

CIRCLE OF TREES

A Multigenerational Tapestry of Faith Program



**BY JULIE SIMON, KATIE TWEEDIE COVEY, AND PAT KAHN; DEVELOPMENTAL EDITOR,
JUDITH A. FREDIANI**

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www.uua.org/re/tapestry.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge:

- **Charlene Brotman** for permission to use the story "You're Saved by Something Green" from *The Kid's Book of Awesome Stuff* (Brotman-Marshfield Curriculum, June 2004). Available from [AbeBooks](#).
- **Charlesbridge Publishing Inc.** (at www.charlesbridge.com/) for permission to use the text of the book *Trout Are Made of Trees* by April Pulley Sayre, text copyright 2008.
- **Dawn Publications** for permission to use the text of the children's picture book [The Tree in the Ancient Forest](#) (at www.dawnpub.com/our-books/tree-in-the-ancient-forest/) by Carol Reed-Jones, text copyright 1995 by Carol Reed-Jones.
- **David Densmore and Susan Osborn** for permission to use the lyrics from the song "Winter" from [Susan Osborn](#) (at www.susanosborn.com/?section=music-2)'s recording *Still Life*; music by Antonio Vivaldi; lyrics by David Densmore and Susan Osborn.
- **Joyce Poley** for permission to use the song "What Can We Do" from the *Let Your Heart Sing!* songbook and CD.
- **Betsy Rose** (at www.betsyrosemusic.org) for permission to use the song "Standing Like a Tree" from the album *In My Two Hands*.
- **Jim Scott** (at www.jimscottmusic.com) for permission to use the "The Rainforest Song," from the *Earth and Spirit Songbook* and the CD *Sailing with the Moon*.
- **Gretchen Sleicher** for permission to use the arrangement of "[The Simple Praise of Trees](#)" (at songsforthegreatturning.net/songs-of-gratitude/i-raise-my-arms/) on the [Songs for the Great Turning](#) (at songsforthegreatturning.net/) website.

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Note: If you add or delete text in this program, you may change the accuracy of the Table of Contents. The Table of Contents is an auto-generated list; if you change content and want an accurate representation of the page numbers listed in the TOC, click the table and click “Update Field.” Then click “Update page numbers only.” Click OK.

THE PROGRAM

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better. — Albert Einstein

Every part of the earth is sacred; every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every humming insect is holy. — Anonymous

Roger Ulrich is an environmental psychologist who took advantage of a naturalistic experiment . . . What he found was that the patients with a view of a grove of trees left hospital on average a day sooner, needed less pain medication, and had fewer negative nurse's notes than patients who had a view of a brick wall. — Esther Sternberg in "The Science of Healing Places," [On Being](#) (at www.onbeing.org/program/transcript/4861), September 2012

Circle of Trees is a multigenerational program of eight workshops that nurture deep connection with trees, nature, and all of earth's living creatures. The program uses trees as an entry point to understand and connect with life on earth. Across many cultures, trees are recognized as a symbol for life on earth—for example, the biblical Tree of Life. Even young children understand trees as sustainers of life, fundamental engines of life on earth as we know it. Trees create and purify the air we breathe. They house and provide resources for myriad creatures, including humans. They bring us peace, joy, and delight.

GOALS

This program will:

- Provide a basic understanding of why trees are, literally, "providers of life"
- Identify threats to trees and the web of life and provide inspiration to take action
- Explore using methods that are spiritual, non-intellectual, with the hope of fostering deep connection
- Provide meaningful ways in which participants can actively promote the health of trees and, by extension, the web of life
- Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"
- Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of Unitarian Universalist faith.

LEADERS

The most important qualities for leaders of this program are curiosity, joy, and an ethic of care for the environment.

Multigenerational programs are an excellent opportunity to engage youth co-leaders in the leadership team. Adolescents rarely find themselves in communities that welcome their leadership, and this program invites our congregations to be a sorely needed exception.

PARTICIPANTS

Stewardship of the environment is a crucial, timely topic relevant to people of all ages, who live in all kinds of family relationships. Using this program, congregations can build multigenerational community by engaging adults, youth, and children fully as Unitarian Universalists heeding the call to action in service to earth. When publicizing the program, be clear that everyone is welcome—indeed, needed: single people, families of any configuration, adults of all ages. The program serves children as young as eight or nine and youth and adults of all ages. The [UUA website](#) (at www.uua.org/re/multigenerational/index.shtml) offers additional resources for multigenerational programming in congregations.

Anticipate the participant who simply must move in order to remain engaged, or the older person who must be near the speaker in order to hear, can help you create an inclusive program. No one should be excluded from the program or its activities by real or perceived physical or other limitations. The most essential tool in the process of inclusion is awareness that adaptation may be needed. Some activities offer specific adaptations under the heading Including All Participants, immediately after the Description of Activity.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

One goal of Circle of Trees is to help participants to slow down, go deeper, and truly experience a connection to trees and all of earth. The program begins with some lighthearted learning about trees—how they are structured, what they contribute to life on our planet—then moves into appreciation for these providers of life. A ritual helps participants see into the essence of trees and nature, to sense what it feels like to be a tree or another being, and ultimately to experience empathy for trees and other beings; approaches that tend toward the spiritual, rather than the intellectual, foster deeper connection. The program incorporates movement, story learning, meditation, and taking action.

Ideally, the entire program occurs outdoors in the presence of trees. If this is not feasible, find ways to be outside at least some of the time. Workshop 8 should definitely be done outside; if it is raining, wear raincoats and boots and forge ahead. If the weather really is too wild to gather the group outside, reschedule for another day.

Core workshops are designed to be 60 minutes, but consider allotting at least 90 minutes for each workshop so you can include the Alternate Activities. You might also consider plan time for participants share a meal or snack either before or after each workshop, to help form and foster inter-generational relationships.

While each workshop can be done independently, it is preferable to complete all workshops in the order presented. If possible, combine Workshops 6 and 7 into a two-and-a-half-hour block so the group can experience the ritual, Council Among the Trees, fully and without interruption.

The first workshop invites participants to get to know each other, while they learn about and connect with trees in a concrete, scientific, fun way. Workshops 2 and 3 actively explore the very real benefits trees provide to humans and all life on our planet. In Workshop 4, participants share the special trees in their lives and develop and express appreciation for these trees and trees in general. In Workshop 5, participants learn about climate change, discuss how trees fit into that global challenge, and develop ways to protect and help trees. In Workshops 6 and 7, participants create a ritual that fosters deep connection and empathy with trees, nature, and all life on earth. In the final workshop, participants go outside for a walk in the woods, literally immersed in the trees, with the hope of forging an authentic, lasting connection with these spirit- and earth-enhancing forms of life.

Quote

A quote introduces each workshop. Co-leaders may wish to discuss the quote as part of their workshop preparation. Exploring a quote together can help you each feel grounded in the ideas and activities you will present and can help you get "on the same page" for co-leading. You may read the quote aloud to your group as an entry point to the workshop. The quotes are also included in the Taking It Home handout you will provide at each workshop's Closing.

Introduction

The Introduction gives an overview of the workshop concepts and explains how you can use the activities to teach the concepts.

Goals

The Goals are the desired participant outcomes for the workshop. Reviewing the goals will help you connect the workshop's content and methodologies with the four strands of the Tapestry of Faith religious education programs: ethical, spiritual, Unitarian Universalist identity, and faith development. As you plan each workshop, apply your knowledge of the group, the time and space you have available, and your own strengths

and interests as a leader to determine the most important and achievable goals for the workshop.

Learning Objectives

The Learning Objectives are specific participant outcomes that the workshop activities are designed to facilitate—what a participant will learn, become, or be able to do as a result of the learning activities. It may be helpful to think of learning objectives as the building blocks with which the program's larger, "big picture" goals are achieved.

Workshop-at-a-Glance

The Workshop-at-a-Glance table lists the workshop activities in a suggested order and provides an estimated time for completing each activity to conduct a 60-minute workshop. The table includes all the core activities from the workshop Opening through the Closing, plus any Faith in Action activities for the workshop.

Note: In some cases you can lead a Faith in Action activity in an extended (more than 60-minute) workshop, that is, provide it as you would an Alternate Activity. However, for most Faith in Action activities, you will need to make special arrangements for participants, other congregants, and sometimes members of the wider community to undertake activities outside the group's regular meeting time.

Spiritual Preparation

Each workshop provides a spiritual exercise that leaders may use to prepare themselves for facilitating the workshop. Taking time to center yourself within the workshop's purpose and content will support and free you to be present with the group. The exercise will guide you to call forth your own life experiences, beliefs, and spirituality and relate these to the workshop you are about to lead. Take advantage of these exercises as a way to grow, in faith, as a leader.

Workshop Plan

The workshop plan describes every element of the workshop in the sequence established in the Workshop-at-a-Glance table. Additionally, the workshop plan presents any extension activities, a Taking It Home section, and a Resources section, which includes all the stories, handouts, and other resources you need to lead the workshop activities. The Find Out More section suggests additional sources to help you, the leader, further explore the workshop topics.

If you are reading Circle of Trees online, you can move as you wish among a workshop's elements—Opening, Closing, Faith in Action, Activity 4, Resources, etc. Each element occupies its own webpage, and you can click on "Print This Page" at any time. If you prefer to have Circle of Trees on your own computer, click on

"Download Entire Program" or "Download Workshop"; this will give you a user-friendly document to customize as you wish, using your own word-processing program.

Each workshop comprises the following elements:

Welcoming and Entering: An optional activity you can provide in situations where members of the group "straggle in" as much as 15 minutes before the workshop start time.

Opening: Workshops begin with chalice lighting and an opening ritual. The Opening is a time for centering, both for individuals and the group. Also, repeating the opening ritual before each workshop helps participants build a common faith language vocabulary and faith ritual experience. Take the liberty you need to shape an opening ritual that suits your group, works within your space limitations, and reflects the culture and practices of your congregation.

Activities: Up to five activities form the core content of each workshop. In each workshop, one activity focuses the group's attention on a story that illuminates the workshop theme. Presenting activities in the sequence suggested will help you provide a coherent learning experience. In general, workshops are structured to activate participant's interest in and prior knowledge of the main topic, then offer hands-on engagement with the topic, and finally provide opportunities to process and apply new observations and knowledge. The suggested sequence alternates listening and talking, sitting still and moving about, and individual exploration and team or whole-group exploration, in order to provide variation that will help keep participants engaged.

Materials for Activity: Provided for each activity, this checklist tells you the supplies you will need.

Preparation for Activity: Review the bulleted preparation "to do" list for each activity at least one week before a workshop. This list describes all the advance work you need to do for the activity.

Description of Activity: This section provides detailed directions for implementing the activity. For many activities, the description includes a rationale that links the activity thematically to the rest of the workshop and to the entire program. Read the activity descriptions carefully during your planning process so that you understand each activity and its purpose. Later, when you are leading the group, use the description as a step-by-step how-to manual.

Including All Participants: Your planning process should always include adaptation to include all participants. For certain activities, the Including All Participants section suggests specific modifications to make the activity manageable for people of all ages and ability levels.

Faith in Action: An important component of the program, Faith in Action activities give participants practice at being Unitarian Universalists in the world. When you lead a Faith in Action project, you create an opportunity for participants to experience the active expression of faith values.

By design, Faith in Action activities engage leaders, participants, other congregants and sometimes members of the wider community, usually outside the group's regular meeting time and place. Faith in Action projects often require special arrangements to be made in advance. Like the core and alternate activities, Faith in Action activities include a materials checklist, a list of preparations you must make ahead of time, and a detailed description of the activity.

Most workshops either introduce a new Faith in Action activity or describe a step the group will take in a long-term Faith in Action activity. However, when you get to a particular workshop, the group may not be ready for a new Faith in Action activity, or, may be "on hold" midway through a long-term Faith in Action project, perhaps waiting for supplies to arrive or for an environmental organization to schedule time to visit your program. It is perfectly fine for the Faith in Action component of Circle of Trees to deviate from the suggested timetable!

Plan well, but remain flexible. Be aware that inclement weather, the last-minute cancellation of a scheduled visitor, or other surprises may bump a planned Faith in Action activity to a later workshop.

Note: Faith in Action activities can also be used independently from the Circle of Trees program for a wide age-span of children or for multigenerational service projects. If your congregation is participating in the UUA's Green Sanctuary Program, you may want to include the Green Sanctuary committee or team in helping to plan and carry out the Faith in Action activities.

Closing: The Closing signals the end of the group's time together. As you plan each workshop, allow plenty of time for your Closing and avoid rushing through it. Shape a closing ritual that fits the group and your congregation's culture and practices.

Leader Reflection and Planning: This section provides guidance, often in the form of questions, to help co-leaders process the workshop after it is concluded and use their reflections to shape future workshops. Be sure to share pertinent information with the religious educator. The UUA also appreciates [feedback on Tapestry of Faith programs](#).

Taking It Home: Taking It Home resources for each workshop are designed to extend each participant's experience and connect families with the workshop content. Download the Taking It Home section and adapt it to reflect the actual activities of your workshop.

You can print and photocopy the Taking It Home section for participants to bring home, send it to the group via email, or post it on your congregation's website (or perhaps do all three!).

Resources: Here you will find the full text of stories, artwork, handouts, and all the other resources you need to lead every element of the workshop.

Under "Stories," you will find the full text of the workshop's central story and any other stories you will need for workshop activities.

Under "Handouts," you will find any material that needs to be printed and photocopied for participants to use in the workshop.

Under "Leader Resources," you will find all remaining components you need to lead the workshop activities. These may include a recipe, a puzzle for you to print and cut into pieces, or an illustration you will show the group, which you can print as a hard copy or display on a computer as a PowerPoint slide.

Under the heading "Find Out More," you will find book and video titles, website URLs, and other selected resources to further explore the workshop topics.

MATERIALS

- Cloth for altar or centering table
- Leaf name tags from the previous workshop, plus a few blank extras, and markers
- Basket for name tags

LEADER GUIDELINES

As you adapt workshops to fit your resources and the needs of the group, take care to preserve the intent of a workshop and its purpose in the overall program.

Read each workshop at least several days before leading it. Get a feel for it, do a little extra research if your curiosity strikes, and follow your interests.

Preparing with your co-leader is very important. Each leader should read the workshop in advance and then together determine each co-leader's responsibilities. Immediately before the workshop, work together to set up the meeting space and ensure that the materials and equipment are available. Experience the Spiritual Preparation exercise together, if possible. At least, take a moment before participants arrive to go over what you'll do and to briefly share your expectations for the workshop.

IMPLEMENTATION

The options for scheduling Circle of Trees are many. It can be used on Sunday mornings as a multigenerational program sandwiched between larger segments of the congregation's religious education year. It can be used

on Saturday afternoons or early weekend evenings, perhaps combined with a potluck meal. It can be adapted for use primarily with children and youth of mixed ages. It can be part of or central to a congregational summer program. It can be part of a weekend retreat. Consult with your religious educator or Religious Education Committee to schedule Circle of Trees.

Most Unitarian Universalists wish to provide stewardship to the world, and most are concerned about the earth and its resources—but prospective participants will only know about Circle of Trees if you tell them. Schedule the program when they are most likely to be free, and let them know well in advance of its purposes and merits.

BEFORE YOU START

One of the goals of Circle of Trees is for participants to engage directly with trees and the web of life, thus the culminating workshop is designed to be a shared experience in nature, in a nearby natural area or park. Consult with the director of religious education for all necessary arrangements for a field trip. The timing of the workshop does not include travel time, so factor that into your plans.

Internet access and the availability of a laptop can enrich many of the workshops, which include links to online videos, music, and websites.

RESOURCES

Background Reading for All Tapestry of Faith Programs

[*Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*](#) by Tracey L. Hurd (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005)

[*The Gift of Faith: Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children*](#) (Second Edition) by Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2003)

[*Welcoming Children with Special Needs: A Guidebook for Faith Communities*](#) by Sally Patton (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004)

[*When Youth Lead: A Guide to Intergenerational Social Justice Ministry*](#) by Jill M. Schwendeman (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2007)

The Arts and Spirituality

Tapestry of Faith offers two online supplementary resources to enrich the teaching and learning experience:

[*Spirituality and the Arts in Children's Programming*](#) by Dr. Nita Penfold provides guidance for using arts in creative, spiritual ways.

[Making Music Live](#) by Nick Page demonstrates how to incorporate music into religious education, including how to teach songs even if you are not a musician.

Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven [Principles](#):

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalism draws from many [Sources](#):

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men that challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love
- Wisdom from the world's religions, which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life
- Jewish and Christian teachings, which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves
- Humanist teachings, which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature

FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

Faith Development Office
Ministries and Faith Development
Unitarian Universalist Association
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210-1409
religiouseducation@uua.org

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

Did you work with (a) co-facilitator(s)?

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?

In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?

Did you enrich the program with any resources that you would recommend to others?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

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Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?

In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?

WORKSHOP 1: COME INTO THE CIRCLE

INTRODUCTION

*The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The next best time is now. — Chinese proverb*

Trees are an integral part of all life on earth, and they are facing stresses as a result of deforestation and pollution—stresses that threaten our very existence. As Unitarian Universalists who affirm and promote "respect for the interdependent web of all existence," we cannot take trees for granted. This program helps participants understand trees as, literally, "providers of life," explore a spiritual connection to nature, identify threats to the web of life, and feel inspired to take action to protect trees and our environment.

The story, "The Tree in the Ancient Forest," illustrates the interdependence of the ancient forest and connections with the web of life.

The Faith in Action activity introduces a process for selecting one or more tree-related projects and offers an array of possibilities for projects over the course of the program.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce the structure and rituals of the program
- Allow participants to get to know each other and begin to bond as a multigenerational group
- Foster an understanding of and respect for trees and their role in life on earth
- Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"
- Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the interdependent role of trees in the ancient forest
- Connect with nature through the program rituals of movement and guided imagery
- Develop multigenerational relationships.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	
Opening	5
Activity 1: Rise Up for Trees, Team Up for Trees	10
Activity 2: Guided Imagery — Among the Trees	5
Activity 3: Creating Our Covenant	10
Activity 4: Story — The Tree in the Ancient Forest	10
Activity 5: Make a Tree	15
Faith in Action: Choosing a Project	60
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Song — Meditation on Breathing	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, reflect on the following:

- Think about your relationship to nature in general and trees specifically. How close to your home is a tree? What relationship do you have to trees or to a specific tree?
- Think about what trees give us and how we depend on them to survive. What comes to your mind?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Leaf name tag template, and construction paper, scissors, hole punch, and yarn
- Bold markers

Preparation for Activity

- Make leaf-shaped name tags for all expected participants and co-leaders, plus a few extra. (Free printable leaf template patterns are available on the [Digital Card Fun](http://digitalcardfun.com/188/free-printable-leaf-patterns/) (at digitalcardfun.com/188/free-printable-leaf-patterns/) website.) Trace the patterns on construction paper. Cut out the patterns, punch a hole in each, and string yarn through to make a necklace.
- Write your name tag, as an example, and put it on. Throughout the program, be sure to wear your own name tag, to include introductions at the beginning of each workshop, and to encourage all participants to wear their name tags; this will alleviate the anxiety of people of any age who have difficulty remembering names!

Description of Activity

This activity reinforces the importance of learning participants' names. Being able to greet one another by name is a fundamental practice of hospitality and an important part of building strong relationships among group members.

Have each participant choose a leaf name tag and write their first name on it with a bold marker.

Including All Participants

Assist any participants who have trouble writing or gripping a marker.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Select an area where the group can comfortably sit in a circle.
- Create an altar or centering space for the chalice, using a small table with a cloth.
- Write the chalice lighting words on newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

This activity introduces the opening circle and chalice lighting words and gives participants an opportunity to learn each other's names. Always include introductions and encourage the wearing of name tags to alleviate anxiety of people of any age who have difficulty remembering names!

Gather participants in a circle around the chalice. Explain that each workshop starts with lighting the chalice. For this first workshop, you may wish to invite the youngest participant to light the chalice. Say, in these words or your own:

Whenever we light a chalice, we are connected with Unitarian Universalists around the world who share this ritual of our faith. Our chalice lighting words are adapted from words by an anonymous writer which are sometimes attributed to Chief Seattle, a chief of the Duwamish tribe in the 19th century in the area we know today as the state of Washington. These words speak of our connection with nature and all life.

Invite the group to join you in saying the chalice lighting words you have posted:

We light this chalice for the air that is precious...
for all things share the same breath—
the beast, the tree, the person,
we all share the same breath.

Welcome everyone to the Circle of Trees program. Invite participants to say their names and to very briefly answer the question, "What brings you to a program called Circle of Trees?" Go around the circle until everyone has introduced themselves.

Briefly describe the program, in these words or your own:

Circle of Trees is a series of workshops designed to help us slow down and connect more deeply with the interdependent web of life by focusing on trees. We'll explore the many roles that trees play in the web of life and what we can do to support and protect them.

Including All Participants

If any participants may be hard of hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone. If participants will sit on the floor, also provide chairs for those who cannot or do not wish to sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 1: RISE UP FOR TREES / TEAM UP FOR TREES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Choose one version (Rise Up for Trees or Team Up for Trees) to use for this workshop, and plan to use the other version in the next workshop.
- Read the resource and practice giving clear instructions, so you will be comfortable presenting and leading the activity.
- Optional: Look online for photos of the actual trees referenced in the game Team Up for Trees: mighty oak, weeping willow, and bristlecone pine. Print photos and display them as you begin this game.

Description of Activity

Cooperative activities are very effective "ice breakers" and provide an appropriate way for people of all ages to get to know each other. Explain that each workshop will start with an activity similar to this one.

Give instructions for the version you have chosen. Conduct the ice-breaker.

Including All Participants

If a participant needs to remain seated, encourage them to do the poses from a seated position.

ACTIVITY 2: GUIDED IMAGERY — AMONG THE TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Guided Imagery — Among the Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the guided imagery so you will be comfortable leading the activity.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to make themselves comfortable and prepare to listen to a guided imagery. Read aloud the guided imagery in Leader Resource 2.

Encourage participants to respond to the activity using questions such as these:

- How do you feel after our guided meditation?
- Did anything come up for you during the guided meditation that you want to share with the group?

Including All Participants

If any participants have limited hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone.

ACTIVITY 3: CREATING OUR COVENANT (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post a blank sheet of newsprint where all participants can see it, and write "Our Covenant" at the top.

Description of Activity

Participants create a group covenant. Point out that how we behave affects everyone in the group, which is another example of interdependence. Like lighting a chalice, creating a group covenant is another common ritual in UU gatherings. Explain that a *covenant* is an agreement people make with each other.

Ask:

- What do you think will make our time together safe, fun, and productive?
- How do you think we should act when we are together?

Record responses on newsprint. Ask for a quick vote, and check or circle the items on which all participants agree.

Note: This activity is meant to be brief. Do your best to quickly resolve any differences of opinion that arise, seek compromise, and move on.

Including All Participants

Encourage all participants to speak up and be heard.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY — THE TREE IN THE ANCIENT FOREST (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Tree in the Ancient Forest](#) (included in this document)"
- Optional: A copy of the [The Tree in the Ancient Forest](#) (at www.carolreed-jones.com/the_tree_in_the_ancient_forest_11318.htm) by Carol Reed-Jones
- Optional: Pictures of ancient trees

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Review the discussion questions in the activity and add some of your own if desired.
- Optional: Obtain and display the book [The Tree in the Ancient Forest](#) (at www.carolreed-jones.com/the_tree_in_the_ancient_forest_11318.htm)

8.htm) by Carol Reed-Jones. Or, obtain and display pictures of a Douglas fir or other "characters" from the book; an excellent source is the book [Ancient Trees: Trees That Live for 1,000 Years](http://www.amazon.com/Ancient-Trees-That-Live-Years/dp/1855857049) (at www.amazon.com/Ancient-Trees-That-Live-Years/dp/1855857049) by Anna Lewington and Edward Parker.

Description of Activity

Read aloud the story "The Tree in the Ancient Forest." Invite participants to join in on the refrain as it develops. If time allows, you may wish to read the story a second time with group participation.

Engage a discussion with questions such as these:

- What is a tree?
- How did the story make you feel?
- What are some of the plants or animals that live around your house?
- Where do they fit in the cycle of life?
- What are some of the world's ancient trees?
[Answer: Baobab, redwood, olive, cedar]

Make sure that all voices have an opportunity to be heard.

ACTIVITY 5: MAKE A TREE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chime or rain stick

Preparation for Activity

- Designate a large, open space (preferably outdoors) with plenty of room for movement and where noise will not disturb others.
- Determine how participants with mobility issues can fully engage in this activity, and arrange to provide any adaptations.

Description of Activity

In this role play activity, participants work together to create with their bodies one large (and noisy) "tree" while learning the purpose of each part of a tree. It is wonderful to do this outside, preferably among other trees, but it can also be done inside.

Designate a few people to be pollinators. Then, divide the remaining group into six smaller groups: trunk, bark, leaves, roots, flowers, and seeds. Explain that you will tell them what motions and sounds to make for their tree part, but they should wait until you sound the chime or rain stick to start creating the tree.

Introduce the purpose of each tree part and describe its motions and sounds:

- **Trunk:** The trunk moves nutrients up and down the tree and provides support to the tree as a whole. Trunk group members should stand in a circle, facing out, with their shoulders together, holding up their arms. The trunk will make a "whoosh, whoosh" sound.
- **Bark:** Bark protects the tree. Bark group members should surround the trunk, facing out, and hold hands to create a protective barrier. The bark will say, "Safe, safe."
- **Leaves:** Leaves work to produce food for the tree. Leaf group members stand around the bark, facing out, shaking their arms and hands in front of them as they "blow" in the wind. The leaves will say, "Yum, yum."
- **Roots:** Roots collect water and nutrients from the soil. Root group members should sit around the base of the tree with their legs stretched out. Their sound is "Slurp, slurp."
- **Flowers:** Flowers attract pollinators. Flower group members should stand near the leaves, alternating flower, leaf, flower, leaf, while holding their hands around their faces like petals. Flowers shout, "Pollinate me, pollinate me!" After being tapped by a pollinator, the flower "dies" by falling to the ground.
- **Seeds:** Seeds come from a tree, then blow, roll, or are carried to another place where they may help begin a new tree. Seed group members should stand around the tree next to the flowers. After the flowers fall to the ground, the seeds cry, "Disperse, disperse!" while spinning and jumping away from the tree.
- **Pollinators:** The pollinators are animals or insects that travel from flower to flower collecting and transferring pollen so that fertilization takes place and a new seed or nut can form. After the flowers have shouted "Pollinate me!" several times, the pollinators should gently tap them on the shoulder.

Sound the chime to start the process of making the tree.

Tell the group that they have created an adult tree and, with it, seeds to grow many more trees in the future.

As time allows, make the tree again, with participants taking different parts.

Process the activity by posing questions such as the following:

- What part of the tree did you like being? What is the purpose of that part of the tree?
- What did you learn about trees in this game?

- What do you think would happen if any part of the tree was missing?
- How can we help care for each part of the tree?

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Selected Bibliography](#) (included in this document)
- Basket for name tags on the centering table

Preparation for Activity

- Download the Taking It Home section of this workshop to reflect the activities this group has done. Copy it as a handout for all participants. (You may wish to email participants as well or instead.)
- Download Handout 2. Copy it for all participants, or plan to email it with the Taking It Home handout.
- Write the closing words on newsprint, and post them where they will be visible to all participants. (Note: These words are from Reading 708 in *Singing the Living Tradition* and are adapted from Hebrew scripture, Isaiah 55.)

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a circle around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home and the handout, Selected Bibliography. Explain that Taking It Home includes a summary of what they did in the workshop, resources for further exploration, and fun "homework." For the next workshop, ask participants to research ways that trees benefit humans.

Invite participants to reflect for a moment on today's workshop. Ask each participant to share one word that describes how they feel. Go around the circle with this "one-word checkout."

Invite participants to join hands and say the closing words together:

Let us go out in joy, and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before us shall burst
into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their
hands.

Extinguish the chalice together. As they go, ask participants to leave their name tags in the basket you've provided for this purpose.

FAITH IN ACTION: CHOOSING A PROJECT (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 1, [Tree-Related Project Ideas](#) (included in this document)
- Colored dot stickers or other stickers

Preparation for Activity

- Make copies of Handout 1 for the group to share.
- Research local tree groups, for example:
 - [Trees Atlanta](#), dedicated to protecting Atlanta's urban forest through planting, conservation, and education
 - [Adopt a Tree - Greenovate Boston](#)
 - [Friends of Trees in the Pacific Northwest](#)
 - [Alliance for Community Trees](#), a vital and growing national movement to improve the environment and our communities, one tree at a time
- Write some examples of local groups or individuals whose work connects with trees on several pieces of newsprint, leaving room for participants to add examples.
- Post blank newsprint for ideas and for voting.
- Optional: Locate someone in your congregation who is knowledgeable about trees, and invite them to share information about possible projects. Or, if your congregation participates in the UUA's [Green Sanctuary](#) (at www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/) Program, invite members of that committee or team to help with this activity.

Description of Activity

This first Faith in Action activity introduces the components of a project and offers several possibilities that participants may choose from.

To begin, explain that Faith in Action projects help participants of all ages build skills of identifying, planning, executing, and reflecting on service projects. The program assumes that Faith in Action projects take place outside of the workshop time. Depending on the project chosen, they may be short-term projects or longer-term projects that span several weeks.

An action project starts with identifying a need. Explain that the group will create and carry out one or more Faith in Action projects related to trees over the course of the program. Share the examples of local groups or

individuals whose work connects with trees that you've listed on the newsprint. Invite participants to share any tree-related projects they have participated in and record these on newsprint.

Distribute Handout 1, Tree-Related Project Ideas, and give participants time to look it over. Ask participants to brainstorm ideas for projects they would be interested in doing. Write all suggestions on newsprint, including any ideas you might have.

Give each participant three dot stickers. Ask them to vote for the suggestions they like best, using their dots. They may put all three dots on one idea or distribute them among several choices.

When voting is complete, identify the three ideas that got the most votes.

Discuss with the group what it would take to successfully complete each of the "top three" projects:

- What would be involved?
- What resources would we need?
- What partners would we need?
- How much time would it take, and when could you personally work on it?
- What might you learn?

When you have discussed each "top three" idea, give each participant one more dot sticker and have them place their dot by the project they prefer. The project with the most votes will be the Faith in Action project you start with.

Explain that in subsequent Faith in Action workshops, the group will plan this project, do it, and then reflect on the project. The cycle can then be repeated, as they choose other projects related to trees.

Including All Participants

Throughout the project, be sure to make room for contributions from people of all ages and ability levels.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leader after the workshop to reflect on the following:

- How was the mix of discussion and action?
- In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements?
- How well did the activities include everyone?
- Were the activities appropriate for the ages in the group?
- What might you do differently next time?

Look ahead to the next workshop and assign leadership responsibilities.

TAKING IT HOME

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The next best time is now. — Chinese proverb

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP ... we explored our relationship to trees and heard a story about the interdependence of the ancient forest. We affirmed the value—for ourselves and for the group—of treating each other with respect by creating a covenant for our time together.

HOMEWORK: Before the next workshop, investigate the ways in which trees benefit humans.

MAKE TIME FOR TREES: There are several ways to take today's workshop home, for example:

- Share your thoughts and feelings about today's workshop and the Circle of Trees program with family members, housemates, or co-workers. You may gain particularly valuable insight from people of different faith traditions.
- Try to spend time outside each day, paying special attention to the trees near where you live. Think about your relationship to nature in general and trees specifically. How close to your home is a tree? Have you thought about what trees give us and how we depend on them to survive?
- Create a nature journal to record your observations and feelings about trees as you deepen your connection over the course of the Circle of Trees workshops.
- Think about ways you can engage with people and trees with respect.

EXTEND THE TOPIC: Explore some of the many wonderful books about trees found in Handout 2, Selected Bibliography.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SONG — MEDITATION ON BREATHING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Multiple copies of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook supplement, *Singing the Journey*
- Optional: Computer with Internet access, or a recording of the song "Meditation on Breathing"

Preparation for Activity

- Learn the song so that you can teach it from memory, or invite a guest song leader to teach the song to the group. Listen to a piece of the song on the UUA website.
- Write the lyrics to "Meditation on Breathing" (Hymn 1009 in *Singing the Journey*) on newsprint, and post it where all participants can see it:

Description of Activity

Participants learn the song "Meditation on Breathing."

Say, in these words or your own:

Singing together is another way we feel a connection with each other. Does anyone know the song "Meditation on Breathing" from our hymnbook *Singing the Journey*, Hymn 1009?

Teach the melody by singing one phrase at a time and having participants sing the phrase back to you, then put the phrases together as a whole song.

If there are enough voices, add the descant and drone parts.

The lyrics are:

When I breathe in, I'll breathe in peace.
When I breathe out, I'll breathe out love.

STORY: THE TREE IN THE ANCIENT FOREST

Text copyright 1995 by Carol Reed-Jones.

We gratefully acknowledge [Dawn Publications](#) for permission to use the text of the children's picture book *The Tree in the Ancient Forest* by Carol Reed-Jones.

This is the ancient forest.

This is the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

These are the roots that draw food from the soil

To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

These are the tiny, underground truffles

That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,

To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

These are the voles and mice that tunnel,

And eat tiny, underground truffles

That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,

To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

This is the owl that flies at night,

That hunts the voles and mice that tunnel,

And eat tiny, underground truffles

That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,

To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

These are the sleepy owlets,

That are fed by the owl that flies at night,

That hunts the voles and mice that tunnel,

And eat tiny, underground truffles

That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,

To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

This is a hollow in the tree,

Home of the sleepy owlets,

That are fed by the owl that flies at night,

That hunts the voles and mice that tunnel,

And eat tiny, underground truffles

That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,

To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

This is the woodpecker,

Searching for ants,

That started the hollow in the tree,

Home of the sleepy owlets,

That are fed by the owl that flies at night,

That hunts the voles and mice that tunnel,

And eat tiny, underground truffles

That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,

To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

This is the saucy, chattering squirrel,

That scolds the woodpecker,

Searching for ants,

That started the hollow in the tree,

Home of the sleepy owlets,

That are fed by the owl that flies at night,

That hunts the voles and mice that tunnel,

And eat tiny, underground truffles

That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,

To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

This is the hungry, stealthy marten

That stalks the saucy, chattering squirrel,

That scolds the woodpecker,

Searching for ants,

That started the hollow in the tree,

Home of the sleepy owlets,

That are fed by the owl that flies at night,

That hunts the voles and mice that tunnel,

And eat tiny, underground truffles

That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,

To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree

That grows in the ancient forest.

These are the fir cones that fall from a branch,

And startle the hungry, stealthy marten

That stalks the saucy, chattering squirrel,
That scolds the woodpecker,
Searching for ants,
That started the hollow in the tree,
Home of the sleepy owlets,
That are fed by the owl that flies at night,
That hunts the voles and mice that tunnel,
And eat tiny, underground truffles
That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,
To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree
That grows in the ancient forest.
This is the three-hundred-year-old tree,
That grows from the fir cones that fall from a branch,

And startle the hungry, stealthy marten
That stalks the saucy, chattering squirrel,
That scolds the woodpecker,
Searching for ants,
That started the hollow in the tree,
Home of the sleepy owlets,
That are fed by the owl that flies at night,
That hunts the voles and mice that tunnel,
And eat tiny, underground truffles
That grow on the roots that draw food from the soil,
To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree
That grows in the ancient forest.

HANDOUT 1: TREE-RELATED PROJECT IDEAS

Here are some suggestions for tree-related projects:

- Create a "Tree Guide" to the congregation's property. Identify the types of trees, and prepare informational plaques to be placed along a trail that congregants can use as a self-guided tour. Identify any work or maintenance that might be needed, and work with the appropriate congregational leaders to schedule the work.
- Plant trees, either on the congregation's property or in the local community.
- Create a "Nature Playground" or "Tree Place" as appropriate for your facility, in order to invite an appreciation of a tree or trees and of nature. Use [The Arbor Day Foundation Nature Explore Program](http://www.natureexplore.org/) (at www.natureexplore.org/) as a starting point.
- Display the artwork and poetry you create in Workshop 4, Activity 5, in a Circle of Trees exhibit for your congregation. If desired, visitors to the exhibit can create their own art or poetry to add to the exhibit, with Circle of Trees participants leading the activity and sharing what they have been doing in the program.
- Join up with a local [Adopt-A-Stream](http://www.adopt-a-stream.org/) (at www.adopt-a-stream.org/) group and participate in stream bank cleanup days.
- Plan a fundraiser for an international tree group, such as the [Global Tree Campaign](http://www.globaltrees.org/projects.htm) (at www.globaltrees.org/projects.htm), the [Green Belt Movement](http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/) (at www.greenbeltmovement.org/), or the [Rainforest Foundation](http://www.rainforestfoundation.org/) (at www.rainforestfoundation.org/).
- Investigate whether your local community, city, or town has a [Climate Change Action Plan](http://www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/state/activities/action-plan.html) (at www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/state/activities/action-plan.html) already in place. If so, invite a guest speaker or a panel of speakers to talk about the plan and report on progress in implementing it. If no climate change plan has been developed, invite interested citizens, either within the congregation or from the wider community, to meet together and discuss ways to approach local officials about starting the process.

HANDOUT 2: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Tree for All Seasons by Robin Bernard. Readers will climb through the pages of this vivid photographic book to explore the parts of a tree and understand their functions. In summer, the tree sunbathes and seethes with animal life. With autumn comes the flowing sap that makes maple syrup for pancakes. As the tree's leaves begin to fall, winter is coming on and the tree is nearly dormant. Spectacular photographs and fun, informative text not only answer questions about how trees work and why seasons change but also make this book an invitation to observe and enjoy nature and its many wonders.

A Wish to Be a Christmas Tree by Colleen Monroe. This charming tale of an overgrown pine that was always passed over for Christmas, and what his woodland friends do to help him, is sure to become a holiday classic for years to come.

Aani and the Tree Huggers by Jeannine Atkins. Based on true events in northern India, this is the story of a little girl's bravery. One day, Aani hears the roaring of the tree cutters. Hoping to get the workers to put down their saws and hatchets, Aani and the village women explain that the trees provide food, fuel, and homes for animals, but to no avail. Finally, Aani wraps her body around one of the trees, with surprising results. Distinctive color illustrations, inspired by Indian miniature painting, accompany the moving story.

America's Famous and Historic Trees by Jeffery G. Meyer. Like many residents of Jacksonville, Florida, the Jeffrey Meyers family liked to picnic under the city's magnificent Treaty Live Oak. When their toddler handed them an acorn from the tree, Meyers, a nurseryman, planted it in the back yard. That acorn was the inspiration for an immensely popular project, *America's Famous and Historic Trees*, sponsored by American Forests, the country's oldest nonprofit conservation organization. In this fascinating book, Meyers tells the stories of 17 historic trees, describes their role in America's history, and tells how their seeds were collected and their offspring propagated.

Ancient Trees: Trees That Live for a Thousand Years by Anna Lewington and Edward Parker. Trees from all around the world are represented. Parker's many beautiful, full-color images contribute a great deal, but what makes this book especially interesting is a discussion of the roles these trees have played through the ages in human religions, myths, economies, and everyday life. (This copy is out of print, but used copies are readily available.)

Be a Friend to Trees by Patricia Lauber. Why should you be a friend to trees? Because they are a valuable natural resource. People depend on trees for food, and animals depend on trees for food and shelter. But most important, we depend on trees because they add oxygen, a gas we all need, to the air. While trees give us many wonderful products, we must also protect them because we can't live without them.

Companions in Wonder by Julie Dunlap and Stephen Kellert. Rachel Carson's classic 1956 essay "Help Your Child to Wonder" urged adults to help children experience the "sense of wonder" that comes only from a relationship with nature. This anthology gathers personal essays recounting adventures great and small with children in the natural world. The authors—writing as parents, teachers, mentors, and former children—describe experiences that range from bird watching to an encounter with an apple butter-loving grizzly bear. By turns lyrical, comic, and earnest, these writings guide us to closer connections with nature and with the children in our lives, for the good of the planet and for our own spiritual and physical well-being.

The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest by Lynne Cherry. The author and artist Lynne Cherry journeyed deep into the rain forests of Brazil to write and illustrate this gorgeous picture book. One day, a man exhausts himself trying to chop down a giant kapok tree. While he sleeps, the forest's residents, including a child from the Yanomamo tribe, whisper in his ear about the importance of trees and how "all living things depend on one another" . . . and it works. Cherry's lovingly rendered colored pencil and watercolor drawings of all the "wondrous and rare animals" evoke the lush rain forests, and the stunning endpapers feature world maps bordered by tree porcupines, emerald tree boas, and dozens more fascinating creatures.

Last Child in the Woods by Richard Luov. Never before in history have children been so plugged in—and so out of touch with the natural world. In this groundbreaking work, child advocacy expert Richard Luov directly links the lack of nature in the lives of today's wired generation—he calls it "nature deficit"—to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as rises in obesity, Attention Deficit Disorder, and depression. Nature-deficit disorder is not a medical condition; it is a description of the human costs of alienation from nature. This alienation damages children and shapes adults, families, and communities. There are solutions, though, and they're right in our own backyards.

The Lorax by Dr. Seuss. Long before saving the earth became a global concern, Dr. Seuss, speaking through his character the Lorax, warned against mindless

progress and the danger it posed to the earth's natural beauty.

Mama Miti by Donna Jo Napoli. Through artful prose and beautiful illustrations, Donna Jo Napoli and Kadir Nelson tell the true story of Wangari Muta Maathai, known as "Mama Miti," who in 1977 founded the Green Belt Movement, an African grassroots organization that has empowered many people to mobilize and combat deforestation, soil erosion, and environmental degradation. Today more than 30 million trees have been planted throughout Mama Miti's native Kenya, and in 2004 she became the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Wangari Muta Maathai has changed Kenya tree by tree—and with each page turned, children will realize their own ability to positively impact the future.

The Meaning of Trees by Fred Hageneder. The tree is beloved as Mother Nature's visible symbol of power and grace. This book is a beautiful celebration of their lore and spirit, botany and history. Genera from aspen to willow are captured in 70 dramatic photographs that illustrate their brilliant seasonal transformations. Featuring 50 different types of tree, this informative compendium describes each by way of botanical qualities; medicinal uses for their leaves, bark, and wood; cultural symbolism; magical associations; and so much more.

Meetings with Remarkable Trees by Thomas Pakenham. With this astonishing collection of tree portraits, Thomas Pakenham has produced a new kind of tree book. The trees are grouped according to their characteristics; roughly half are ancient native trees in the United Kingdom, while the rest are exotic newcomers from Europe.

My Mom Hugs Trees by Robyn Ringgold. "Do you think your mom does strange things? Well, my mom hugs trees, rescues bugs, sings with birds, and talks to flowers. Come meet my mom. You might end up doing strange things too!" Delightful illustrations and poetic text hold the attention of young readers and make *My Mom Hugs Trees* a perfect "read to me" book. The story reflects a love and enjoyment of life. Mom, with her strange habits, will foster children's connection to nature.

Myths of the Sacred Trees by Moyra Caldecott. Essential to life on earth since the beginning of time, trees hold a special place in our collective consciousness: rooted in the earth, reaching skyward, nourished by the elements, and enlivened by the sap running through their veins, they provide a metaphor for what it means to be human.

The Night Tree by Eve Bunting. By moonlight in the quiet forest, a young boy and his family decorate their favorite tree with popcorn, apples, tangerines, and

sunflower-seed balls as a gift for the animals of the woods. Sure to become a Christmas favorite, this beautifully illustrated story of a family's unusual tradition brings to life the true spirit of Christmas.

Our Tree Named Steve by Alan Zweibel. "Dear Kids, A long time ago, when you were little, Mom and I took you to where we wanted to build a house. . . . I remember there was one tree, however, that the three of you couldn't stop staring at. . ." After the family spares him from the builders, Steve the tree quickly works his way into their lives. He holds their underwear when the dryer breaks down, he's there when Adam and Lindsay get their first crushes, and he's the centerpiece at their outdoor family parties. With a surprising lack of anthropomorphizing, this is a uniquely poignant celebration of fatherhood, families, love, and change.

Planting the Trees of Kenya by Claire A. Nivola. Wangari Maathai, winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize and founder of the Green Belt Movement, grew up in the highlands of Kenya, where fig trees cloaked the hills, fish filled the streams, and the people tended their bountiful gardens. But over many years, as more and more land was cleared, Kenya was transformed. When Wangari returned home from college in America, she found the village gardens dry, the people malnourished, and the trees gone. How could she alone bring back the trees and restore the gardens and the people?

Remarkable Trees of the World by Thomas Pakenham. Thomas Pakenham embarks on a five-year odyssey to most of the temperate and tropical regions of the world to photograph 60 trees of remarkable personality and presence: Dwarfs, Giants, Monuments, and Aliens; the lovingly tended miniature trees of Japan; the enormous strangler from India; and the 4,700-year-old "Old Methuselahs." American readers will be fascinated by Pakenham's first examination of North American trees, including the towering redwoods of Sequoia and Yosemite, the gaunt Joshua trees of Death Valley, and the bristlecone pines discovered in California's White Mountains.

Sacred Trees: Spirituality, Wisdom and Well-Being by Nathaniel Altman. A heartfelt, profusely illustrated discussion of their history and meaning gives a new appreciation of trees' special place in our lives. Observe how a multitude of cultures around the world have formed enduring bonds with trees, believing them possessed of a "life force." Find out which are considered "cosmic" or "home to the gods," which symbolize ancestral roots, and which represent fertility. Your commitment to their preservation will deepen and grow.

Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree by Gail Gibbons. This book about nature and the changing seasons focuses on a young boy and a very special apple tree.

Seeds of Change: Planting a Path to Peace by Jen Cullerton Johnson. This book brings to life the empowering story of Wangari Maathai, the first African woman, and environmentalist, to win a Nobel Peace Prize.

Seeds of Change: Wangari's Gifts to the World by Jen Cullerton Johnson. As a young girl in Kenya, Wangari Maathai was taught to respect nature. She grew up loving the land, plants, and animals that surrounded her—from the giant mugumo trees revered by her people, the Kikuyu, to the tiny tadpoles that swam in the river. Although most Kenyan girls were not educated, Wangari, curious and hardworking, was allowed to go to school, where her mind sprouted like a seed. She excelled at science and went on to study in the United States. After returning home, Wangari blazed a trail across Kenya, using her knowledge and compassion to promote the rights of her countrywomen and to help save the land, one tree at a time.

Someday a Tree by Eve Bunting. A family relaxes and engages in picnics, naps, storytelling, and plain fun under a gigantic old oak tree on their country property. One day, young Alice notices that the grass under the tree smells funny and is turning yellow. The oak's leaves start to fall, even though it is spring. A tree doctor discovers that the soil has been poisoned, probably by illegally dumped chemicals. Neighbors pitch in: The poisoned dirt is carted off, the fire department sprays water, sacking is wrapped around top branches, and the telephone company loans poles from which to hang sunscreens. However, the tree dies despite the efforts to save it. Finally, Alice remembers her collection of acorns, which she rushes out and plants in healthy ground near the tree.

Tell Me Tree by Gail Gibbons. Featuring a special section on how children can make a tree identification book of their own, this is a bright and colorful introduction to trees, leaves, and their inner workings in nature.

The Tree Book for Kids and Their Grownups by Gina Ingoglia. The birds and the bees and the flowers and the . . . TREES! How do trees grow? Why do leaves change? What kind of tree is that? The acclaimed Brooklyn Botanic Garden's newest guide answers kids' (and parents') tree-related questions in an easy-to-understand way. It features 33 different trees that grow in North America, from rural Georgia to the streets of New York City to the California suburbs. Each profile includes a beautiful botanical watercolor illustration by author Gina Ingoglia showing the tree as it appears in a particular season, as well as life-size depictions of its leaf, flower, and seed. Readers of all ages will be in awe over the wonderful world of trees.

The Tree in the Ancient Forest by Carol Reed-Jones. A delightful introduction to the habitat in and around old

trees. From lowly fungi to majestic owls, the book connects the web of nature. Repetitive, cumulative verse—a poetic technique that children universally enjoy—aptly portrays the amazing ways in which the inhabitants of the forest depend on one another for survival. It includes a guide to the forest creatures and their interrelationships, and a concise explanation of an ancient forest.

The Tree of Life: Baobab by Barbara Bash. According to African legend, each animal was given a tree to plant by the Great Spirit. When the hyena was assigned the baobab tree, the careless animal planted it upside down—"and that is why its branches look like gnarled roots." With this intriguing bit of folklore, Bash proceeds to unfold the life cycle of this majestic bastion of the African savannah. Frequently measuring 60 feet tall and 40 feet across, these giants "outlive nearly everything on earth"—their life span is more than 1,000 years. In this compelling and moving account, the baobab stands proud and stately as a vivid panoply of activity unfolds within its sprawling branches. Finally, an old tree dies and "collapses in on itself, a melted heap of ruins." A seed sprouts, a new baobab tree begins to grow, and life continues. One of nature's great lessons is recreated dramatically in this stirring book.

Tree, Leaves and Bark (Take Along Guide series) by Diane Burns. This introduction to the world of insects, caterpillars, and butterflies teaches kids how to identify the tiny creatures they find and fun other facts. The book offers both safety tips and interesting educational activities, and color illustrations enhance the presentation.

Trees: A Visual Guide by Tony Rodd and Jennifer Stackhouse. Beautifully illustrated and designed, this gorgeous reference book explores the world of trees from every perspective—from the world's great forests to the lifespan of a single leaf. The volume illustrates how trees grow and function, looks at their astounding diversity and adaptations, documents the key role they play in ecosystems, and explores the multitude of uses to which we put trees—from timber and pharmaceuticals to shade and shelter.

Wangari's Trees of Peace by Jeanette Winter. As a young girl growing up in Kenya, Wangari was surrounded by trees. But years later when she returns home, she is shocked to see whole forests being cut down, and she knows that soon all the trees will be destroyed. So Wangari decides to do something—and she starts by planting nine seedlings in her own backyard. And as they grow, so do her plans. This true story of Wangari Maathai, environmentalist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is a shining example of how one woman's passion, vision, and determination inspired great change.

Whispers From the Woods by Sandra Kynes. A walk in the woods makes it easy to understand the awe and reverence that our ancestors had for trees. It speaks to something deep and primal within us—something we

don't hear as often as we should. By exploring a variety of mysteries and traditions of trees, *Whispers from the Woods* helps readers get reacquainted with the natural world and find their place in the earth's rhythm.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: RISE UP FOR TREES / TEAM UP FOR TREES

Rise Up for Trees is adapted from the activity How Many Are Standing? (p. 35 in *Everyone Wins!* by Josette and Sambhava Luvmour, New Society Publishers, 2007). Team Up for Trees is adapted from a [cooperative camp game](#).

Choose which game to use each time the group gathers. After the first workshop, invite participants of any age to help lead the activity.

Rise Up for Trees

The object is to always have four people rising at one time, no fewer and no more. To start, have everyone sit in a circle, then ask four people to Rise Up for Trees. "Rising" can mean standing up or, for those who must or prefer to remain seated, raising their arms; offer both options. Each person rising can remain up anywhere from one second to one minute—however long they estimate that to be. Ask participants to watch each other; as one person sits down (or lowers their arms), another should Rise Up for Trees so that there are always four people rising up for trees. Continue to have people Rise Up for Trees and sit down for about five minutes. This should take place in silence, although laughter sometimes emerges and is fun. Encourage everyone to get a chance to Rise Up for Trees at least a few times.

Team Up for Trees

The group sits in a circle. Tell participants that they will use their bodies together to create three trees: a Mighty Oak, a Weeping Willow, and a Bristlecone Pine. Each tree requires three people:

- To make a Mighty Oak, the middle person stands tall with their arms outstretched to the sky in a slight V shape. The people on the right and left put their backs to the middle person and stretch their arms out in a slight V shape—one arm parallel to the ground and one reaching toward the sky.
- To make a Weeping Willow, the person in the middle bends over with their arms curved to the ground. The people on the right and left put their backs to the middle person and bend over with their arms curved to the ground.
- To make a Bristlecone Pine, the person in the middle crosses and curves their arms overhead. The people on the right and left stand with their backs to the middle person, also crossing and curving their arms overhead.

Begin with one person in the center of the circle as the Pointer. The Pointer calls out one of the three tree names and points to someone in the circle. The person pointed to and the people on each side of that person must then create the tree (based on the instructions given earlier), while everyone else quietly counts down 5-4-3-2-1. If the team pointed to can make the tree within the count of 5, the Pointer chooses again. If they cannot make the tree within the count of 5, then the middle person becomes the Pointer.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: GUIDED IMAGERY — AMONG THE TREES

Moving as quietly as you can, sit or lie down in a comfortable position and close your eyes. (pause) Take a deep breath. (pause) Notice how your body feels. Notice how your mind feels. Take a couple of long, slow breaths, in and out, in and out, and begin to let go and relax your body and mind. (pause) Take another full breath, and as you breathe out, relax your legs and your arms. Breathe in, and as you breathe out, relax your abdomen and your chest. Breathe in again, and as you breathe out, relax your face and your head.

Now take a moment to imagine a sunny meadow. It is summertime, and the meadow is carpeted with grasses and wildflowers. In the middle of the meadow, you see a large, beautiful old tree. It can be any type of tree that you want. Take a good look at the tree. This tree is your special tree, and you can imagine it any way you want. Notice its overall shape and color. Notice its leaves and branches. Notice any flowers or berries it may have. Notice any nuts or pods just beginning to form.

Gaze at your tree with its many branches and begin to walk toward it. Feel the sun shining its gentle warmth on you as you walk toward the tree. Breathe in the fresh, clean air around you. As you get closer, notice that the air is even fresher and more pure.

When you reach the tree, walk slowly around it. Look up into its brown branches and notice all the green leaves waving in a gentle breeze. Put your hand out and feel the texture of the bark around the large, old trunk. When you have walked almost all the way around the tree, imagine a rope and slat ladder hanging from one of the lower branches of your tree. (pause)

Climb up the ladder and into the tree. Imagine that today, climbing into your tree is as easy as lowering yourself into a comfy chair. You have all the strength and agility you need to fully explore your tree. Wherever you want to go in your tree, a ladder appears so that you can easily explore that part of your tree.

As you climb, you may encounter creatures that live in or visit the tree. If you see a bird, a spider, or another creature, greet it with a nod and thank it for sharing its tree with you.

If you wish, climb to the very top of the tree. Take half a minute to continue to explore your tree. This is all the time you need.

(After 30 seconds) Now that you have explored your tree, find a comfortable place to rest. Maybe there is a spot near the main trunk where a branch comes out at the perfect angle to form a seat. Sit down here or any other comfy spot. Relax . . . and think about the wonderful time you have had exploring your tree. In a moment I will ask you to slowly sit up and open your eyes.

(Pause for about 10 seconds) Now, slowly sit up and gently open your eyes.

FIND OUT MORE

Two good UU environmental resources are the [UU Ministry for Earth](http://uuministryforearth.org/) (at uuministryforearth.org/) and the [Green Sanctuary Program](http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml).

The Rev. Daniel S. Brosier of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin, Illinois, offers a sermon titled Ordinary Miracles (May 4, 2003) in which he recounts an experience of saying "hello, trees" while engaged in deep study at a seminary.

WORKSHOP 2: TREES: PROVIDERS OF LIFE

INTRODUCTION

To be poor and be without trees is to be the most starved human being in the world. To be poor and have trees is to be completely rich in ways that money can never buy. — Clarissa Pinkola Estes, author of Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype

This workshop encourages participants to see trees as life-giving. The story "You're Saved by Something Green" describes the most fundamental benefit for humans—life! Participants use what they've learned from their Workshop 1 "homework" in Activity 4, Tree Jeopardy.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Increase knowledge of how trees directly affect our daily lives
- Build awareness of the many benefits of trees
- Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"
- Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the fundamental importance of trees through the story "You're Saved by Something Green"
- Reinforce their knowledge of the benefits of trees by playing "Tree Jeopardy"

- Build on their understanding of and respect for trees through multiple modes of learning, including movement, meditation, and song
- Experience multigenerational learning.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	
Opening	5
Activity 1: Rise Up for Trees, Team Up for Trees	10
Activity 2: Guided Imagery — Among the Trees	5
Activity 3: Story — You're Saved by Something Green	10
Activity 4: Tree Jeopardy	15
Activity 5: Song — Standing Like a Tree	10
Faith in Action: Planning the Project	
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, reflect on the quote for this workshop:

To be poor and be without trees is to be the most starved human being in the world. To be poor and have trees is to be completely rich in ways that money can never buy.

Consider how you are rich "in ways that money cannot buy."

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Cloth for altar or centering table
- Leaf name tags from the previous workshop, plus a few blank extras, and markers
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Place the cloth and chalice on the altar or centering table.
- Set the name tags in the basket with a marker nearby.

Description of Activity

As participants arrive, direct returning participants to retrieve their name tags from the basket. Invite newcomers to choose and write their first name on a name tag.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" from the previous workshop

Preparation for Activity

- Select an area where the group can comfortably sit in a circle.
- Post the chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" where all participants can see them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle around the chalice. Select someone to light the chalice. Say, in these words or your own:

Whenever we light a chalice, we are connected with Unitarian Universalists around the world who share this ritual of our faith. Our chalice lighting words are adapted from words by an anonymous writer which are sometimes attributed to Chief Seattle, a chief of the Duwamish tribe in the 19th century in the area we know today as the state of Washington. These words speak of our connection with nature and all life.

Invite the group to join you in saying the chalice lighting words you have posted:

We light this chalice for the air that is precious...

for all things share the same breath—
the beast, the tree, the person,
we all share the same breath.

Go around the circle and have everyone introduce themselves. Point out the covenant the group created in the last workshop and ask if anything needs to be added. Introduce the topic of today's workshop: Trees, Providers of Life. Say, in these words or your own:

Your homework from the last workshop was to investigate ways in which trees benefit humans. We'll see what you've discovered by playing a game of "Tree Jeopardy."

Including All Participants

If there are participants who are hard of hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone to help with volume. If participants are sitting on the floor, make sure that there are also chairs for those who do not wish to or cannot sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 1: RISE UP FOR TREES / TEAM UP FOR TREES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Choose the ice-breaker that you didn't do in the last workshop. Read the resource and practice giving clear instructions, so you will be comfortable presenting the ice-breaker.

Description of Activity

Give instructions and then lead the icebreaker.

Including All Participants

If a participant needs to remain seated, encourage them to do the poses from a seated position.

ACTIVITY 2: GUIDED IMAGERY — AMONG THE TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 2, [Guided Imagery — Among the Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Practice reading the guided imagery so that you will be comfortable leading it.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to make themselves comfortable and prepare to listen to a guided meditation. Read aloud the guided imagery in Leader Resource 2.

Encourage responses to the activity with questions such as these:

- How do you feel after our guided meditation?
- Did anything come up for you during the guided meditation that you want to share with the group?

Including All Participants

If any participants have hearing limitations, consider using a hand-held microphone.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — YOU'RE SAVED BY SOMETHING GREEN (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[You're Saved by Something Green](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story, so you will be comfortable leading it.
- Review the discussion questions in the activity, and add some of your own if desired.

Description of Activity

Invite the participants to make themselves comfortable and ready to listen to the story. Read or tell the story "You're Saved by Something Green."

Briefly discuss the story as a group. Prompt discussion by posing questions such as:

- How do you feel when you hear that a large tree supplies a day's worth of oxygen for four people?
- What do you think the link between trees and climate change is?
- What are a few things we can do to help reduce or slow carbon emissions that contribute to climate change?

Including All Participants

If some participants find it easier to listen if they have something to fidget with, provide some "fidget busters," such as small pieces of clay, pipe cleaners, or a length of string. If any participants have hearing limitations, consider using a hand-held microphone.

ACTIVITY 4: TREE JEOPARDY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Tree Jeopardy Answers and Questions](#) (included in this document)
- Poster board and markers
- Optional: A computer with PowerPoint software, and a digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Create the Tree Jeopardy game on poster board.
- Optional: Use PowerPoint to create a Tree Jeopardy game board. Set up a projection screen or use a blank wall. Set up and test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

This activity, based on the classic TV game show *Jeopardy*, is a fun and engaging way to introduce the benefits of trees. Introduce yourself or co-leader as the host of the game.

Explain that in this cooperative version of the game, teams take turns selecting and answering a question as a team. Remind them that their answer must be in the form of a question.

Divide the group into two or more teams of roughly the same number of people. Include people of all ages in each group. Start with the team with the youngest participants (or use your own method to determine which team goes first). Invite one person to select a category and point value (for example: "Now I Can Breathe for 100 points").

Read the answer connected to that spot on the Jeopardy board. Ask the team to provide the question to the answer you have just read. If the first team does not provide the correct question, invite the next team to try. If neither team provides the correct question, the host reads it aloud. Continue until all the items on the board have been selected.

If time allows, ask participants to share any other ways trees benefit humans that they learned from their "homework" assignment.

Including All Participants

Encourage the group to make room for contributions from people of all ages and ability levels.

ACTIVITY 5: SONG — STANDING LIKE A TREE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and makers
- Leader Resource 2, [Standing Like a Tree](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Watch a [YouTube video](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppieUj8NDog) of a kindergarten class singing "Standing Like a Tree" to familiarize yourself with the song.
- Write the lyrics and motions from Leader Resource 2 on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Invite a song leader from your congregation to teach the song to the group.

Description of Activity

Invite the group to stand in a circle. Say, in these words or your own:

There are lots of songs about trees. One well known song is "Standing Like a Tree," which I'm going to teach to you by call and response: I will sing one line and then you repeat the line.

Once participants are comfortable with the words, introduce the motions that accompany each line in the same way: First the leader says or sings a line, and then the participants respond.

Optional: Show the [YouTube video](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppieUj8NDog) of a kindergarten class singing this song.

Including All Participants

If some participants cannot stand, include chairs in the circle.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Download the Taking It Home section of this workshop to reflect the activities this group has done. Copy it as a handout for all participants. (You may wish to email participants as well or instead.)
- If needed, write the closing words on newsprint, and post them where they will be visible to all

participants. (Note: These words are from Reading 708 in *Singing the Living Tradition* and are adapted from Hebrew scripture, Isaiah 55.)

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a circle around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Explain that Taking It Home includes a summary of what they did in the workshop, resources for further exploration, and fun "homework." Explain that they have until Workshop 4 to complete the homework from this workshop, which is to locate (or imagine) their own special tree and bring a photograph or a picture of that tree to share with the group.

Invite participants to reflect for a moment on today's workshop. Ask each participant to share one word that describes how they feel. Go around the circle with this "one-word checkout."

Invite participants to join hands and say the closing words together:

Let us go out in joy, and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before us shall burst
into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their
hands.

Extinguish the chalice together. As they go, ask participants to leave their name tags in the basket you've provided for this purpose.

FAITH IN ACTION: PLANNING THE PROJECT

Materials for Activity

- Information about the project chosen in the first workshop
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Share the project selected in Workshop 1, Faith in Action with the director of religious education, and obtain their feedback.
- If the project will take place at the congregation, invite other appropriate individuals or groups (e.g., the Building and Grounds Committee) to participate in the planning.
- If you have not done so, make a plan for ongoing communication about the project, such as an email list or a phone tree. Plan to gather contact information at this meeting if you do not already have it.

Description of Activity

Briefly review the project chosen in the last workshop and explain that the next step is to plan exactly how the project will take place. Invite the group to consider:

- Who will take part? Do we need to invite anyone not present to take part?
- What supplies will we need?
- How much time do we anticipate the project will take?
- When is the best time to undertake our project?
- Who needs to be contacted in order for our project to move forward?
- What resources are needed? Which resources do we have available for the project, and what resources do each of us need to bring in?
- What are the steps in bringing the project to completion?

Record their responses on newsprint.

After the workshop, discuss the plan with the director of religious education and other congregational leaders or outside partners, as needed.

Including All Participants

Throughout the project, be sure to make room for contributions from people of all ages and ability levels.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leader after the workshop to reflect on the following:

- How was the mix of discussion and action?
- In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements?
- How well did the activities include everyone?
- Were the activities appropriate for the ages in the group?
- What might you do differently next time?

Look ahead to the next workshop and assign leadership responsibilities.

TAKING IT HOME

To be poor and be without trees is to be the most starved human being in the world. To be poor and have trees is to be completely rich in ways that money can never buy. — Clarissa Pinkola Estes, author of *Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype*

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we learned that trees truly are "providers of life"—we cannot survive without them! We are indeed "saved by something green." We played Tree Jeopardy and learned some of the many benefits of trees.

HOMEWORK: Before Workshop 4, locate or imagine your own "special tree." Bring in a photo or a picture you've drawn of your special tree to share with the group.

MAKE TIME FOR TREES: There are several ways to take today's workshop home, for example:

- Share your thoughts and feeling about today's workshop and the Circle of Trees program with family members, housemates, or co-workers.
- Try to spend time outside each day, paying special attention to the trees near where you live.
- Design another Tree Jeopardy game and play it with others.
- Create a nature journal to record your observations and feelings about trees as you deepen your connection over the course of this program.
- Think about ways that you can engage with people and trees with respect.

EXTEND THE TOPIC: Explore some of the many wonderful books about trees found in Workshop 1, Handout 2, Selected Bibliography.

STORY: YOU'RE SAVED BY SOMETHING GREEN

By Charlene Brotman, from *The Kids' Book of Awesome Stuff* (Brotman-Marshfield Curriculum, June 2004). Used with permission.

Take a deep breath. The air you just breathed *in* is different from the air you just breathed *out*. The air you breathed *out* is a gas that can suffocate you if too much of it gets in the air. That gas is carbon dioxide.

The oxygen you breathed *in* makes energy for you from the food you eat. But when your cells use the oxygen, they end up with something your body doesn't want: carbon dioxide. So your blood goes around to all your cells like a trash hauler, collecting the carbon dioxide and taking it to your lungs. You breathe it out.

All night, all day, every creature on earth breathes out carbon dioxide. Over and over. That's a lot of suffocating gas! A little carbon dioxide in the air is normal and safe. But if the air around you filled up completely with carbon dioxide (or even just halfway), you would suffocate.

So . . . with all the breathing *out* that goes on in the world, what keeps you from smothering under a thick cloud of carbon dioxide? What saves you?

You are saved by something *green*.

All over the planet, green plants on the land and in the ocean pull carbon dioxide gas out of the air by breathing it in themselves! The very same gas that can kill you is exactly what a green plant must have to live.

Plants don't breathe with lungs like yours, of course. Instead, they breathe in the carbon dioxide through millions of invisible holes on the underside of their leaves and on their stems. The tiny openings can close and open.

Every time a leaf breathes in carbon dioxide, it also breathes out an equal amount of pure oxygen. The leaf is getting rid of oxygen it doesn't want.

The same oxygen that leaves breathe out is exactly what you need to breathe in. You can't live without it. You breathe in what leaves breathe out. So do slugs. So do crows, crocodiles, and crickets . . .

Oxygen from plants travels on wind currents from far-away continents and oceans. It reaches you even when the trees around you have lost their leaves, or if you live in a place with no leaves at all. Right this minute, you may be breathing oxygen from a rain forest in Costa Rica, or a field of red poppies in Turkey.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: TREE JEOPARDY ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS

Category: Now I Can Breathe

100. Trees block these life-giving rays to cool the air beneath their branches. (What is sunlight?)
200. One large tree provides four people with a day's worth of this essential gas, critical for life on planet Earth. (What is oxygen?)
300. Trees absorb this harmful gas along with other potentially harmful gasses including sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide. (What is carbon dioxide?)
400. Trees trap and hold these airborne allergens that are harmful to us. (What are dust, smoke, and—ironically--pollen?
Note: Accept any of these answers.)
500. Trees cool the air, land, and water with shade and moisture, reducing this effect in urban areas. (What is the heat-island effect? *Note: An urban heat island is a metropolitan area that is significantly warmer than its surrounding rural areas due to human activities.*)

Category: Home Sweet Home

100. Trees can help lower these bills for a homeowner by providing shade in the summer. (What is electricity; what are utility or power bills?)
200. Trees provide a home for these nesting animals that bring joy and song to the local community. (What are birds?)
300. Trees provide a home for these nesting animals that bring joy to some and pain to many gardeners and homeowners. (What are squirrels? *Note: The group may name insects such as caterpillars; accept any reasonable answer.*)
400. Deciduous trees (the trees that lose their leaves in the fall or winter) block sunlight in the summer, but allow sunlight to reach and warm your home in the winter if you place them near this side of the house. (What is south; what is west?
Note: Accept either or both.)
500. When placed strategically around your home, these trees that keep their leaves in the winter can be used to reduce wind exposure and loss of heat from your house by as much as 50 percent. (What are evergreens?)

Category: Happy, Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise

100. When trees absorb falling rain, they can reduce the severity of this natural disaster. (What is flooding?)
200. A room with a view of trees has been documented to speed the recovery for people staying in this type of institution. (What is a hospital?)
300. Trees provide these edible items that taste delicious and are often beautiful and sweet smelling, too. (What are nuts, seeds, and fruit? *Note: Accept any reasonable answer.*)
400. Trees can help screen an ugly view or define space within an area, providing this special element to a yard or landscape. (What is privacy, solitude, or security? *Note: Also acceptable are peace, serenity, relaxation, or anything else that you deem reasonable.*)
500. Trees can lower blood pressure, slow heartbeat, and help people feel this pleasant sensation. (What is relaxation?)

Bonus Answer for "Final Jeopardy"

Streets with trees increase walking and jogging, thus increasing interaction among these people who live near each other in a community. (What are neighbors?)

LEADER RESOURCE 2: STANDING LIKE A TREE

By Betsy Rose. Used with permission.

Standing like a tree (stand straight and tall)

With my roots dug down (stomp each foot into ground with the words "dug" and "down")

My branches wide and open (extend arms overhead and stretched out)

Come down the rain (wiggle fingers as if they are raindrops)

Come down the sun (hold arms overhead and connected as in a big sun)

Come down the fruit to a heart that is open to be (bring hands down slowly and cross over heart)

Standing like a tree (look up and straighten up)

Repeat three times.

FIND OUT MORE

Explore more the benefits of trees at these websites:

- [Arbor Day Foundation](http://www.arborday.org/trees/benefits.cfm) (at www.arborday.org/trees/benefits.cfm)
- North Carolina State University's [Trees of Strength](http://www.treesofstrength.org/benefits.htm) (at www.treesofstrength.org/benefits.htm) program
- [Tree People](http://www.treepeople.org/top-22-benefits-trees) (at www.treepeople.org/top-22-benefits-trees)

Learn about the urban "heat island" effect at the [EPA website](http://www.epa.gov/heat island/index.htm) (at www.epa.gov/heat island/index.htm).

Good UU environmental resources are the [UU Ministry for Earth](http://uuministryforearth.org/) (at uuministryforearth.org/) and the [UUA Green Sanctuary Program](http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml).

WORKSHOP 3: TREES: CONNECTED TO ALL LIFE

INTRODUCTION

The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn. — Ralph Waldo Emerson

This workshop continues the exploration of the benefits of trees and what they contribute to life on our planet.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Further understanding of how trees impact all creatures and plants in the web of life
- Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"
- Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the concept of interdependence through the story "Trout Are Made of Trees"
- Reinforce their knowledge by playing the "Helping Tree Metaphors" game
- Build on their understanding of and respect for trees through multiple modes of learning, including movement, meditation, and song

- Experience multigenerational learning.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	
Opening	5
Activity 1: Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees	5
Activity 2: Guided Imagery — Among the Trees	5
Activity 3: Story — Trout Are Made of Trees	10
Activity 4: Helping Tree Metaphors	15
Activity 5: The Rainforest Song	15
Faith in Action: Engaging in the Project	
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider the following:

- What and where is your "special tree"?
- What makes it special?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Cloth for altar or centering table
- Leaf name tags from the previous workshop, plus a few blank extras, and markers
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Place the cloth and chalice on the altar or centering table.
- Set the name tags in the basket with a marker nearby.

Description of Activity

As participants arrive, direct returning participants to retrieve their name tags from the basket, and invite newcomers to choose and write their first name on a name tag.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" from the previous workshop

Preparation for Activity

- Select an area where the group can comfortably sit in a circle.
- Post the chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" where all participants can see them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle around the chalice. Select someone to light the chalice. Say, in these words or your own:

Whenever we light a chalice, we are connected with Unitarian Universalists around the world who share this ritual of our faith. Our chalice lighting words are adapted from words by an anonymous writer which are sometimes attributed to Chief Seattle, a chief of the Duwamish tribe in the 19th century in the area we know today as the state of Washington. These words speak of our connection with nature and all life.

Invite the group to join you in saying the chalice lighting words you have posted:

We light this chalice for the air that is precious...

for all things share the same breath—
the beast, the tree, the person,
we all share the same breath.

Go around the circle and have everyone introduce themselves. Point out the covenant the group created in the last workshop and ask if anything needs to be added. Point out the group covenant and ask if anything needs to be added. Introduce the topic of today's workshop—Trees: Connected to All Life—in these words or your own:

In the last workshop, we explored how trees benefit humans. Today we'll look at some ways that trees benefit other creatures and plants in the web of life.

Including All Participants

If there are participants with limited hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone to help with volume. If participants are sitting on the floor, make sure that there are also chairs for those who do not wish to or cannot sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 1: RISE UP FOR TREES / TEAM UP FOR TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Choose one version of the ice-breaker (Rise Up or Team Up) to use for this workshop.

Description of Activity

Once you've introduced both versions of this ice-breaker, you may choose to do the same one each time or alternate between the two; ask the group for their preference.

Including All Participants

If a participant needs to remain seated, encourage them to do the poses from a seated position.

ACTIVITY 2: GUIDED IMAGERY — AMONG THE TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 2, [Guided Imagery — Among the Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Practice reading the guided imagery so that you will be comfortable leading it.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to make themselves comfortable and prepare to listen to a guided meditation. Read aloud the guided meditation.

Encourage responses to the meditation with questions such as these:

- How do you feel after our guided meditation?
- Did anything come up for you during the guided meditation that you want to share with the group?

Including All Participants

If any participants have limited hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — TROUT ARE MADE OF TREES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Trout Are Made of Trees](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story a few times so you will be comfortable delivering it.
- Review the discussion questions in the activity, and add some of your own if desired.

Description of Activity

Invite the participants to make themselves comfortable and ready to listen to the story. Read "Trout Are Made of Trees" aloud.

Engage participants in discussing the story by posing questions such as these:

- How did the story make you feel at the end?
- Were you surprised at the ways that trees "feed" trout?
- Do you know of any other ways that trees help insects or wildlife not mentioned in the story?
- What are some ways that trees help or benefit other plants?

Variation

If time allows, read it through a second time, inviting participants to join in by creating sound effects.

Including All Participants

If any participants have hearing limitations, consider using a hand-held microphone.

ACTIVITY 4: HELPING TREE METAPHORS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Helping Tree Metaphors](#) (included in this document)
- Selection of objects (or pictures of objects) listed on Leader Resource 1, four or five of each
- Four or five small bags or baskets

Preparation for Activity

- Plan how you will form four or five small groups. Each small group should have no fewer than three and no more than six people. (If your whole group is too small to do this, plan to work together in one, large group, and prepare materials accordingly.)
- Prepare a bag or basket containing four or five objects for each small group. (Every group should consider the same objects.)
- Obtain an object—not one of the objects in the bags or baskets—that you can use to demonstrate how an object can be a metaphor for a benefit of trees.

Description of Activity

Help participants form small groups according to your plan, letting them know that each group should have three to six people.

Ask if anyone knows what a metaphor is. Allow participants to share some definitions. Say, in these words or your own:

A metaphor is an object or that is used to represent another object or idea that may have similar qualities.

Tell them they will look at physical objects that are metaphors for the benefits that trees provide to the world. They will choose their particular metaphors in their small groups and then share them with the larger group.

Show the object you chose. Say, in these words or your own:

Think of all the wonderful benefits that trees and forests bring to the planet, to humans, and to wildlife. Take a look at this object and think about what it might represent in terms of something that trees provide to humans, wildlife, or the planet.

Take ideas from the group. Then tell them your intended metaphor for the object. Be sure to let them know that other ideas for connections can be just as valid as the metaphor you intended.

Give each group a bag or basket of objects and tell them that they have about 10 minutes to discuss the objects inside. Ask them to consider one object at a time and be sure to make space for everyone's ideas.

Bring the whole group back together. Ask a representative of each small group to briefly describe the metaphor they came up with for one of the objects, with each group presenting a different object. Be ready to ask groups about their discussions if a representative says the group did not think of a metaphor.

If time allows, encourage participants to think of benefits of trees that are not represented by any of the metaphor objects.

ACTIVITY 5: THE RAINFOREST SONG (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [The Rainforest Song](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: The *Earth and Spirit Songbook* and/or the CD *Sailing with the Moon* from the [Jim Scott website](http://www.jimscottmusic.com) (at www.jimscottmusic.com)
- Optional: A computer with Internet access
- Optional: Rhythm instruments, such as maracas, wood blocks, egg shakers, and tambourines

Preparation for Activity

- View the [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVJCbLDVrGY) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVJCbLDVrGY) of Jim Scott singing this song on YouTube.
- Prepare to teach the song or invite a song leader from your congregation to do so.

Description of Activity

Ask if anyone already knows "The Rainforest Song" by Jim Scott. Say that he is a UU songwriter and musician. Invite those who know the song to help teach the chorus and parts. Tell them that the various parts of this song make it easy for singers of all ages and musical abilities to participate.

Optional: Play the CD or show the YouTube video of Jim Scott singing the song.

Teach the song to the group.

Including All Participants

If any participants do not wish to sing, you might invite them to participate by using a rhythm instrument.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Download the Taking It Home section of this workshop to reflect the activities this group has done. Copy it as a handout for all participants. (You may wish to email participants as well or instead.)
- If needed, write the closing words on newsprint, and post them where they will be visible to all participants. (Note: These words are from Reading 708 in *Singing the Living Tradition* and are adapted from Hebrew scripture, Isaiah 55.)

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a circle around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Explain that Taking It Home includes a summary of what they did in the workshop, resources for further exploration, and fun "homework." Remind participants to bring a photograph or picture of their "special tree" to the next workshop.

Invite participants to reflect for a moment on today's workshop. Ask each participant to share one word that describes how they feel. Go around the circle with this "one-word checkout."

Invite participants to join hands and say the closing words together:

Let us go out in joy, and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before us shall burst
into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their
hands.

Extinguish the chalice together. As they go, ask participants to leave their name tags in the basket you've provided for this purpose.

FAITH IN ACTION: ENGAGING IN THE PROJECT

Materials for Activity

- Project plan developed in the previous workshop

Preparation for Activity

- Make preparations as detailed in the project plan.

Description of Activity

By this workshop, the group will have identified a project and planned the elements needed to complete the project. In this activity, the group implements their project.

Including All Participants

Throughout the project, be sure to make room for contributions from people of all ages and ability levels.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leader after the workshop to reflect on the following:

- How was the mix of discussion and action?
- In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements?
- How well did the activities include everyone?
- Were the activities appropriate for the ages of your participants?
- What should you do differently at the next workshop?
- Are participants growing in their connection to the natural world and their awareness of the need to protect the earth's trees?

Look ahead to the next workshop and assign leadership responsibilities.

TAKING IT HOME

The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn. — Ralph Waldo Emerson

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we continued to explore the many benefits of trees for other creatures and plants in the web of life with a "Helping Tree Metaphors"

activity, and we learned the popular "Rainforest Song" by Unitarian Universalist musician Jim Scott.

HOMEWORK: Before the next workshop, locate or imagine your own "special tree," and bring in a photo or a picture you've drawn of this tree. Feel free to bring extra photos to share.

MAKE TIME FOR TREES: There are several ways to take today's workshop home, for example:

- Share your thoughts and feeling about today's workshop and the Circle of Trees program with family members, housemates, or co-workers.
- Try to spend time outside each day, paying special attention to the trees near where you live.
- Find more "metaphors" for the benefits of trees and do the activity with friends or family members; you might even try it as a charades game.
- Find out more about UU musician and songwriter [Jim Scott](http://jimscottmusic.com/) (at jimscottmusic.com/) and his commitment to the environment, peace, and justice.
- Think about ways that you can engage with people and trees with respect.

EXTEND THE TOPIC: Explore some of the many wonderful books about trees found in Workshop 1, Handout 2, Selected Bibliography.

STORY: TROUT ARE MADE OF TREES

Trout Are Made of Trees by April Pulley Sayre, text copyright 2008.

Used with permission by [Charlesbridge Publishing, Inc.](#)

Read the story dramatically and have fun with the sound effects!

Trout are made of trees.

In fall, trees let go of leaves, which swirl and twirl and slip into streams.

They ride in a rush above rocks and over rapids.

They snag and settle soggily down.

Bacteria feed on the leaves.

Algae grow, softening surfaces.

Next the shredders move in:

Crane flies, caddisflies,

Shrimp, and stoneflies shred leaves.

Rip and snip!

They eat the algae-covered leaves,

which become part of them.

Meanwhile predators are swimming and stalking . . .

Crunch—there go the caddisflies!

Munch—there go the stoneflies!

Now the leaves have become part of the predators.

Trout join in. **Swim and snap!**

Fins flick. **Rush. Zap!**

They eat dragonflies, caddisflies, stoneflies, and minnows.

The leaves have now become part of the trout.

Tree shade keeps the stream cool for spawning. Female trout gather over gravel and lay eggs.

The males fertilize the eggs.

Here come the hatchlings!

They grow up in a stream

—**Crack! Kersplash!**—

shaped by fallen branches.

Trout are made of trees.

So are the bears

and the people

who catch the trout and eat them.

HANDOUT 1: THE RAINFOREST SONG

"The Rainforest Song" by Jim Scott from the [Earth and Spirit Songbook](#) and the CD [Sailing with the Moon](#). Used with permission.

Oh let the rain feed the thirsty ground

Sing me the song of life you sing

Such a beautiful sound.

(repeat)

Additional Parts

Rain come down, rain come down

The understory, the understory

On the ground level, the ground level

Canopy, canopy

Emergent! Emergent!

LEADER RESOURCE 1: HELPING TREE METAPHORS

Objects That Symbolize Benefits to Human, Wildlife, and the Planet

Small cereal box (or other food container): Trees provide food for wildlife and humans

Fan: Trees cool the air

Umbrella: Trees provide shade from the sun

Coffee filter: Tree roots filter out pollutants from rain and runoff

Aspirin: Tree roots, bark, and berries provide medicine (for example, the bark of the willow tree was the origin of aspirin)

Painting: Trees offer many humans four-season beauty

Jungle gym: Trees offer all kinds of opportunities for play and exercise

House: Trees shelter birds, insects, mammals and other organisms

There are many other examples, of course—be creative and add your own examples to this list!

Background: Benefits of Trees

Among the many benefits that trees provide are clean air, clean water, shade and cooling (to other plants, wildlife, and humans), soil stabilization and flood protection (roots hold soil, which holds water), shelter to animals (including humans), food to wildlife and humans (nuts, seed, fruits, berries), medicine, raw materials (wood, paper), health, beauty, play, joy.

FIND OUT MORE

The Trout Life Cycle

From *Trout Are Made of Trees* by April Pulley Sayre, text copyright 2008:

Trout are one part of a vast food web centered in streams and rivers. Trout require cool, clean water to survive. Trees shade streams, helping to keep the water cool. As stream water winds its way past fallen branches and rocks, it speeds up in some places and slows down in others. Fast-flowing water scours away dirt, leaving gravel. This creates the perfect nesting place for trout.

Fanning her tail and fins, a female trout sweeps away the top layer of gravel to create a pit—her nest. She lays several thousand eggs in the nest. A male trout swims over the nest and fertilizes the eggs. The male and female cover the eggs with gravel, then leave.

In about a month, the eggs hatch. Each young trout, called an alevin, has a yolk sac attached to its body. This sac provides nutrients. Once the sac is used up and absorbed into its body, the alevin swims out of the gravel. At this stage young trout are called fry.

Fry hide in quiet pools, among tree roots and branches that have fallen into the water. They eat aquatic insects—insects that live in the water—as well as tiny crustaceans and plankton. Many of these creatures feed on leaves that fall into the stream. As the trout grow they also feed on larger animals, such as snails, small fish, tadpoles, and adult frogs. When trout mature, they spawn, or mate, and produce a new generation of trout. These trout, like their parents, feed on the insects who feed on the leaves that fall from the trees near the stream.

Learn More About Stream Ecology

From *Trout Are Made of Trees*:

[American Rivers](http://www.americanrivers.org) (at www.americanrivers.org): Learn about endangered rivers, endangered species, and how you can help conserve these natural resources.

[Chesapeake Bay Foundation](http://www.cbf.org) (at www.cbf.org) (CBF): Discover how to protect and preserve the Chesapeake Bay through CBF's environmental education program.

Peter B. Moyle, *Fish: An Enthusiast's Guide* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993): This engaging and humorous book provides a succinct summary of fish biology and conservation for students and fish enthusiasts.

[Project Wet! Worldwide Water Education](http://www.projectwet.org) (at www.projectwet.org): Learn about rivers, streams, fish, and wetlands, with lessons and activities to do with a group.

[River Network](http://www.rivernetwork.org) (at www.rivernetwork.org): Find out how to make a difference in the quality of our rivers and the water we drink, with easy actions you can take at home.

[Trout Unlimited](http://www.tu.org) (at www.tu.org): Help protect trout habitats by supporting this grassroots advocacy group.

UU environmental resources are the [UU Ministry for Earth](http://uuministryforearth.org/) (at uuministryforearth.org/) and the [UUA Green Sanctuary Program](http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml).

WORKSHOP 4: TREES: SANCTUARY FOR THE SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

Us sing and dance, make faces and give flower bouquets, trying to be loved. You ever notice that trees do everything to git attention we do, except walk? — Alice Walker, author, from The Color Purple

After several workshops spent learning about trees—how they are structured, what they contribute to life on our planet—this workshop moves into a more expressive and spiritual appreciation for these providers of life.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Encourage personal expressions of gratitude for trees
- Explore the poetic and artistic inspiration that trees and nature provide
- Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"
- Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Express a deeper connection to trees by sharing personal feelings of gratitude and inspiration
- Create a poem or drawing expressing gratitude to trees

- Build on their understanding of and respect for trees through multiple modes of learning, including movement, meditation, and song
- Experience multigenerational learning.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	
Opening	5
Activity 1: Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees	5
Activity 2: Guided Imagery — Among the Trees	5
Activity 3: Story — Tree Poems	5
Activity 4: Sharing Our Special Trees	15
Activity 5: Thank You to Trees	20
Faith in Action: Reflecting on the Project	60
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Song — The Simple Praise of Trees	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider the poem "Let the Trees Be Consulted" in Activity 3, Story — Tree Poems. Ask yourself:

- Are there other ways that trees should be consulted?
- What are your favorite poems about trees?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Cloth for altar or centering table
- Leaf name tags from the previous workshop, plus a few blank extras, and markers
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Place the cloth and chalice on the altar or centering table.
- Set the name tags in the basket with a marker nearby.

Description of Activity

As participants arrive, direct returning participants to retrieve their name tags from the basket, and invite newcomers to choose and write their first name on a name tag.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" from the previous workshop

Preparation for Activity

- Select an area where the group can comfortably sit in a circle.
- Post the chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" where all participants can see them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle around the chalice. Select someone to light the chalice. Say, in these words or your own:

Whenever we light a chalice, we are connected with Unitarian Universalists around the world who share this ritual of our faith. Our chalice lighting words are adapted from words by an anonymous writer which are sometimes attributed to Chief Seattle, a chief of the Duwamish tribe in the 19th century in the area we know today as the state of Washington. These words speak of our connection with nature and all life.

Invite the group to join you in saying the chalice lighting words you have posted:

We light this chalice for the air that is precious...

for all things share the same breath—
the beast, the tree, the person,
we all share the same breath.

Go around the circle and have everyone introduce themselves. Point out the covenant the group created in the last workshop and ask if anything needs to be added. Point out the group covenant and ask if anything needs to be added. Introduce the topic of today's workshop—Trees: Sanctuary for the Spirit—by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we'll explore the beauty and inspiration trees that provide as we share our special trees with one another and express our gratitude to trees, the providers of life.

Including All Participants

If there are participants with limited hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone to help with volume. If participants are sitting on the floor, make sure that there are also chairs for those who do not wish to or cannot sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 1: RISE UP FOR TREES / TEAM UP FOR TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Choose one version of the ice-breaker (Rise Up or Team Up) to use for this workshop.

Description of Activity

Once you've introduced both versions of this ice-breaker, you may do the same one each time or alternate between the two; ask the group for their preference.

Including All Participants

If a participant needs to remain seated, encourage them to do the poses from a seated position.

ACTIVITY 2: GUIDED IMAGERY — AMONG THE TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 2, [Guided Imagery — Among the Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Practice reading the guided imagery so that you will be comfortable leading it.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to make themselves comfortable and prepare to listen to a guided meditation. Read aloud from Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1.

Encourage responses to the meditation with questions such as these:

- How do you feel after our guided meditation?
- Did anything come up for you during the guided meditation that you want to share with the group?

Including All Participants

If any participants have limited hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — TREE POEMS (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poems about trees

Preparation for Activity

- Select some poems about trees such as "Open House" by Aileen Fisher and "Let the Trees Be Consulted" by John Wright found at the [Trees of Strength](http://www.ncsu.edu/project/treesofstrength/poems.htm) (at www.ncsu.edu/project/treesofstrength/poems.htm) website
- Read the selected poems a few times so you will be comfortable presenting them.
- If participants will read aloud, give them their assignments and copies of the poems ahead of time.

Description of Activity

Invite the participants to make themselves comfortable and ready to listen to two poems about trees. If desired, invite participants to read, or, read the poems aloud yourself.

ACTIVITY 4: SHARING OUR SPECIAL TREES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pictures or photos of trees

Preparation for Activity

- Gather pictures or photos of trees and place them on a table.

Description of Activity

Participants share their "special tree" with the group.

Say, in these words or your own:

Two things that trees provide to humans are beauty and inspiration. Many of you brought photos or pictures of your special tree from home. For those of you who didn't have time, take a few moments to choose one from the pictures on the table.

Tell participants that they will have 60 seconds to speak, and invite them to show their picture and share why the tree is special to them. You or your co-leader can model the process for the group.

Including All Participants

If a participant isn't comfortable sharing, allow that person to pass.

ACTIVITY 5: THANK YOU TO TREES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Art materials, such as watercolors, color pencils, markers, and drawing paper
- Handout 1, [Poetry Prompts](#) (included in this document)
- Pens, pencils, and writing paper
- Recordings of quiet, meditative music or forest sounds, and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Set up one table with art supplies and a second with poetry-writing supplies.
- Prepare the music player with a selection of music.
- Optional: Invite a guest artist or poet to help with the workshop.

Description of Activity

Participants will create an artistic or poetic expression of gratitude to trees. Introduce the activity with these words or your own:

As an expression of our gratitude to trees, we'll each create a "thank you to trees." This can be a drawing or painting, or perhaps you'd like to write a poem—or you can do both! You can work on your own or collaborate with others. Enjoy the quiet music as you work. After about 15 minutes, we'll re-gather and share what we've done with the group.

Give the group time to work. Re-gather the group with enough time to share.

Including All Participants

If a participant isn't comfortable sharing, allow that person to pass.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Download the Taking It Home section of this workshop to reflect the activities this group has done. Copy it as a handout for all participants. (You may wish to email participants as well or instead.)
- If needed, write the closing words on newsprint, and post them where they will be visible to all participants. (Note: These words are from Reading 708 in *Singing the Living Tradition* and are adapted from Hebrew scripture, Isaiah 55.)

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a circle around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Explain that Taking It Home includes a summary of what they did in the workshop, resources for further exploration, and fun "homework." Tell participants that their homework is to think about ways they can support and protect trees and the web of life before Workshop 5, when we'll explore the question "What can one person do?"

Invite participants to reflect for a moment on today's workshop. Ask each participant to share one word that describes how they feel. Go around the circle with this "one-word checkout."

Invite participants to join hands and say the closing words together:

Let us go out in joy, and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before us shall burst
into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their
hands.

Extinguish the chalice together. As they go, ask participants to leave their name tags in the basket you've provided for this purpose.

FAITH IN ACTION: REFLECTING ON THE PROJECT (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Invite anyone who helped with planning or implementing the project to participate in this reflection.

- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

An important but often neglected part of any social justice activity is the opportunity to reflect on what participants learned from the experience. Pose the following questions and record responses on newsprint:

- What do you think worked best about this project?
- What was frustrating?
- Who was the most memorable person you met?
- Did your view of the world change in any way?
- Did you feel that your gifts were welcome? Were you able to welcome the gifts of others in your group? The gifts of people you met?
- What will you remember about this experience?
- How do you think your actions changed the world (even if in small ways)?

You, your co-leader, or perhaps a parent volunteer should summarize the feedback and share it with the director of religious education. This feedback can help other groups plan future Faith in Action projects. You may wish to share this information with the Social Action Committee or other volunteers in the congregation as well.

Invite participants to help write a newsletter article about the experience. Be sure to get appropriate permissions to share information and any pictures from the project on the congregation's website. You might also create a scrapbook of photos from any Faith in Action projects your group completes.

Including All Participants

Be sure that participants of all ages and ability levels feel welcome to share their feedback.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leader after the workshop to reflect on the following:

- How was the mix of discussion and action?
- In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements?
- How well did the activities include everyone?
- Were the activities appropriate for the ages of your participants?
- What should you do differently at the next workshop?

- Are participants growing in their connection to the natural world and their awareness of the need to protect the earth's trees?

Look ahead to the next workshop and assign leadership responsibilities.

TAKING IT HOME

Us sing and dance, make faces and give flower bouquets, trying to be loved. You ever notice that trees do everything to git attention we do, except walk? — Alice Walker, author, from *The Color Purple*

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP . . . we shared our "special trees" with each other and expressed our gratitude to trees through art and poetry.

HOMEWORK: Think about ways that you can support and protect trees and the web of life before Workshop 5, when we'll explore the question "What can one person do?"

MAKE TIME FOR TREES: There are several ways to take today's workshop home, for example:

- Share your thoughts and feeling about today's workshop and the Circle of Trees program with family members, housemates, or co-workers.
- Try to spend time outside each day, paying special attention to the trees near where you live.
- Share your artwork or poetry with friends or family. Ask them to share their "special tree" with you.
- Create a nature journal to record your observations about and gratitude to trees.
- Think about ways that you can engage with people and trees with respect.

EXTEND THE TOPIC: Explore some of the many wonderful books about trees found in Workshop 1, Handout 2, Selected Bibliography.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SONG — THE SIMPLE PRAISE OF TREES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Listen to the recording on the [Songs for the Great Turning](http://songsforthegreatturning.net/songs-of-gratitude/i-raise-my-arms/) (at songsforthegreatturning.net/songs-of-gratitude/i-raise-my-arms/) website, and plan to play it for the group.
- Learn the song so that you can teach it to the group, or invite a guest song leader to teach the song.
- Write the lyrics on newsprint and post where all participants can see.

Description of Activity

Participants learn the song "The Simple Praise of Trees" by Gretchen Sleicher and David Densmore.

Say, in these words or your own:

Singing together is another way we feel a connection with each other. This song, "The Simple Praise of Trees," is a way to express our gratitude to trees.

If you have a computer with Internet access, play the recording on the [Songs for the Great Turning](http://songsforthegreatturning.net/songs-of-gratitude/i-raise-my-arms/) (at songsforthegreatturning.net/songs-of-gratitude/i-raise-my-arms/) website.

Teach the melody by singing one phrase at a time and having participants sing the phrase back to you, then put the phrases together. If there are enough voices, add in the additional harmony parts. The lyrics are as follows:

Part 1—Alto Melody

I raise my arms in the forest and join the simple praise of trees

Part 2—Tenor harmony

I raise my arms and join the praise of trees

Part 3—Soprano harmony

In the forest, the forest, I raise my arms in praise of trees

Part 4—Bass harmony

I raise my arms and join the praise of trees

HANDOUT 1: POETRY PROMPTS

Adapted from Kenn Nesbitt's [Poetry for Kids](#) website.

Five Senses Poem

Think of an experience, such as crunching through the autumn leaves. Start each line of a five senses poem with one of the senses (but feel free to leave out a sense if it doesn't fit!).

- I see . . .
- I feel . . .
- I taste . . .
- I hear . . .
- I smell . . .

Cinquain

Cinquains are five lines long. They have two syllables in the first line, four in the second, six in the third, eight in the fourth, and just two again in the last line. Cinquains do not need to rhyme, but you can include rhymes if you want to.

Haiku

A haiku is an unrhymed three-line poem based on a traditional Japanese poetic form. Haiku are usually about nature or the seasons. The traditional pattern for haiku in English is to write the first and last lines with five syllables each, and the middle line with seven syllables.

Tanka

A tanka poem is similar to haiku but has five lines, with five to seven syllables per line, and uses similes and metaphors. Like haiku, the subject is often nature or the seasons. Here's an example of a tanka poem:

Beautiful mountains [five syllables]
Rivers with cold, cold water. [seven syllables]
White cold snow on rocks [five syllables]
Trees over the place with frost [seven syllables]
White sparkly snow everywhere. [seven syllables]

FIND OUT MORE

Explore North Carolina State University's [Trees of Strength](http://www.treesofstrength.org/benefits.htm) (at www.treesofstrength.org/benefits.htm) website.

UU environmental resources are the [UU Ministry for Earth](http://uuministryforearth.org/) (at uuministryforearth.org/) and the [UUA Green Sanctuary Program](http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml).

WORKSHOP 5: TREES: FROM PERIL TO PROGRESS

INTRODUCTION

*I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Perhaps, unless the billboards fall,
I'll never see a tree at all. — Ogden Nash,
American poet, "Song of the Open Road" (1933)*

This workshop briefly addresses the peril of global climate change with a focus on the progress that can be made when each of us takes action. Participants view a visual essay by Canadian activist Franke James and create one of their own.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Show how one person's actions to combat climate change can make a difference
- Encourage participants to take personal actions and work with others to address climate change
- Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"
- Affirm stewardship of the earth as an explicit act of faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Be inspired to take action following the example in the visual essay
- Explore personal and collective actions they can take to address climate change

- Build on their understanding of and respect for trees through multiple modes of learning, including a visual essay, movement, meditation, and song
- Experience multigenerational learning.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	
Opening	5
Activity 1: Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees	5
Activity 2: Guided Imagery — Among the Trees	5
Activity 3: Story — Visual Essay	15
Activity 4: What Can One Person Do?	25
Faith in Action: Choosing a Project	60
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Song — What Can We Do	10
Alternate Activity 2: Hummingbird Video	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, ask yourself:

- What can I do to support and protect trees?
- What role do I play in combating climate change?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Cloth for altar or centering table
- Leaf name tags from the previous workshop, plus a few blank extras, and markers
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Place the cloth and chalice on the altar or centering table.
- Set the name tags in the basket with a marker nearby.

Description of Activity

As participants arrive, direct returning participants to retrieve their name tags from the basket, and invite newcomers to choose and write their first name on a name tag.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" from the previous workshop

Preparation for Activity

- Select an area where the group can comfortably sit in a circle.
- Post the chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" where all participants can see them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle around the chalice. Select someone to light the chalice. Say, in these words or your own:

Whenever we light a chalice, we are connected with Unitarian Universalists around the world who share this ritual of our faith. Our chalice lighting words are adapted from words by an anonymous writer which are sometimes attributed to Chief Seattle, a chief of the Duwamish tribe in the 19th century in the area we know today as the state of Washington. These words speak of our connection with nature and all life.

Invite the group to join you in saying the chalice lighting words you have posted:

We light this chalice for the air that is precious...

for all things share the same breath—
the beast, the tree, the person,
we all share the same breath.

Go around the circle and have everyone introduce themselves. Point out the covenant the group created in the last workshop and ask if anything needs to be added. Point out the group covenant and ask if anything needs to be added. Introduce the topic of today's workshop—Trees: From Peril to Progress—with these words or your own:

So far in Circle of Trees, we've talked about the many benefits of trees and we've expressed our gratitude. Now it is time to think about taking action to support and protect trees. Despite the "gloom and doom" message we see and hear in the news, there are things that each of us can do—and if every person who cares about trees does them, they add up!

Including All Participants

If there are participants with limited hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone to help with volume. If participants are sitting on the floor, make sure that there are also chairs for those who do not wish to or cannot sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 1: RISE UP FOR TREES / TEAM UP FOR TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Choose one version of the ice-breaker (Rise Up or Team Up) to use for this workshop.

Description of Activity

Once you've introduced both versions of this ice-breaker, you may do the same one each time or alternate between the two; ask the group for their preference.

Including All Participants

If a participant needs to remain seated, encourage them to do the poses from a seated position.

ACTIVITY 2: GUIDED IMAGERY — AMONG THE TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 2, [Guided Imagery — Among the Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Practice reading the guided imagery so that you will be comfortable leading it.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to make themselves comfortable and prepare to listen to a guided meditation. Read aloud from Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1.

Encourage responses to the meditation with questions such as these:

- How do you feel after our guided meditation?
- Did anything come up for you during the guided meditation that you want to share with the group?

Including All Participants

If any participants have limited hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — VISUAL ESSAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Visual Essay](#)" (included in this document)
- A computer and a digital projector
- Optional: [Printed copy](#) (at www.yesmagazine.org/planet/franke-james) of the visual essay
- Optional: 15-foot length of rope
- Optional: Clips, clothespins, or tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read the [visual essay](#) (at www.yesmagazine.org/planet/franke-james), so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Decide whether to hold the workshop indoors or outdoors, which affects how you will show the visual essay. Indoors: The visual essay can be projected from a laptop onto a wall. If this is not possible, then a printed copy of the essay (preferably in color) can be posted on a wall (approximately 30 feet), at an eye level that is comfortable for all participants. Outdoors: String a rope between two trees and clip or tape each printed page to the rope so that participants can walk in a line around the essay. Post the first 19 pages on one side and the next 19 pages on the back of the first pages.
- Set up and, if applicable, practice the display of the visual essay, using the method you have chosen.

- If your group includes children younger than age 9, consider doing Alternate Activity 2, Hummingbird Video in place of this one.

Description of Activity

The story for this workshop is a visual essay by Canadian artist and environmental activist Franke (pronounced Frankie) James. Introduce the story with these words or your own:

Today, instead of hearing a story, we're going to "see" one—a visual essay by Canadian Franke James. In her work, she merges science, art, and storytelling to inspire people to take action for the planet. She is an author, artist, and game designer focused on the environment, ethics, and social justice. Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, says, "Franke James is among the tiny handful of really powerful and profound artists who have taken on climate change—the most important topic on the planet, but one so big and all-encompassing that it often defies artistic interpretation. Her work is incredibly important for many of us around the world."

Explain how the essay is to be viewed. Remind the group how much time they have to view the entire essay.

If time allows, invite participants to share their reactions to the visual essay.

Including All Participants

Display the visual essay so that the viewing experience is physically accessible to all, including anyone with mobility limitations. Partner a visually impaired person with someone who can guide them through the visual essay and describe its components aloud. Project or hang the visual essay at a level accessible to all participants; it is far easier for taller people to gaze down than it is for shorter people to look up.

ACTIVITY 4: WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Unlined paper and markers, pens, or pencils
- Optional: Computer with Internet access
- Optional: Handout 1, [Climate Change Action Plan](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint.
- Set paper and markers on work tables.

- On another work table, set out pens or pencils, paper, and (optional) a computer with Internet access.

Description of Activity

Help participants form three or four small groups, each including a mix of ages.

Introduce a brainstorming activity in these words or your own:

Think about everything we've learned about trees, the healing they can bring to our planet, and what we just viewed in the visual essay. Each group will do a short brainstorm of things that "one person can do" to protect trees and address climate change in three or four different areas: at home, in our congregation, at work or school, and in our town or city. After about five to seven minutes, we'll reconvene and share our ideas.

Assign a work area to each group. Give each group a marker and a sheet of newsprint and ask them to record the ideas they brainstorm on the newsprint. If you wish, distribute Handout 1. Have groups conduct their brainstorms.

Give the groups a one-minute warning.

Invite each group to share the ideas they came up with. Post each group's newsprint where everyone can see it.

Say, in these words or your own:

With the time we have left, we will start working on some advocacy plans to share our ideas. For example, you can work with partners to create a visual essay, or to start a letter-writing campaign. How about starting a petition to encourage others to join in our efforts to protect trees and address climate change?

Indicate the tables and materials available and guide participants to choose a project and people to work with; as always, encourage multigenerational groups to work together.

Once participants have completed visual essays (which may need to continue outside of the workshop time allotted), they may wish to display and share them. Ask for volunteers to work on a plan; for example, the essays could be posted somewhere in the congregation, shared in the newsletter, or turned into a PowerPoint slideshow to project at a congregational event or to share on the website.

Including All Participants

Encourage each group to make room for contributions from people of all ages and ability levels.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Download the Taking It Home section of this workshop to reflect the activities this group has done. Copy it as a handout for all participants. (You may wish to email participants as well or instead.)
- If needed, write the closing words on newsprint, and post them where they will be visible to all participants. (Note: These words are from Reading 708 in *Singing the Living Tradition* and are adapted from Hebrew scripture, Isaiah 55.)

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a circle around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Explain that Taking It Home includes a summary of what they did in the workshop, resources for further exploration, and fun "homework." Tell participants that their homework is to begin implementing the climate change action plan right away and to keep a journal of things they have done.

Invite participants to reflect for a moment on today's workshop. Ask each participant to share one word that describes how they feel. Go around the circle with this "one-word checkout."

Invite participants to join hands and say the closing words together:

Let us go out in joy, and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before us shall burst
into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their
hands.

Extinguish the chalice together. As they go, ask participants to leave their name tags in the basket you've provided for this purpose.

FAITH IN ACTION: CHOOSING A PROJECT (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Colored dot stickers or other stickers
- Workshop 1, Handout 1, [Tree-Related Project Ideas](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Research local tree groups, for example:
 - [Trees Atlanta](#), dedicated to protecting Atlanta's urban forest through planting, conservation, and education
 - [Adopt a Tree - Greeovate Boston](#)
 - [Friends of Trees in the Pacific Northwest](#)
 - [Alliance for Community Trees](#), a vital and growing national movement to improve the environment and our communities, one tree at a time
- Post sheets of blank newsprint.
- Optional: Locate someone in the congregation who is knowledgeable about trees. Invite that person to share information about possible projects. If your congregation participates in the UUA's Green Sanctuary Program, invite members of the committee or team to help.

Description of Activity

Repeat the steps detailed in Workshop 1 to choose another project. If desired, use the project that got the second-most votes in Workshop 1.

Including All Participants

Throughout the project, be sure to make room for contributions from people of all ages and ability levels.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leader after the workshop to reflect on the following:

- How was the mix of discussion and action?
- In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements?
- How well did the activities include everyone?
- Were the activities appropriate for the ages of your participants?
- What should you do differently at the next workshop?
- Are participants growing in their connection to the natural world and their awareness of the need to protect the earth's trees?

Look ahead to the next workshop and assign leadership responsibilities.

TAKING IT HOME

I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Perhaps, unless the billboards fall,

I'll never see a tree at all. — Ogden Nash,
American poet, "Song of the Open Road" (1933)

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP ... we viewed a visual essay by Franke James called "What Can One Person Do?" We brainstormed ways that we can address climate change at home, in our congregation, at work or school, and in the wider community and came up with a plan for sharing our ideas.

HOMEWORK: Begin implementing the action plan right away. Keep a journal of actions you have taken.

MAKE TIME FOR TREES: There are several ways to take today's workshop home, for example:

- Share your thoughts and feeling about today's workshop and the Circle of Trees program with family members, housemates, or co-workers.
- Try to spend time outside each day, paying special attention to the trees near where you live.
- Create your own visual essay to share with family, friends, and the whole world!
- View more visual essays by [Franke James](#) (at www.frankejames.com/) online.
- Think of more ways that you can engage with people and trees with respect.

EXTEND THE TOPIC: Explore some of the many wonderful books about trees found in Workshop 1, Handout 2, Selected Bibliography.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SONG — WHAT CAN WE DO (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 2, [Song — What Can We Do](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: *Let Your Heart Sing: joyous songs for UU congregational singing*, produced by Joyce Poley and Frank Henning, 1991. Vol.1: 15 songs, Vol.2: 12 songs with chords
- CD or a downloaded music file, and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Learn the song "What Can We Do" so you can teach it to the group, or invite a guest song leader to teach the song.
- Write the song lyrics on newsprint, and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants learn the song "What Can We Do" by UU musician and songwriter Joyce Poley.

Distribute Handout 2. Teach the song by singing one phrase at a time and having participants sing the phrase back to you. Then put it all together and sing the whole song. The song can also be sung as a round.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: HUMMINGBIRD VIDEO (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Preview the [two-minute video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGMW6YWjMxw) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGMW6YWjMxw) of

Green Belt movement founder and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Wangari Maathai telling a story about a hummingbird. If the group includes children younger than age 9, consider showing this video in place of Activity 3, Story — Visual Essay.

- Set up and test the Internet connection. Cue the video to show the group.

Description of Activity

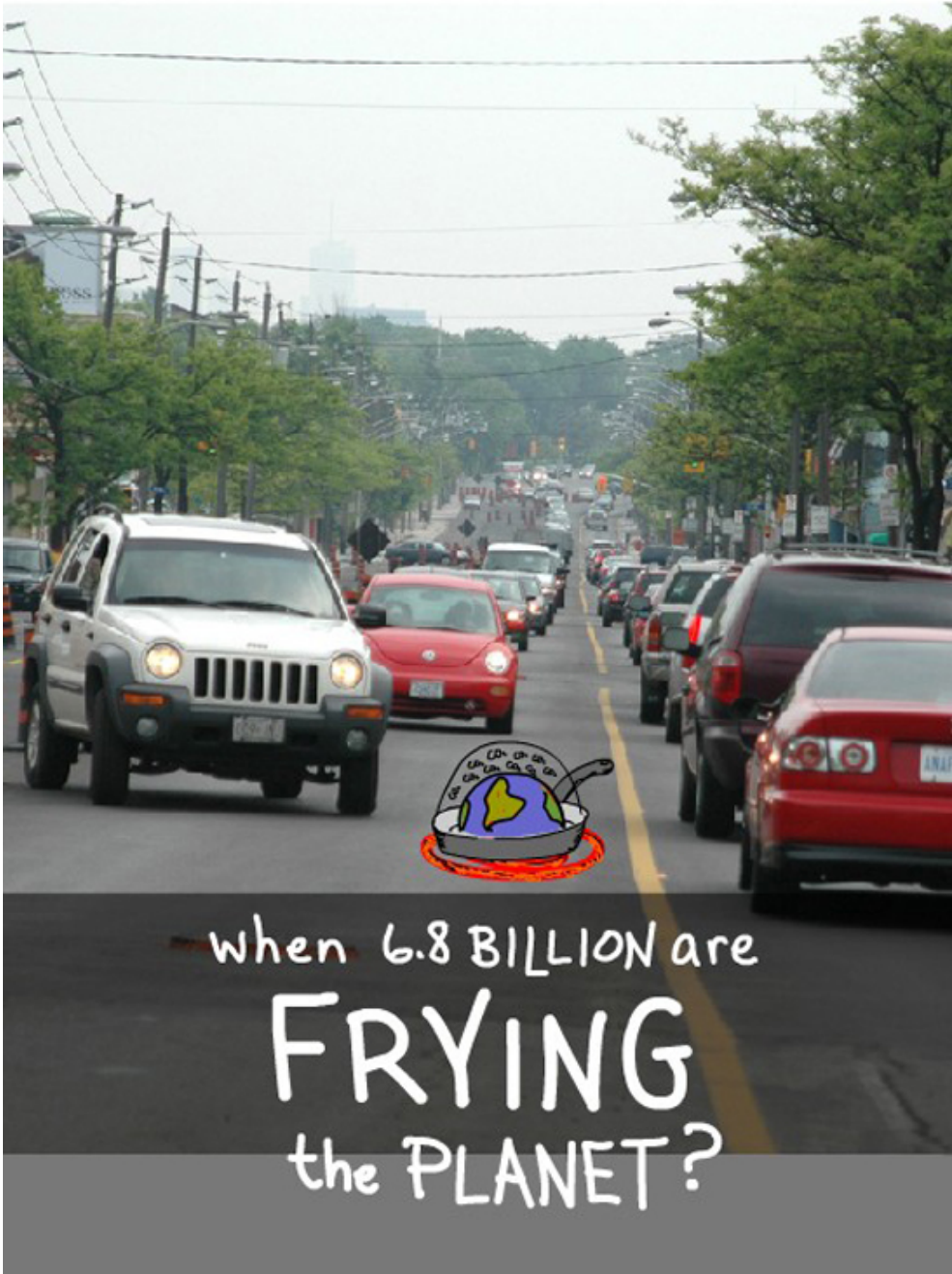
Show the video, in which Green Belt movement founder and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Wangari Maathai tells a story about a hummingbird and encourages viewers to do what we can to help the earth.

STORY: VISUAL ESSAY

"[What Can One Person Do When 6.8 Billion Are Frying the Planet?](#)" by Franke James. Posted December 28, 2010 on the [YES! Magazine](#) website. [YES! Magazine](#) encourages you to make free use of this article. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons License.

Download a [high-resolution PDF](#) (at www.uua.org/documents/jamesfranke/what_can_one_person_do.pdf) for printing.

What can ONE person do



HANDOUT 1: CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

What Is a Climate Change Action Plan?

A local climate change action plan lays out specific policy proposals or planning processes, including institutional and policy structures, that a local government will use to develop and implement a climate change mitigation strategy. A climate action plan typically addresses the following:

- Regional and local risks and vulnerabilities
- Baseline emissions
- Goals and targets
- Identification and screening of mitigation options
- Estimated results of mitigation actions
- Recommendations and strategy for implementation

Why Create an Action Plan?

Although climate change is a global issue, many critical actions to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions can be initiated locally. Local governments can alter GHG emission patterns significantly through their influence and authority over [several climate related topics](#) such as municipal utilities, land use and urban forestry, building codes, waste management, transportation, financing, environmental programs, and other relevant policy areas. Additionally, local government actions directly impact and benefit the lives of citizens.

In addition, many climate change mitigation measures generate broader non-climate related benefits. For example, energy efficiency programs lower costs while reducing GHG emissions. Increasing carpools and public transportation reduces pollution and traffic congestion in addition to reducing GHG emissions. Reforestation and urban tree programs not only sequester carbon, but also can reduce the amount of energy used for cooling and provide aesthetic improvement.

Developing a Climate Change Action Plan

Collaborate with Stakeholders

Collaboration across local agencies, as well as with the public, businesses, and industry, ensures that the strategy reflects a cross-section of perspectives that support it. EPA provides information to assist local groups in [translating inventory results into actions](#).

Understand the Scope of GHG Emissions and Identify Opportunities for Reductions

Understanding the scope of GHG emissions is key to identifying trends, sources of increase, and sectors to target. EPA provides methods and tools to assist local groups in developing a GHG inventory.

Understand Vulnerabilities to Climate Change

Local governments can consider impacts and adaptation in existing planning and approval processes, especially large infrastructural projects that would be costly to adapt later. For information about potential impacts of climate change, visit the U.S. Global Change Research Program website.

Set Goals

Quantitative goals provide structure and facilitate the evaluation of progress. Goals should include a specific timeframe and can be stated in terms of emissions reductions, energy savings, or cost savings. Goals can be sector-specific or more general.

Establish Criteria for Evaluating Mitigation Options

Examples of evaluation criteria include the following:

- Timeframe of focus
- Effectiveness in reducing GHGs
- Private sector costs and savings
- Public sector costs
- Economic gains
- Social equity
- Existing institutional capacity or programs
- Political feasibility
- Existing legal constraints
- Enforceability
- Measurability
- Co-benefits

Identify Options

Local governments can consider options that affect the entire community or key sectors, depending on the GHG inventory, goals, and priorities. EPA provides methods and tools to assist local governments in identifying policy options.

Evaluate and Select Options

In evaluating policy options, local governments should determine each option's quantitative impact on GHGs, the economy, energy supply, air pollution, etc., based on local goals and priorities. This allows governments to rank policy options and facilitates comparison.

Establish an Administrative Process for Implementation, Evaluation, and Measurement

Local governments should identify mechanisms—including funding mechanisms—and actors for implementing individual options within strategy, and establish progress reporting mechanisms and time frames.

How to Implement an Action Plan

Design and Implement Policies

After determining the actions, local governments begin to design specific policies and to establish implementation pathways. EPA provides guidance for local governments on designing and implementing programs.

Measure and Evaluate

It is important for local governments to evaluate progress toward their goals in order to adjust their strategy and action plan accordingly. EPA provides methods and tools to assist local governments in determining the results of their climate and energy programs and policies.

Communicate

Citizens and stakeholders have important roles in helping to mitigate GHGs. Communicating the benefits of programs to mitigate climate change can help gain continued support for policies and programs affecting the community. EPA provides information for local governments on engaging stakeholders.

HANDOUT 2: SONG — WHAT CAN WE DO

"What Can We Do" by Joyce Poley from the *Let Your Heart Sing* CD and songbook. Used with permission.

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/trees/song_what_can_we_do.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/trees/song_what_can_we_do.pdf) for printing.

Part 1:

What can we do to make the world a better place?
What can we do to make it better?
What can we do? Oh what can we do?
What can we do to make it better?

Part 2:

Clean up our own mess, clean up our own mess.
Recycle the good stuff, dispose of the bad stuff
Clean up our own mess.

Part 3:

Love your sister,
Love your brother,
Love one another,
That's what we all can do.

What Can We Do

Words and music by Joyce Poley

Musical notation for the first system of the song. It consists of three staves: a vocal line, a piano accompaniment line, and a bass line. The key signature is C major and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 130. The first measure has a C chord, and the second measure has an F chord. The lyrics are: "What can we do, — to make the world a bet- ter place —" (vocal), "Clean up our own mess" (piano), and "Love your sis- ter" (bass).

Musical notation for the second system of the song. It consists of three staves. The key signature is C major and the time signature is 4/4. The first measure has a G7 chord, the second has a C chord, and the third has a C chord. The lyrics are: "What can we do — to make it bet-ter, What can we do, — oh" (vocal), "Clean up our own mess Re- cy- cle the good — stuff, Di-" (piano), and "Love your brother Love one a-" (bass).

Musical notation for the third system of the song. It consists of three staves. The key signature is C major and the time signature is 4/4. The first measure has an F chord, the second has a G7 chord, and the third has a C chord. The lyrics are: "What can we do, —" (vocal), "What can we do — to make it bet- ter" (vocal), "pose of the bad — stuff Clean up our own mess!" (piano), and "no-ther That's what we all can do." (bass).

FIND OUT MORE

View more visual essays at [Franke James's website](http://www.frankejames.com/) (at www.frankejames.com/).

Visit 350.org (at 350.org/), a global movement to solve the climate crisis.

Unitarian Universalist environmental resources include the [UU Ministry for Earth](http://uuministryforearth.org/) (at uuministryforearth.org/) and the [UUA Green Sanctuary Program](http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml).

WORKSHOP 6: COUNCIL AMONG THE TREES, PART 1

INTRODUCTION

Cut down the forest of desire, not the forest of trees. — The Buddha, Dhammapada 283

Workshops 6 and 7 are ideally done as one longer workshop of at least two hours. The workshops comprise an adaptation of the ritual "A Council of All Beings," presented by Joanna Macy, John Seed, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess in the 1988 book [Thinking Like a Mountain: Toward a Council for All Beings](#) (at www.joannamacy.net/books-dvds/118-thinking-like-a-mountain-towards-a-council-of-all-beings.html). If possible, identify an outdoor setting for these activities, while being mindful to select a location that will be accessible and welcoming to participants with all mobility, hearing, or other sensory issues.

This work is guided by the philosophy of "deep ecology", a term coined by Naess in 1972. In an [interview posted on the Context Institute website](#) (at www.context.org/iclib/ic22/zimmerman/), Michael Zimmerman explains "deep ecology":

Deep ecology portrays itself as "deep" because it asks deeper questions about the place of human life, who we are. Deep ecology is founded on two basic principles: one is a scientific insight into the interrelatedness of all systems of life on Earth, together with the idea that anthropocentrism—human-centeredness—is a misguided way of seeing things. The second component of deep ecology is what Arnie Naess calls the need for human self-realization. Instead of identifying with our egos or our immediate families, we would learn to identify with trees and animals and plants, indeed the whole ecosphere. This would involve a pretty radical change of consciousness, but it would make our behavior more consistent with what science tells us is necessary for the well-being of life on Earth. We just wouldn't do certain things that damage the planet, just as you wouldn't cut off your own finger.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce a ritual that fosters a deep connection between participants and trees
- Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist

Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"

- Affirm stewardship of the earth as an explicit act of faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience a spiritual connection with each other and the web of life
- Embody the concept of interdependence by creating a mask to represent their spiritual ally
- Build on their understanding of and respect for trees through multiple modes of learning, including movement, meditation, and ritual
- Experience multigenerational learning.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	
Opening	5
Activity 1: Introduction to the Council Among the Trees	5
Activity 2: Milling	15
Activity 3: Discovering Your Being and Calling Your Ally	10
Activity 4: Mask-Making	20
Faith in Action: Planning the Project	60
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, complete Activity 3 for yourself:

Allow the image of a tree or part of a tree, an animal that lives in or near trees, or any another image of nature (perhaps a cloud, a mountain, a pond), to come to you in your imagination.

After several minutes, take on the spirit of the being or the part of nature that you have envisioned; feel as if you are turning into the tree or creature or part of nature. Ask yourself:

What is happening to me as this spirit? What are my days like? What are my nights like? What is happening to my environment? What do I want?

What do I have to say? What would I like to tell the humans? What wisdom do I have to share?

Allow the answers to come to you from inside.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Cloth for altar or centering table
- Leaf name tags from the previous workshop, plus a few blank extras, and markers
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Place the cloth and chalice on the altar or centering table.
- Set the name tags in the basket with a marker nearby.

Description of Activity

As participants arrive, direct returning participants to retrieve their name tags from the basket. Invite newcomers to choose and write their first name on a name tag.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" from the previous workshop

Preparation for Activity

- Select an area where the group can comfortably sit in a circle.
- Post the chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" where all participants can see them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle around the chalice. Select someone to light the chalice. Say, in these words or your own:

Whenever we light a chalice, we are connected with Unitarian Universalists around the world who share this ritual of our faith. Our chalice lighting words are adapted from words by an anonymous writer which are sometimes attributed to Chief Seattle, a chief of the Duwamish tribe in the 19th century in the area we know today as the state of Washington. These words speak of our connection with nature and all life.

Invite the group to join you in saying the chalice lighting words you have posted:

We light this chalice for the air that is precious...

for all things share the same breath—
the beast, the tree, the person,
we all share the same breath.

Go around the circle and have everyone introduce themselves. Point out the group covenant and ask if anything needs to be added.

Including All Participants

If there are participants with limited hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone to help with volume. If participants are sitting on the floor, make sure that there are also chairs for those who do not wish to or cannot sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNCIL AMONG THE TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Drum or rattle
- Optional: Quiet music, such as a chant, or nature sounds, and appropriate music player

Preparation for Activity

- Decide if Workshops 6 and 7 will be done as one longer workshop and adjust the schedule accordingly.
- Read through the activity several times so you will be comfortable leading the ritual.
- Select a large open space that is accessible to all—preferably outdoors, in proximity to trees.

Description of Activity

This activity (indeed, the entire Council) is best done outside or at least in a place with trees nearby. Have participants form a circle, sitting on the ground if they are able. Say, in these words or your own:

What we are about to do today is adapted from the Council of All Beings, a ritual created by Joanna Macy and John Sneed, which enables humans to connect deeply with the earth. Many people do this ritual over the course of a weekend. We'll be taking two hours [or two workshops, depending on how you structure your workshops] for our own ritual, which we are calling the Council Among the Trees. Many people are saddened about the plight of the earth, her trees, her creatures, and other living forms. Our Council Among the Trees will help us express our gratitude for trees, acknowledge our sadness about what is happening to them, take stock of what is happening, and, finally, feel empowered to take action.

Briefly explain what you'll be doing as part of the Council so that everyone knows what will take place that day.

Say, in these words or your own:

We will start by creating a ritual space, then we'll do some connecting activities, and take a few moments to each call our creature to us. We will make masks to embody our creatures. At the end of this workshop [or, the next time we meet] we will create and experience the actual Council Among the Trees, and then close with our thoughts and ideas for taking future action.

Emphasize the importance of silence, which is called for during much of the Council. Say that silence invites a deep and powerful connection to take place.

Ask for a volunteer to open the ritual by drumming or shaking a rattle around the circle, perhaps asking them to weave in and out among the participants. If you chose to include music, play it now as part of opening the ritual.

ACTIVITY 2: MILLING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chime, drum, or rattle

Preparation for Activity

- Read the activity several times so you will be comfortable leading the ritual.
- Plan for the possibility of an uneven number of participants. A co-leader can serve as the needed partner or you can have one set of three partners.

Description of Activity

"Milling" is a series of exercises designed to create group bonding.

Note how many participants there are; if there is an uneven number, let the group know how to handle this when it's time to choose partners.

Say, in these words or your own:

This activity is called the Milling. You will silently and slowly walk around our area without any specific direction or pattern in mind. Be mindful as you pass by another participant and look into their eyes, but there is no need to smile or nod. During the Milling, please do not talk or make a sound in any way, except when you are invited to speak as part of the ritual. In a few minutes, I will give directions for what to do at the first of our two stops in the Milling.

Give everyone a few minutes to mill about silently.

Stop 1: Sharing

Ask participants to find a partner and stand in front of them. Ask partners to take turns telling each other

something really special that happened to them in an outdoor setting. Sound the chime, drum, or rattle to indicate when it's time for the second person to share and when it's time to finish the sharing. After the second person has shared, have partners say goodbye and continue with their milling.

Stop 2: Hand Dance

After a few minutes (or less), ask everyone to stop in front of a different partner. Explain that Person A will put up their hands in front of them (leaders can model this) and Person B will place their palms on the hands of Person A. Person A will move their hands, and Person B will follow. Let them know that you will use the chime, drum, or rattle to indicate when it's time to switch who is leading, but that they should not stop the flow at any point. Have participants do this for a few minutes.

Sound the chime again. Let the group know that now no one is leading and no one is following, and they should not stop the flow but keep going until you chime again.

When you chime to indicate the end of the hand dance, say, in these words or your own:

Now, without speaking, say good-bye to your partner and start milling again.

After a minute or so, sound the chime to end the Milling.

Including All Participants

If any participants have mobility limitations, adapt the group instructions for this activity so that everyone will be able to follow them. You might be, or arrange, a "milling" partner for a person with a visual disability or someone who needs physical assistance to "mill."

ACTIVITY 3: DISCOVERING YOUR BEING AND CALLING YOUR ALLY (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the activity description several times so that you will be comfortable leading.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Ask them to close their eyes and allow the image of a tree or part of a tree, an animal that lives in or near trees, or any another image of nature—such as a cloud, a mountain, or a pond—to come to them in their imagination. Remind them that if nothing comes to them, they can actively choose a creature, tree, or part of nature themselves.

After several minutes, invite everyone to take on the spirit of the being or the part of nature that they have envisioned. Ask them to feel as if they are turning into the tree, creature, or part of nature. Say, in these words or your own:

What is happening to me as this spirit? What are my days like? What are my nights like? What is happening to my environment? What do I want? What do I have to say? What would I like to tell the humans? What wisdom do I have to share?

Encourage them to allow the answers to come to them from inside. Allow them to reflect for a few minutes.

Ask participants to silently sit up while continuing to keep their eyes closed.

ACTIVITY 4: MASK-MAKING (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Mask-making supplies, such as construction paper, markers or paints, stones, feathers, shells, other found and recycled objects, scissors (include left-handed), glue, glue sticks, and yarn
- Optional: Purchased pre-made masks to which objects can be attached

Preparation for Activity

- Read the activity several times so you will be comfortable leading it.
- Designate a particular area for mask-making, and set up the supplies there.
- Optional: If you are conducting this workshop outdoors, you may wish to relocate indoors for this activity, to enable participants to use a glue gun and/or have easy access to work tables, art supplies, and a water source for clean-up.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to open their eyes. Have them move to the mask-making table or area and silently begin creating a mask to represent themselves as the being or part of nature they just envisioned. Assure them that the mask does not have to look exactly like the being, as long as it feels representative. Remind them to make a large mouth hole so that everyone else can hear their being or nature spirit speak during the Council Among the Trees.

Encourage participants to continue working in silence, although a small amount of talking can be okay.

Some participants will want to spend a long time on their masks. Remind them that the mask is only a representation.

Give the group five-minute and one-minute warnings for finishing their masks.

Engage everyone to help with clean-up.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Basket for name tags
- Drum or rattle
- Large container for storing masks, if Workshops 6 and 7 will be done separately

Preparation for Activity

- Download the Taking It Home section of this workshop to reflect the activities this group has done. Copy it as a handout for all participants. (You may wish to email participants as well or instead.)
- If needed, write the closing words on newsprint, and post them where they will be visible to all participants. (Note: These words are from Reading 708 in *Singing the Living Tradition* and are adapted from Hebrew scripture, Isaiah 55.)
- Bring out the container for storing the masks.

Description of Activity

Use this Closing only if you are not continuing with Workshop 7 today.

Have a participant or co-leader drum quietly, and ask everyone else to be silent. Invite participants to place their masks one by one into the container for safekeeping until Workshop 7.

Gather the group in a circle around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Explain that Taking It Home includes a summary of what they did in the workshop, resources for further exploration, and fun "homework."

Invite participants to reflect for a moment on today's workshop. Ask each participant to share one word that describes how they feel. Go around the circle with this "one-word checkout."

Invite participants to join hands and say the closing words together:

Let us go out in joy, and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before us shall burst
into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their
hands.

Extinguish the chalice together. As they go, ask participants to leave their name tags in the basket you've provided for this purpose.

FAITH IN ACTION: PLANNING THE PROJECT (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Information about the project chosen in the previous workshop
- Newsprint and markers

Preparation for Activity

- Review the selected project with the director of religious education and ask for feedback.
- If the project will take place at the congregation, invite others in your congregation (e.g., the Buildings and Ground Committee), as needed, to participate in the planning.
- If you have not done so, make a plan for ongoing communication about the project, such as an email list or a phone tree. Plan to gather contact information at this meeting if you do not already have it.

Description of Activity

Briefly review the project chosen in the last workshop and explain that the next step is to plan exactly how the project will take place. Pose the following questions to the group, and record their answers on newsprint:

- Who will take part? Do we need to invite anyone not present to take part?
- What supplies will we need?
- How much time do we anticipate the project will take?
- When is the best time to undertake our project?
- Who needs to be contacted in order for our project to move forward?
- What resources do we have available to bring to the project? What resources are needed? What resources will each of us bring in?
- What are the steps in bringing our project to completion?

After the workshop, discuss the plan with the religious educator. Determine who else needs information about the project and how information will be shared with the participants, their families, and potential partners.

Including All Participants

Throughout the project, be sure to make room for contributions from people of all ages and ability levels.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the workshop to reflect on the following:

- How was the mix of discussion and action?
- In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements?
- How well did the activities include everyone?
- Were the activities appropriate for the ages of your participants?
- What should you do differently at the next workshop?
- Are participants growing in their connection to the natural world and their awareness of the need to protect the earth's trees?

Look ahead to the next workshop and assign leadership responsibilities.

TAKING IT HOME

Cut down the forest of desire, not the forest of trees. — The Buddha, *Dhammapada* 283

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP ... we prepared for the Council Among the Trees ritual, which continues in Workshop 7.

HOMEWORK: Take time each day to reflect on the being your mask represents. Ask yourself:

What is happening to me as this spirit? What are my days like? What are my nights like? What is happening to my environment? What do I want? What do I have to say? What would I like to tell the humans? What wisdom do I have to share?

MAKE TIME FOR TREES: There are several ways to take today's workshop home, for example:

- Try to spend time outside each day, paying special attention to the trees near where you live.
- Create a nature journal to record your observations and feelings about trees as you deepen your connection over the course of the Circle of Trees workshops.
- Think about ways that you can engage with people and trees with respect.

EXTEND THE TOPIC: Explore some of the many wonderful books about trees found in Workshop 1, Handout 2, Selected Bibliography.

FIND OUT MORE

Learn more about the Deep Ecology movement in this [Introduction To Deep Ecology: An Interview With Michael E. Zimmerman](#), by Alan Atkisson, originally published in [Global Climate Change](#), Summer 1989.

Learn about the appointment of [Joanna Macy](#), "a scholar of Buddhism, general systems theory, and deep ecology," to the faculty of Starr King School for the Ministry.

Read a sermon by Rev. Kathleen McTigue titled [To Love the World Enough](#).

UU environmental resources include the [UU Ministry for Earth](#) and the [UUA Green Sanctuary Program](#).

WORKSHOP 7: COUNCIL AMONG THE TREES, PART 2

INTRODUCTION

Come back with me into a story we all share, a story whose rhythm beats in us still. The story belongs to each of us and to all of us, like the beat of [a] drum, like the heartbeat of our living universe. — Joanna Macy, in Thinking Like a Mountain

This workshop completes the ritual begun in Workshop 6, an adaptation of the ritual A Council of All Beings, presented by Joanna Macy, John Seed, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess in the 1988 book [Thinking Like a Mountain: Toward a Council for All Beings](http://www.joannamacy.net/books-dvds/118-thinking-like-a-mountain-towards-a-council-of-all-beings.html) (at www.joannamacy.net/books-dvds/118-thinking-like-a-mountain-towards-a-council-of-all-beings.html).

Note: Only do this Opening and Activity 1 if Workshops 6 was done at a previous meeting. If you are providing Workshops 6 and 7 as a single, longer workshop, add the time allotted for this Opening and Activity 1, Reconnecting, to Activity 3, Council Among the Trees.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Foster a deep connection between participants and trees by completing a ritual
- Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"
- Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience a spiritual connection with each other and the web of life

- Empower one another to take action to protect trees and the web of life
- Build on their understanding of and respect for trees through multiple modes of learning, including movement, meditation, and ritual
- Experience multigenerational learning.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	
Opening	5
Activity 1: Reconnecting	5
Activity 2: Creating the Gateway	5
Activity 3: Council Among the Trees	30
Activity 4: Grounding	10
Faith in Action: Engaging in the Project	
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, imagine and reconnect with your spirit of the being or part of nature from the last workshop. Reflect on the following:

What is happening to me as this spirit? What are my days like? What are my nights like? What is happening to my environment? What do I want? What do I have to say? What would I like to tell the humans? What wisdom do I have to share?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Cloth for altar or centering table
- Leaf name tags from the previous workshop, plus a few blank extras, and markers
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Place the cloth and chalice on the altar or centering table.
- Set the name tags in the basket with a marker nearby.

Description of Activity

As participants arrive, direct returning participants to retrieve their name tags from the basket. Invite newcomers to choose and write their first name on a name tag.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" from the previous workshops

Preparation for Activity

- Select an area where the group can comfortably sit in a circle.
- Post the chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" from the previous workshops.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle around the chalice. Select someone to light the chalice. Lead the group in saying the chalice lighting words together:

We light this chalice for the air that is precious...
for all things share the same breath—
the beast, the tree, the person,
we all share the same breath.

Including All Participants

If any participants are hard of hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone to help with volume. If participants are sitting on the floor, make sure that there are also chairs for those who do not wish to or cannot sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 1: RECONNECTING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Container of masks from Workshop 6

Preparation for Activity

- Read all the activities in the ritual so you will be comfortable leading it.

Description of Activity

Invite everyone to get their masks from the container they placed them in at the end of Workshop 6. Have participants sit or lie down in a comfortable position with their mask resting nearby. Ask them to close their eyes and breathe deeply and slowly, in and out, in and out.

After a moment, invite everyone to imagine and reconnect with the spirit of the being or part of nature that they envisioned in the last workshop. Ask them to feel as if they are turning into that tree, creature, or part of nature. Repeat the questions you asked them to think about last time, in these words or your own:

What is happening to me as this spirit? What are my days like? What are my nights like? What is happening to my environment? What do I want? What do I have to say? What would I like to tell the humans? What wisdom do I have to share?

Remind them to allow the answers to come to them from inside.

Give everyone a few minutes to contemplate the questions, then ask that they silently sit up while keeping their eyes closed. Invite them to open their eyes and stand quietly.

ACTIVITY 2: CREATING THE GATEWAY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Drums or rattles

Preparation for Activity

- Select an area, preferably outdoors, for the Council to take place, and designate an entry or "gateway" to the Council circle. Be sure that your chosen area is accessible to people of all ages and ability levels.
- Specify co-leaders' roles in conducting the Council and any participant roles in shared leadership.

Description of Activity

Explain that once the Council is formed, participants will speak in the first person of their being or nature spirit.

Model how to do this by introducing yourself as your creature, for example:

I am Tree Bark and I protect the trees.

Encourage everyone to refer to humans as "they" or "the two-leggeds." Say, in these words or your own:

Please don't talk to the other creatures in the circle as if they were human—this is very confusing for them.

Create the gateway to the council by standing with your co-leader on either side of the entry to the Council area. Ask participants to put on their masks outside the entry in silence. Say, in these words or your own:

As we begin to drum, we invite you to walk one by one through the gateway to the Council Among the Trees. Welcome your creature or nature spirit into your body. Once you have passed through the gateway, begin to move and make the sounds of your being or nature spirit. Slowly form a circle with your fellow beings.

With your co-leader, begin to drum as participants pass through the gateway and form the Council circle.

ACTIVITY 3: COUNCIL AMONG THE TREES (30 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the ritual so you will be comfortable leading it.

Description of Activity

As participants are gathered in the circle, remind them that each being or nature spirit will introduce themselves to the Council Among the Trees—saying who they are, what their life is like, and how they spend their time. After each spirit speaks, all the spirits will respond by saying:

We hear you, [name of spirit].

Conduct the ritual.

When all beings have introduced themselves, say, in these words or your own:

Our Council Among the Trees is now formed.

Ask the beings or nature spirits to each speak again, this time telling the Council what is happening to them, what people have done to them, and what they would like to say to people. Again, after each being or spirit speaks, the Council responds by saying:

We hear you, [name of spirit].

When all have spoken, ask each to speak once more, sharing whatever wisdom, knowledge, or gifts they have to offer and what they might teach people who are willing to listen. Have the Council respond after each spirit speaks by saying:

We thank you, [name of spirit].

ACTIVITY 4: GROUNDING (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Invite all of the beings and nature spirits to walk back through the gateway, put on their "human masks" (by taking off their spirit masks), and return to the circle holding their spirit masks. After all are seated, invite each person, one at a time, to turn their spirit masks to face themselves and make a small promise to change one aspect of their life that hurts their being or spirit.

When everyone has made their promise, say, in these words or your own:

These promises made shall not be broken. We give thanks to the spirits who have come together today to share their feelings, dreams, hopes, and wisdom.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Download the Taking It Home section of this workshop to reflect the activities this group has done. Copy it as a handout for all participants. (You may wish to email participants as well or instead.)
- If needed, write the closing words on newsprint, and post them where they will be visible to all participants. (Note: These words are from Reading 708 in *Singing the Living Tradition* and are adapted from Hebrew scripture, Isaiah 55.)

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a circle around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Explain that Taking It Home includes a summary of what they did in the workshop, resources for further exploration, and fun "homework." Tell participants that their homework is to attend to the promise they have made to the beings or spirits who spoke to us during our Council Among the Trees.

Invite participants to reflect for a moment on today's workshop. Ask each participant to share one word that describes how they feel. Go around the circle with this "one-word checkout."

Invite participants to join hands and say the closing words together:

Let us go out in joy, and be led back in peace;

the mountains and the hills before us shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Extinguish the chalice together. As they go, ask participants to leave their name tags in the basket you've provided for this purpose.

FAITH IN ACTION: ENGAGING IN THE PROJECT

Materials for Activity

- Project plan developed in the previous workshop

Preparation for Activity

- Make preparations as detailed in the project plan.

Description of Activity

By this workshop, the group will have identified a project and planned the elements needed to complete the project. In this activity, the group implements their project.

Including All Participants

Throughout the project, be sure to make room for contributions from people of all ages and ability levels.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leader after the workshop to reflect on the following:

- How was the mix of discussion and action?
- In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements?
- How well did the activities include everyone?
- Were the activities appropriate for the ages of your participants?
- What should you do differently at the next workshop?

- Are participants growing in their connection to the natural world and their awareness of the need to protect the earth's trees?

Look ahead to the next workshop to assign leadership responsibilities.

TAKING IT HOME

Come back with me into a story we all share, a story whose rhythm beats in us still. The story belongs to each of us and to all of us, like the beat of [a] drum, like the heartbeat of our living universe. — Joanna Macy, in *Thinking Like a Mountain*

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we completed the Council Among the Trees ritual, expressing our gratitude for trees, acknowledging our sadness about what is happening to them, and ending by feeling empowered to take action.

HOMEWORK: Reflect on the promise you shared in the Council Among the Trees to change an aspect of your life that hurts the beings or spirits embodied in the Council. See if you can remember what other beings or spirits said in the Council. Do the others' words give you more ideas for ways you, as a "two-legged," can cause less harm?

MAKE TIME FOR TREES: There are several ways to take today's workshop home, for example:

- Try to spend time outside each day, paying special attention to the trees near where you live.
- Use a nature journal to record your observations and feelings about trees as you deepen your connection over the course of the Circle of Trees workshops.
- Think about ways that you can engage with people and trees with respect.

EXTEND THE TOPIC: Explore some of the many wonderful books about trees found in Workshop 1, Handout 2, Selected Bibliography.

FIND OUT MORE

A comprehensive manual to help you facilitate a weekend-length Council of All Beings without previous experience can be found on the [Rainforest Info](http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/deep-eco/cabcont.htm) (at www.rainforestinfo.org.au/deep-eco/cabcont.htm) website.

Two good UU environmental resources are the [UU Ministry for Earth](http://uuministryforearth.org/) (at uuministryforearth.org/) and the [UUA Green Sanctuary Program](http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml).

WORKSHOP 8: COME BE WITH TREES

INTRODUCTION

It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees. — Wangari Maathai, Nobel Prize winner and founder of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya

Plan a field trip to a nearby natural area or park that has woods or numerous trees and some type of trail through a tree-covered area. Once again, this workshop is a time to slow down and connect deeply with trees and nature. Light rain the day of the workshop doesn't have to mean cancellation; you can wear raincoats and boots and forge ahead. But if the weather seems too wild to be outside, you can choose to reschedule for another day.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Celebrate the completion of the Circle of Trees program
- Honor the relationships developed over the program, among participants and with trees and the web of life
- Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"
- Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Directly engage with trees and nature in a variety of ways
- Gain inspiration and a sense of empowerment from the story of Wangari Maathai
- Build on their understanding of and respect for trees through multiple modes of learning, including movement, meditation, and song
- Experience multigenerational learning.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	
Opening	5
Activity 1: Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees	5
Activity 2: Guided Imagery — Among the Trees	5
Activity 3: Story — Trees for Kenya	10
Activity 4: A Walk Among the Trees	30
Faith in Action: Reflecting on the Project	60
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, think back through all the Circle of Trees workshops. What were the highlights for you? How have you changed as a result of leading this program?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Cloth for altar or centering table
- Leaf name tags from the previous workshop, plus a few blank extras, and markers
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Place the cloth and chalice on the altar or centering table.
- Set the name tags in the basket with a marker nearby.

Description of Activity

As participants arrive, direct returning participants to retrieve their name tags from the basket. Invite newcomers to choose and write their first name on a name tag.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" from previous workshops

Preparation for Activity

- Select an area where the group can comfortably sit in a circle.
- Post the chalice lighting words and "Our Covenant" where all participants can see them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle around the chalice. Select someone to light the chalice, and say the chalice lighting words together:

We light this chalice for the air that is precious...
for all things share the same breath—
the beast, the tree, the person,
we all share the same breath.

Including All Participants

If there are participants who are hard of hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone to help with volume. If participants are sitting on the floor, make sure that there are also chairs for those who do not wish to or cannot sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 1: RISE UP FOR TREES / TEAM UP FOR TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rise Up for Trees / Team Up for Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Choose the ice-breaker you will use for this workshop.

Description of Activity

Conduct the ice-breaker.

Including All Participants

If a participant needs to remain seated, encourage them to do the poses from a seated position.

ACTIVITY 2: GUIDED IMAGERY — AMONG THE TREES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 2, [Guided Imagery — Among the Trees](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Practice reading the guided imagery so that you will be comfortable leading it.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to make themselves comfortable and prepare to listen to a guided meditation. Read aloud from Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1.

Encourage responses to the meditation with questions such as these:

- How do you feel after our guided meditation?
- Did anything come up for you during the guided meditation that you want to share with the group?

Including All Participants

If any participants have limited hearing, consider using a hand-held microphone.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — TREES FOR KENYA (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Trees for Kenya](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story a few times so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Review the discussion questions in the activity, and add some of your own if desired.

Description of Activity

Invite the participants to make themselves comfortable and ready to listen to the story. Read "Trees for Kenya."

Engage a group discussion by posing questions such as these:

- Can you think of any project or activity you have done that helped restore the land or the planet?
- Is it ever okay to cut down trees? Why or why not? What could make it okay to cut down trees?
- Can you imagine being willing to go to jail for a cause you believe in?

ACTIVITY 4: A WALK AMONG THE TREES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Clipboards, drawing paper, and pens, pencils, or color pencils
- Optional: Paper for rubbing textures, and soft crayons or chalk
- Optional: Re-usable bags for collecting leaves or other small, natural items
- Optional: A guide to local trees
- Optional: A stethoscope

Preparation for Activity

- Identify an outdoor walk that all participants will be able to accomplish in the time allotted. Visit the trail, so you will be familiar with the "features" along the way.
- Choose which "mini activities" to include. Gather the materials and resources needed for each.

Description of Activity

Even 30 minutes of slowing down and noticing the trees and the nature around them can enable deep connection.

Here are some "mini activities" you might include during your walk:

- Provide clipboards with drawing paper, and pens, pencils, and a few color pencils. Ask participants to find a comfortable spot and close their eyes for as long as they like—at least a minute or two. Ask them to tune in to their less-

used senses; we rely less on smell, hearing, and touch than sight. Encourage them to take their time to listen to the trees and then write or sketch a response. (This activity can take the entire 30 minutes if participants desire.)

- Notice and feel the bark of different trees. Make bark rubbings with paper and crayons or colored pencils and compare them.
- Hug (and thank) a tree, making sure to avoid vines, hairy or otherwise, and biting insects.
- Collect leaves, and then make leaf rubbings, leaf collages, or simple leaf bouquets.
- Call on your own expertise, that of others in the group, and a tree guide to identify trees by their leaves, the shape of the tree, or other characteristics.
- If it's springtime, use a stethoscope to listen to the "heartbeat of a tree."
- Sing one or more of the songs from a previous workshop that participants enjoyed.
- Climb a tree. If you are lucky enough to have trees at the right stage and habit of growth (i.e., trees with branches low enough and sturdy enough to climb), as well as permission to climb, encourage everyone to climb into a tree. Take turns and encourage spotters on the ground for both children and adults. You need not climb high to enjoy the experience or to feel connected to the tree.

Including All Participants

Ensure that the location and the activities you choose are accessible to people of all ages and ability levels.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
- Basket for name tags

Preparation for Activity

- Download the Taking It Home section of this workshop to reflect the activities this group has done. Copy it as a handout for all participants. (You may wish to email participants as well or instead.)
- If needed, write the closing words on newsprint, and post them where they will be visible to all participants. (Note: These words are from Reading 708 in *Singing the Living Tradition* and are adapted from Hebrew scripture, Isaiah 55.)

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a circle around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home.

Invite participants to reflect, for a minute or so, on the Circle of Trees program. Then, engage participants in discussing the program with questions such as these:

- Did anything shift or change for you during the Circle of Trees program?
- What do you remember the most?
- Do you see trees any differently?
- Do you think you will treat trees the same way you did before participating in the program?

Invite participants to join hands and say the closing words together:

Let us go out in joy, and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before us shall burst
into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their
hands.

Extinguish the chalice together. Tell participants that they are welcome to take their leaf name tags home.

FAITH IN ACTION: REFLECTING ON THE PROJECT (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Invite anyone who helped with planning or implementing the project to participate in this reflection.

Description of Activity

An important but often neglected part of any social justice activity is the opportunity to reflect on what participants have learned from the experience. Pose the following questions to the participants, and record their responses on newsprint:

- What do you think worked best about this project?
- What was frustrating?
- Who was the most memorable person you met?
- Did your view of the world change in any way?
- Did you feel your gifts were welcome? Were you able to welcome the gifts of others in your group and people you met?
- What will you remember about this experience?

- How do you think your actions changed the world (even if in small ways)?

You, your co-leader, or perhaps a parent volunteer should summarize the feedback and share with the director of religious education. This feedback can help other groups plan future Faith in Action projects. You may wish to share with this information with the Social Action committee or other volunteers in the congregation as well.

In addition, invite participants to help write a newsletter article about the experience. Be sure to get appropriate permission to share the information and any pictures from the project on the congregation's website. You may also wish to create a scrapbook of photos from any Faith in Action projects your group completed during Circle of Trees.

Including All Participants

Be sure to encourage participants of all ages and ability levels to share their feedback.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leader after the workshop to look back over the entire program. Did you meet your overall goals? Did new goals emerge?

Share feedback on the program with the director of religious education and/or minister, including helpful notes for those who may facilitate the program in the future. Share your reflections in a congregational newsletter article or blog post.

TAKING IT HOME

It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees. — Wangari Maathai, Nobel Prize winner and founder of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we heard the story of Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt movement she founded in Kenya. Most importantly, we enjoyed a walk among the trees, remembering all that we experienced together during the Circle of Trees program.

MAKE TIME FOR TREES: You might like to:

- Watch a documentary about Wangari Maathai called [Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai](http://takingrootfilm.com/about.htm) (at takingrootfilm.com/about.htm). (It's available on Netflix; you might also be able to check it out of the library or watch it on your local PBS station.) Invite Circle of Trees participants to join you, or host a showing for the congregation.

- Try to spend time outside each day, paying special attention to the trees near where you live.
- Use a nature journal to record your observations and feelings about trees as you deepen your connection with them, beyond the Circle of Trees workshops.

- Think about ways that you can engage with people and trees with respect.

EXTEND THE TOPIC: Explore some of the many wonderful books about trees found in Workshop 1, Handout 2, Selected Bibliography.

STORY: TREES FOR KENYA

When Wangari Maathai was a little girl growing up in central Kenya in Africa, the land was green, the streams full, and the trees grew thick and lush. To help her family with meals, Wangari gathered firewood from the trees around her village.

On her first day gathering, her mother told her "Don't collect any firewood from a fig tree." Wangari asked "Why not?" Her mother answered, "That is a tree of God. We don't cut it, we don't burn it, we don't use it all." And so Wangari was careful, along with the rest of the village, to let the fig trees live a good long time. She didn't know it then, but the roots of the strong tree helped water come to the surface from deep below the earth. Until they fell to the ground naturally of old age, the fig trees helped the Kenyan soil stay rich and alive.

Wangari was a smart girl and worked hard in school. When she grew up, she went to America to study biology in college.

But when Wangari returned six years later, Kenya had changed. Many trees had been cut to make way for new buildings and large coffee and tea plantations. In some places, the land was bare and the streams had dried up. Even the fig trees had been cut. And no one had thought to put in new trees. Kenya was becoming a desert. That was hard for the birds, insects, and many other animals.

It was also hard for the people. Soon Wangari was hearing from the women of Kenya that many people did not have enough to eat. Clean water was hard to find and so was firewood for cooking. Wangari listened to the women who spoke to her, and she began to get an idea.

Wangari's idea to help everything was to plant trees. She planted small seedling trees in her own back yard, right in the city. When she saw the trees grow strong and green, she taught the women in her village to plant trees and gave them seedlings to plant. When other women saw the village turn green again, they wanted to plant trees too. Soon Wangari started a nursery and gave tree seedlings to women all over Kenya. She paid them money for each tree planted and kept alive, which helped them to buy food.

Some people laughed and said that women could not plant trees, but more and more women planted trees. And dried, brown land in Kenya turned soft and green again. But the cutting of trees continued. Wangari tried to protect the trees and told the tree cutters to stop. She did not believe so much building was needed. But powerful people disagreed. Wangari was arrested and went to jail for what she believed in. But others continued to plant trees and protect those that were still alive. Eventually, Wangari was released from jail.

As more trees were planted, the desert was pushed away and the land came back to life. Streams flowed once more. The soil became rich and healthy again. More and more people helped plant trees. By 2004, when Wangari won the Nobel Peace Prize, more than 30 million trees had been planted. Kenya was green again.

FIND OUT MORE

Read about Wangari Maathai and the [Green Belt Movement](http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/) (at www.greenbeltmovement.org/).

UU environmental resources include the [UU Ministry for Earth](http://uuministryforearth.org/) (at uuministryforearth.org/) and the [UUA Green Sanctuary Program](http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml).