Family Ministry Training

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To the Facilitators

We are so glad that you have taken on the challenge (and, we hope, pleasure) of facilitating Family Ministry Training. We think there's a lot to it, perhaps more than most participants would imagine. We hope you will find it as exciting to work with as we did to write.

As you will see, we've included notes to you in the Introduction to each workshop. In some cases these offer practical suggestions to help your facilitation; in others, they explain why an exercise is designed the way it is.

This training was created as a series of six two-and-a-half-hour workshops. However, parts of this training can be valuable even if you are unable to offer the entire series. Use this guidance to plan your program:

- Workshops 1 and 2 lay out theological and philosophical underpinnings of the entire training. The video Family Ministry Workshop: It’s About a Paradigm Shift (15:37) contains much of this material. You may elect to share the video with participants rather than provide these two workshops.

- Workshops 3, 4, and 5 are the most practical. You may offer these individually or as a set.

- While Workshop 6 can be offered alone, its impact will be greatest when it follows at least one of the others; it is designed to bring together themes and ideas already introduced.

Suggest to participants who wish to share their learning more widely to their congregations that they might offer Workshops 2 and 6 as a short series.

You will need to create an online, shared folder for Family Ministry Training materials. In the folder, create a document titled Supplementary Materials, with these resources:

- The Unitarian Universalist Identity Renaissance Module (http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/renmod_uuid_reader.pdf), especially pp. 4-10


● Karen Bellavance-Grace’s work on the idea of developing a “Full Week Faith” (http://fullweekfaith.weebly.com/)


A word about evaluations: Participants must complete an online evaluation at the end of the training in order to receive credit for completion. Explain that although this is not a Renaissance module, participants will use the Renaissance evaluation form. Suggest that participants use the handout about evaluations (Handout 1.2) to jot down notes after each workshop. Facilitators should use the Renaissance Module Facilitator Evaluation form.

Throughout this Facilitator Guide, we offer suggestions for what you might say. You need not use these words verbatim; you may find your own way to convey the ideas in them. Share the scripted material in whatever ways will work best for your facilitation team. Make sure you have someone capture the results of the various brainstorming activities. The easiest way is to have someone take a picture of the newsprint and upload the photo to your online, shared document folder.

Finally, be sure to watch the Family Ministry Training introductory video, “Family Ministry Training: Introduction to Workshop 1” before facilitating the first workshop. Do the
exercises the video asks participants to do: questions, journaling, and reflection on feelings about and experiences of family.

We hope this training is the beginning of ongoing conversation that leads to a paradigm shift within Unitarian Universalism. We would love to hear from you about your experiences.

In faith and with hope,

Leia Durland-Jones

Erik Walker Wikstrom
Supply List

- Chalice
- Chime or bell
- Candle and matches, or LED candle
- Centering table with cloth
- A table for resource sharing
- Optional: A table or area to display the created items
- Newsprint pads, 2 easel stands, markers, and tape
- Laptop, projector, and screen
- Music to play as people come in, depart, and at other times, and equipment to play it
- White or light-colored cardstock, at least 1 sheet per participant (Workshop 4)
- Lots of sticky notes (Workshop 6)
- Notepaper (ruled)
- Writing instruments: pencils with erasers and pens for each participant
- A variety of art supplies of your choosing, such as color pencils, fine-tipped markers, regular markers, crayons, pastels, plain drawing paper, murals, clay, pipe cleaners, etc.
- Fidget objects, such as Zen tangle supplies and small blocks
- Boxes of tissues throughout the room (Workshop 1)
- Optional: Copies of Singing the Living Tradition and Singing the Journey, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook and supplement
- If possible, obtain a copy of Full Circle: Fifteen Ways to Grow Lifelong UUs by Kate Tweedie Erslev and familiarize yourself with its content.
Sample Letter to Participants

Dear Family Ministry Training participant:

We are so glad that you will be joining us for the upcoming Family Ministry Training series [Insert date and times]. Here is some information to help you prepare for our time together.

Before attending the first workshop, please watch the Introductory video (9:08). The video provides an opportunity to reflect on your feelings about and experiences of family: https://uuacdn.s3.amazonaws.com/videos/family-ministry-workshop-1-video.mp4.

Training participants will explore our own personal experiences of family as part of the first workshop. Doing some work beforehand allows for two things. First, if the topic of family has difficult associations for you, then the opportunity to work through some of your feelings on your own will help you prepare to experience this training with others. Second, if everyone has had a chance to think about the same questions before coming together, then your exploration as a group can go deeper and be that much richer for all.

The video presents questions such as these:

- How does your history with your family of origin shape your views of family?
- How does your history with your current family shape your views of family?
- What other experiences of “family” have you had? How do these experiences shape your view of family?

Please bring a journal of some sort and a writing implement to the training. (If you are bringing a laptop computer, please bring your own power cord.) There will be opportunities to reflect individually, and a journal can be useful in capturing those reflections with words or images, or however works best for you. At times participants will be invited to share something from their reflections, although no one will ever be required to do so.

We ask that you print handouts and bring them to the in-person training. If you have brochures, programs, or other materials to share, please bring copies for the resource table.
You are asked to bring two specific items with you to place on the centering table. In the Opening Worship participants will assemble on the table objects that symbolize our understandings and experiences of “family.” Please bring an object or an image of an object that can be placed on our communal centering table. We also invite you to bring an object or an image of an object that symbolizes one of the ways your congregation ministers to families (such as a children’s chalice, a sanctuary activity packet, or an item from a rite of passage ritual). This item will be placed on a communal centering table during Workshop 3. Your objects will remain on the table throughout our work together; you may bring them home with you after the training.

We have created a shared online folder for this training in which you will find supplementary materials for this training. [Add instructions for accessing the shared folder.]

The pace of this training will be intense; it’s difficult to cover so much material in the Family Ministry Workshop’s compressed timeframe. [This pertains only to a group that will do all six workshops; adapt as needed.] We are confident, however, that the work we engage in together will be more than worth it! We anticipate that you will leave the training feeling inspired, enriched and ready to engage in your ministry in new ways. Once again…we are so pleased that you will be participating in this family ministry training and look forward to seeing you on [date].

With anticipation,

[Names of facilitators and email/contact information]
List of Handouts

1.1, Schedule for Workshop 1
1.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
1.3, Family Ministry Workshop Resources
2.1, Schedule for Workshop 2
2.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
2.3, A Beginning Bibliography
2.4, Two Approaches to Developmental Theory
2.5, Comparison of Some Developmental Theories
2.6a, Family Systems Scenarios (scenario 1)
2.6b, Family Systems Scenarios (scenario 2)
3.1, Schedule for Workshop 3
3.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
3.3, Prompting Questions for Small Groups
4.1, Schedule for Workshop 4
4.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
4.3, Full Circle “Road Map
5.1, Schedule for Workshop 5
5.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
6.1, Schedule for Workshop 6
6.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
List of Slides

Workshop 1
1.1, Welcome
1.2, Opening Worship
1.3-6, “Here We Have Gathered” lyrics
1.7, Introductions
1.8, Agenda Review
1.9-11, Covenant
1.12, Brainstorming about Families
1.13, What Makes a Family?
1.14-16, More about Families
1.17, Families
1.18, The Silo Mentality
1.19, MeChurch video
1.20, “I” and “We” Cultures
1.21-22, Building a New Way
1.23, Ask Each Other
1.24, Closing Worship
1.25-28, “Building a New Way” lyrics

Workshop 2
2.1, Welcome
2.2, Opening Worship
2.3, “Gathered Here” lyrics
2.4, Introductions
2.5, Covenant
2.6-7, Building a New Way
2.8, Congregation as “Family”
2.9-11, Developmental Models
2.12-14, Systems Thinking
2.15, Ask Yourself
2.16, Share
2.17, The Way Things Are
2.18, Share
2.19, Closing Worship
2.20-23, “Building a New Way” lyrics

**Workshop 3**
3.1, Welcome
3.2, Opening Worship
3.3, “Come, Come, Whoever You Are” lyrics
3.4, Introductions
3.5, Core Assumption
3.6, Prompting Questions
3.7-9, Reflect on This
3.10, Closing Worship
3.11-17, “When Our Heart Is in a Holy Place” lyrics
3.18-20, Ministry Is All That We Do Together

**Workshop 4**
4.1, Welcome
4.2, Opening Worship
4.3, “For Each New Morning” lyrics
4.4, Introductions
4.5-8, Ministry within Families
4.9-12, Full Circle
4.13, Closing Worship
4.14-17, “Guide My Feet” lyrics

**Workshop 5**
5.1, Welcome
5.2, Opening Worship
5.3-5, “I Seek the Spirit of a Child” lyrics
5.6, Introductions
5.7-9, Families Are the Heart of Congregational Life
5.11-13, Imagine: What if families created the congregation?
5.14, Take One Idea to the Next Level
5.15, Closing Worship
5.16-23, “Come Sing a Song with Me” lyrics

Workshop 6
6.1, Welcome
6.2, Opening Worship
6.3-7, “Enter, Rejoice and Come In” lyrics
6.8, Introductions
6.9-10, The Mission of the UU Church of Anytown
6.11-12, Nurturing Generations of UUs
6.13, Families Are the Heart of Congregational Life
6.14, Brainstorm
6.15-17, Fish Bowl
6.18, Processing Prompts
6.19, The Change Curve
6.20, If we’re going to do this
6.21, What we take away / Making a commitment
6.22, Closing Worship
6.23-28, “The Fire of Commitment” lyrics
6.29, Families
WORKSHOP 1: Unpacking “Family”

Workshop-at-a-Glance

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions 30 minutes
Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics 10 minutes
Activity 3: Creating a Covenant 10 minutes
Activity 4: What Makes a Family? 10 minutes
Activity 5: The Families We Come From 40 minutes
Activity 6: “Family” Is a Big Word 5 minutes
Activity 7: Building a New Way 25 minutes
Activity 8: An Overview of Upcoming Workshops 10 minutes
Activity 9: Closing Worship 10 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Notes to Facilitators

Keep in mind that exploring family can be emotional, can bring up memories for people in unanticipated ways, and may require pastoral care for participants. Pastoral care can be a tricky issue for religious professionals, as often the usual channels within a congregation are not available. Encourage participants who feel the need for further processing of feelings that came up in the workshop to seek out a trusted colleague or to speak with their own therapist or spiritual director.

Throughout this workshop be aware that there may be a desire by some participants to process their family issues. This is not the place for that. The intent of doing the pre-workshop work with the video is to allow people to do any needed processing of their emotional issues before coming to the workshop so that the group can move on from there rather than getting bogged down. Nonetheless, “family” can be very loaded for some
people, so do not be surprised if some strong feelings come up. (You may even have some.)

Goals

This workshop will:

- Introduce participants and facilitators to one another
- Allow for exploration and reflection of one’s own experiences of family
- Explore different ways the idea of “family” is understood—for example, generationally, culturally
- Begin to develop language that is radically inclusive to talk about “family”

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Begin to get to know one another and the facilitators
- Identify some of the assumptions they bring to the discussion of family ministry because of their own experiences of family or assumptions they make about “family”
- Expand their thinking of how “family” might be understood by people of other generations, cultures, and life experiences

Preparation

Facilitators should set up a shared folder. Provide a link in the letter to participants along with links to videos and handouts and other readings (see Sample Letter to Participants, p. 4).

The sample letter also guides you to ask participants to:

- Bring a journal and writing instrument; if using a laptop computer, they must bring a power cord
Bring an object that symbolizes their understanding of “family”

For Activity 4 and the activities that follow it, each facilitator will want to have done individual, reflective work about what you believe are the necessary components of a family and have articulated your own idea around limits to what might be called a family. Before this workshop, facilitators should ask themselves, and each other, the following questions:

- How will you respond as a facilitator if a belief outside of your comfort zone is expressed by a participant?
- How will you respond if there is heightened emotion or disagreement between participants?

Prepare together for how you will co-facilitate these activities.

Activity 7, Building a New Way, is very didactic, yet it is the foundation of the rest of the Family Ministry Workshop. Make sure to read through the Description of the activity several times. Consider the ideas yourself: Does the logic of it make sense? Does it make sense theologically? Do you see the connection to the antiracist, anti-oppressive, multicultural vision our Association has set? To better understand the I-we cultural analysis, you might want to watch the short video “Cultural Dimension: me or we,” from an Interfacet Training, Jun 18, 2010 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW7aWKXB5J4) (2:55). We encourage you to dialog with your co-facilitator or another trusted colleague to insure you have a solid grasp of this material and feel comfortable.

**Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions (30 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Chalice
- Chime or bell
- Candle and matches, or LED candle
- Centering table with cloth
● Boxes of tissues throughout the room
● Music player and music to play as people come in
● Laptop, projector, and screen
● Workshop 1, Slides 1-7
● Optional: Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

**Preparation**

● Invite participants to bring with them an object that symbolizes their understanding of “family.”
● Arrange chairs in a circle around the centering table and place the chalice on it. You might consider having tables and chairs in a circle for those who bring laptops or to make it easier for participants to take notes.
● Display Slide 1.
● Optional: Arrange for musical accompaniment or a participant to lead the singing.

**Description**

Greet participants as they enter. When everyone is gathered, ring the chime or bell and invite people to settle into the space and find their breath. After a sacred pause, one facilitator lights the chalice while the other speaks the chalice lighting words:

_We come into this circle, each carrying the experiences and understandings of our lives. This makes us distinct from one another. Yet we also come carrying a common desire to strengthen our congregations and our movement, ourselves, and one another. That gives us unity. As we strive to balance those distinctions and that unity, we light this chalice to show a way._ (Erik Walker Wikstrom)

Display Slide 2. Invite all to sing “Here We Have Gathered,” Hymn 360 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Note that you’ll be singing only verses 1 and 3 of the song lyrics by Alicia Carpenter. Display Slides 3-6 for the lyrics.

After the singing, say, in these words or your own:
Welcome. This is the first of [however many] workshops in which we will explore ideas about family ministry. We’re glad to see that we all made it safely. Some of us know one another already, some here are strangers, yet all of us are here, we hope, to work together, to learn together, to have fun together, and to develop, together, a deeper understanding of the power and the possibilities of the new vision of family ministry we’ll be exploring. It is certainly our hope as facilitators that by the time we’re done we will all have new ideas and new energy for taking this deeper understanding back home with us to the congregations we serve.

Have a co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

It’s always good to know who’s in the room with us and why. We’ll get to that second part—the why—in a moment, but for now let’s go around the circle and have each of us say our name, the congregation or community we serve, our role in that congregation, and anything else that might feel relevant for the group to know. After you introduce yourself, please place the object you brought that represents your understanding of family on the centering table, and briefly share one or two sentences about what the object is and why it represents your understanding of family.

Display Slide 7. Model your own answers to these introductory questions; then, invite each participant to share their answers. After each person speaks, invite them to place their object on the centering table and give their brief explanation.

It will be important to emphasize—perhaps more than once—that people should keep their sharing about their objects brief. This could easily take a great deal more than the time allotted if people don’t stick to the “one or two sentences” guideline. A helpful instruction can be, “This is really just a time for the headline, not the whole article.”

After everyone has spoken, invite participants to take a moment of silence to focus their attention on the centering table and hold in their hearts and minds good wishes for each member of the group, for the group as a learning community, and for the people in the congregations participants serve. After the silence, remark on the multifaceted beauty that is before the group, both on the centering table and in those gathered.
Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics (10 minutes)

Materials

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Workshop 1, Slide 8
- Handout 1.1, Schedule for Workshop 1
- Handout 1.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
- A display table for resources

Preparation

- Preparation details will vary depending on how many workshops you are offering.
- Arrange for someone familiar with the site to be available to explain logistics such as location of restrooms, arrangements for meals, etc.
- Prepare a sheet of newsprint for Parking Lot contributions. Many trainings use a “Parking Lot” for questions and ideas that are tangential or unrelated to the topic yet worth considering. Often there is also time for “Pressing Questions.” While there can be benefit in separating these two things, we suggest combining these on a single sheet. Participants can add questions they’d like to have addressed, as well as ideas that come up during the workshop. Display this list throughout the workshops and check it periodically to see if there is a way to address items listed.
- Decide when breaks will be taken and post their times.
- Display resource materials, including any that participants have brought.

Description

Display Slide 8. Invite the on-site contact to review information such as policies about moving furniture in the room and using tape on the walls, the locations of bathrooms, meal and snack times, Internet access, and any other important details.

Go over the workshop schedule on Handout 1.1 (Schedule for Workshop 1), adding times for breaks as needed.
Go over Handout 1.2 (Preparation for Workshop Evaluation) and invite participants to use it to take notes as the workshop progresses. Ask them to give any feedback about the site, lodging, or food arrangements (if applicable) directly to the coordinator or the on-site contact. Encourage them to speak directly to one of the co-facilitators as soon as possible about any problem they perceive with facilitation or group dynamics so that the situation can be addressed.

Identify other resources for this workshop, including:

- The Parking Lot (sometimes referred to as the Bike Rack). Indicate the posted piece of newsprint or other location where you wish to record Parking Lot items as they arise. Explain that this is where participants may post questions as they arise. Say that the facilitators will check the Parking Lot periodically and decide whether, how, and when to address Parking Lot topics.
- Resource tables. Invite participants to peruse resources in their free time and to add any brochures, program resources, or other materials they have brought to share.

Say something like:

We encourage you to think of our time together as more of a retreat than a class. Our time together is intended to provide an opportunity for reflection more than it is a chance to learn new techniques (although we hope that will happen too). While we are not engaging in any kind of group therapy, we should all be aware that talking about family can bring up powerful feelings, so it’s important to take care of yourself.

**Activity 3: Creating a Covenant (10 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Workshop 1, Slides 9-11

**Preparation**

- Be aware that the approach to creating a covenant provided here may generate some pushback. Familiarize yourself with a summary of White Supremacy Culture (http://www.cwsworkshop.org/PARC_site_B/dr-culture.html) that draws from the work of Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun in their book, *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for*...
Social Change Groups (ChangeWork, 2001). The summary describes 13 characteristics of White Supremacy Culture which many Unitarian Universalists will recognize from the workings of their congregations:

- Perfectionism
- Sense of urgency
- Defensiveness
- Quantity or quality
- Worship of the “right way” to do things
- Worship of the written word
- Paternalism
- Either-or thinking
- Power hoarding
- Fear of open conflict
- Individualism
- Progress = bigger, more
- Objectivity
- Right to comfort

Many of the “norms” that are enshrined in the covenants we are used to making are reflections of one of more of these characteristics. If we are serious as an Association about uncovering white supremacy’s underpinnings of our institutions’ structures, and are truly committed to learning a new, more truly multicultural way of being together, even cherished practices such as creating a covenant at the beginning of meetings need scrutiny.

When making the group covenant, be explicit with the group that not everyone defines or understands families in the same way, and, therefore, the group may discover areas of discomfort and disagreement about family structures. Pay attention to how these differing beliefs or experiences may create the need pastoral care for some participants.

Description
Display Slide 9 and ask for a volunteer to read it aloud:

Our Unitarian Universalist tradition is covenantal, meaning that what holds us together are the promises we make to one another. Unitarian Universalist lay leader Walter Herz offers this definition of a covenant: “The common understandings, agreements, and promises made, one to another, that define our mutual obligations and commitments to each other as we try to live our faith and vision.” As we form our Unitarian Universalist learning community, let us establish our covenant, one with another.

Say something like:

In many different situations one of the first things we do is create a covenant with things like “Start and end on time,” “Don’t talk over each other,” “Assume good intentions,” and other guidelines that we hope will help create a safe space for working together. As we learn more about the ways the dominant white supremacist culture influences the way we think about and experience things, we’re learning that many of the norms that are assumed to create safe space do not actually do so for everybody. In fact, many of the covenantal agreements we probably take for granted are really reflections of the norms of the dominant culture. We, then, propose that we take a more open-ended approach. We suggest four guidelines. [Display Slide 10.]

- Respect the needs of others.
- Listen to your own needs.
- When you are uncomfortable, turn to curiosity.
- Do your best, and forgive others (and yourself) when someone makes a mistake.

It will certainly be uncomfortable for some of us not to have more concrete guidelines, yet living into discomfort will increasingly be the norm of especially those Unitarian Universalists who identify as white, as we increasingly live into our professed antiracist, anti-oppressive, multicultural vision.

Have a co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:
It is important that we come to a clear common understanding about two things. The first is how we will talk about our congregations. Since we will be grounding our work together in the real-life experiences we have within our congregations, it is inevitable that we will talk about them. We suggest these guidelines: [Display Slide 11.]

- Feel free to speak about events, programs, or systems within your congregations.
- Refrain from sharing unflattering stories about individuals.

Another thing good for us to recognize together is that we all will not likely have the same understandings about what makes a family. Disagreement is okay. As the saying goes, we need not think alike to love alike.

Activity 4: What Makes a Family? (10 minutes)

Materials

- 2 easel stands with newsprint
- Markers, and tape for posting on wall
- Workshop 1, Slides 12-13

Preparation

- Prepare to have fun with this! Help the scribes decide who writes what if things get confused, but don’t worry about having everything captured perfectly. The goal of this exercise is not only the list, but the fun of generating it, so try to keep things moving quickly and keep the mood lively.

Description

Say something like:

We’re going to take five minutes to toss in any words that we associate with the idea of family. They can be positive or negative, about your family of origin or the one you’re in now, or qualities or characteristics of families in general. Feel free to share what you actually think or what you think that others think. No judgments. No discussion. We’d like you to toss in these ideas as quickly as you can.
To facilitate capturing it all, we’d like two volunteers, one to be at each of the easels. Neither of you should try to capture everything. One of you can write down the newest idea while the other is still writing out the last one. The lists we generate will be kept hanging throughout the workshops, and if other words come to mind, feel free to add them.

Display Slide 12.

After you have captured all the words the group generates, ask participants to silently reflect on the next two questions for five minutes and display Slide 13:

1. What are the necessary components of a family?
2. Are there limits to what can be called “family”?

Invite participants to simply sit with these questions or journal about their responses and thoughts. Invite them to note anything that surprises them.

During the discussion of the questions on Slide 13, make sure to pay attention to whether the group seems aligned around the necessary components of family. Is there agreement about any limits to what can be called family? Be sure to make room for all voices and opinions. Do not seek unanimity, rather, you are offering the opportunity to reflect and seek greater insight and understanding.

As you transition to the next activity, remind people that they are welcome to continue journaling their responses to these questions later and we will explore the questions again as a group.

Keep the ideas captured on newsprint available to participants for the rest of Workshop 1 as well as any other workshops offered. Have someone take a picture to post in the shared document folder you have provided.
Activity 5: The Families We Come From (40 minutes)

Materials

● Newsprint, markers, tape
● Chime or bell
● Workshop 1, Slides 14-16

Preparation

● Before leading this workshop, spend some time reflecting on your own family of origin and/or current family. Give yourself the opportunity to be with or process what comes up so that you are able to be fully present as a group facilitator.
● Familiarize yourself with the questions and prompts for participants in this activity.

Description

While this is a sharing activity, it is important to stress that this is not the time for individuals to process their experiences of and feelings about family. Rather, this is a time to take any observations and insights they had while doing the preparatory work. There are two primary reasons for this. First, there may be some staff teams who have come together who would not feel comfortable or safe sharing deeply and personally with one another, due to, for example, power dynamics in their work environment. Second, some people have extremely difficult relationships with their families. They may feel unsafe if expected to share intimately in this setting. (There may also be people who are only too willing to share deeply, risking turning this exercise into an experience akin to group therapy.)

Invite participants to quickly find a partner. If needed, make one group of three. Remind them of the pre-workshop video they watched, and explain that they’re now going to return to some of the questions they journaled about (ideally at some depth), but in a different way. Note: The time during which pairs are sharing is a good time to check for anything that may have been posted to the Parking Lot.
Tell the pairs that they will have two minutes to share with each other their response to one of the following statements (sharing partners do not have to respond to the same statements). Display Slide 14:

- When I think about my family I…
- The greatest gift I receive(d) from my family is…
- What I wish other people knew about my experience of family is…

Give a one-minute prompt to switch speakers. After two minutes, sound the chime.

Ask participants to quickly find a new partner with whom to share their response to ONE of the questions in the second (again, sharing partners do not have to respond to the same statements). Display Slide 15:

- One of the hardest things my family faced was…
- People would be surprised to learn that my family is…
- If my family wrote a book together, it would be about…

Give a one-minute prompt to switch speakers. After two minutes, sound the chime.

Ask participants to quickly form a new, final pair. Explain that they will have ten minutes this time to discuss the question. Display Slide 16:

What experiences of “family”—yours or others’—have you had, and how do these experiences shape your view of family?

After five minutes, sound the chime and tell participants that they have only five more minutes.

After five more minutes, sound the chime again and invite participants back into one circle. Ask if any surprises, commonalities, or striking differences came up in the sharing. Take about five minutes, capturing responses on newsprint and noting any points worth lifting up to the group. Have someone take a photograph to post in the shared documents folder.

Activity 6: Family Is a Big Word (5 minutes)

Materials

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
• The brainstorm about family from Activity 4, What Makes a Family?
• Workshop 1, Slides 17-19

Preparation

• Take time to reflect about what you believe to be the necessary components of a family. Reflect on your own idea about limits to what might be called a family
• Make sure the original brainstorm about family is visible to all.

Description

Display Slide 17. Give participants a moment to look at the images on the slide. Then, spend about five minutes talking about the kinds of families in the congregation or community each participant serves and kinds of families in the wider society that may not be represented in their congregation or community. One co-facilitator should capture participant contributions on newsprint.

If the group does not generate these examples, encourage participants to think about families in which grandparents, parents, and children live together; families in which grandparents are raising their grandchildren; families with parents living in different places; single parent families; multiracial families; multi-religious families; families that include aunties, uncles, and cousins; friends who choose to be family together; families with two dads or two moms; families that include pets or animal companions; and any other variations the group can imagine. Be sure adoptive families, foster families, and polyamorous families are included in your discussion.

After five minutes, say these words or your own:

_We may not actually know the full answer to these questions. It is very likely that there are some families in our congregations who don’t feel safe openly sharing who they are, either because of our congregation’s norms or the norms of the larger society._
Activity 7: Building a New Way (25 minutes)

Materials

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Notes from the brainstorm, “What Makes a Family?”
- Workshop 1, Slides 18-23
- Optional: Computer with Internet connection, projector, and speakers and MeChurch video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGEmlPjgjVI

Preparation

- Take time to reflect about what you believe to be essential or necessary components of a family.
- View the MeChurch video on YouTube. Prepare to show the video to the group, or, if sharing is not possible, to describe its content.
- Make sure the original brainstorm about family is visible to all.

Description

Say these words or your own:

_The purpose of this workshop, its not-so-hidden agenda, is to suggest a culture shift in our congregations. Many of us would recognize the idea that we often operate with a “silo mentality.” [Display Slide 18.] What happens in our sanctuaries on Sunday morning is seen as somehow the heart of congregational life, with things likes Children’s and Youth RE, Adult Faith Development, and maybe Pastoral Care as various programs that the congregation offers.

_We have inherited a culture that emphasizes the needs of the individual. In our congregations we may be aware that people are often primarily concerned with what they are going to get out of something or what the congregation is doing for them, even if only unconsciously. This video created by the Christian media company Ignighter Media gives a somewhat exaggerated version of this way of thinking._
Display Slide 19. Stream the MeChurch video from YouTube, or describe the video to the group. Invite participants to add two or three of their own silly examples of what might be offered in a MeChurch. Then, have a co-facilitator say, in these or their own words.

The silo mentality and the emphasis on the needs of the individual are related. One reason for the silo mentality is the intertwined notions that (1) the work of men is more valuable than the work of women and (2) concerns of adults are more important than concerns of children. Until recently, the vast majority of ordained clergy were men. Since the middle of the 20th century, most leaders of children’s and youth religious education have been women. The functions men did, such as leading worship in the sanctuary for adults, have been seen as more important than the work women were doing, tending to the spiritual lives of children.

Another reason so many congregations operate with distinct silos is that the emphasis on the individual—the “me,” the “I”—tends to make the things that I am interested and involved in seem distinct from and more important than the other things going on.

Some say that this emphasis on individualism is a gift of our Transcendentalist ancestors. Yet it can be argued that we have misunderstood their legacy. At the time that Margaret Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody were championing the individual, the wider culture around them was encouraging what our religious forebears felt was a stultifying conformity. One interpretation, then, of their fierce individualism is as a reaction against their prevailing culture. To the extent that that’s true, we could say their legacy to us is not so much their individualism but their countercultural role. And that would mean that we, today, should resist conformity to our dominant culture, which idolizes the individual. We should now be championing community!

Have a co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

A renewed emphasis on the importance of community is in keeping with our commitment to becoming a truly antiracist, anti-oppression, multicultural religious movement. In her book, Salsa, Soul, and Spirit, Juana Bordas notes that cultural anthropologists distinguish between “I” cultures and “we” cultures.
You can look over the two lists and, I’m sure, think of things you’d add to each. And while most Unitarian Universalist congregations might see themselves as “we” communities, the way most are structured and operate is firmly in the “I” column.

So…here is the thinking that underlies this Family Ministry Training.

- Unitarian Universalists tend to be individualistic…
- Our congregations often operate with a silo mentality…
- Our faith calls us to live into becoming a truly multicultural Association…
- Nondominant cultures tend to be communal (i.e., “we”) rather than individualist (i.e., “I”)…

SO…the culture shift in our congregations we are advocating is:

- We are called to learn how to develop a “we” culture in our faith communities, both for our own sake and as a model for the world.

This workshop is based on the notion that our Unitarian Universalist theology and tradition are calling us to change the way we look at ourselves and see the cultivation of community—and communal identity—as more important than addressing individual wants and desires.

Have a co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

Taking this a step further, in many “we” cultures the concept of family is the heart of communal life. This isn’t the “family” described by the U.S. dominant culture—an isolated nuclear family cut off from a wider network of kinship. Instead, in “we” cultures, “family” is understood to include everyone in the community, with everyone being related in some way or other. In “we” communities, the concept of “family” has little to do with lineage or being a blood relative. Instead, the concept of “family” has everything to do with interconnectedness and relationship.
Even in the dominant “I” culture, most people have some experience of “we.” In all their wonderful diversity, families can be experiences of “we”; ideally, they are based in relationship and connection. There may be some of us whose own experiences of family have not lived up to this inclusive ideal. Yet even when our own families have not been the best examples of connectedness, the idea of family—what we think a family should be—is a vision of connectedness, belonging, cooperation, and nurture.

So, if we are serious about building a new way of being in community—moving from the “I” to the “we”—if we accept that this culture shift we’re talking about is a central calling of our faith, then it makes sense to move our families from their too frequent position at the periphery of congregational life to its center. Flipping the prevailing paradigm from its emphasis on what happens in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings, primarily with adults as individuals, we instead focus our attention and resources on those programs that both impact and actively support people in the context of familial relationships. Supporting families with children is a concrete step we can take to affirm, model, and learn from their experience of “we” in an “I” culture. Focusing on the family with adults and children living together is an effective way to help our congregations develop their understanding of themselves as “we” communities, so that they might nurture and lift up all families and all the different ways in which we are family.

This is why a fundamental premise that underlies and supports everything else in this workshop is the assertion, “Families are the heart of congregational life!”

Display Slide 22. Give participants a moment to let that sink in, and then invite them to get together in staff teams from the same congregation, if possible. If some individuals are on their own, invite them to form groups of two to three people.

Display Slide 23. Ask the groups to spend about ten minutes discussing these questions:

- What would it mean in the congregation we serve if families really were the heart of congregational life?
- How might things be different? What possibilities would open up? How can focusing on families with children provide a model for ministering to all families?

After ten minutes, invite participants to return to one group. Then say these words or your own:

_This is certainly a conversation that deserves much more time than we have here, but remember that this is ongoing work you can take with you for further consideration, journaling, or talking about in your staff team._

Ask participants to briefly offer any surprises, challenges, questions, or insights they've experienced in this workshop. Allow ten minutes for this discussion.

**Activity 8: An Overview of Upcoming Workshops (10 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Handout 1.3, Family Ministry Workshop Resources

**Preparation**

- Be prepared to talk about the sequence of workshops your group will experience over the course of this training.
- This could be a good place to lift up any of the questions or ideas that people have noted on the Parking Lot and indicate where in future workshops they may be addressed.

**Description**

Describe the future workshops you've elected to offer. Provide an overview of what participants can expect in the workshops to come. Explain the way the workshops will fit together and the intended outcome(s). Go over Handout 1.3 (Family Ministry Workshop Resources) and note that it includes resources related to material that may be included in a workshop you will not be using together but which could add to their ongoing work of developing and deepening their approach to family ministry.
Activity 9: Closing Worship (10 minutes)

Materials

- Chalice
- Candle and matches, or LED candle
- Workshop 1, Slides 24-28
- Centering table with cloth
- Music to play as people depart (and equipment)
- Optional: Copies of Singing the Journey, supplement to the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

Preparation

- Invite participants to return their chairs to a circle (if they are not already).

Description

Thank participants for the heart they brought to the workshop and for the curiosity they offered one another. Display Slide 24 and invite everyone to sing “Building a New Way,” Hymn 1017 in Singing the Journey. Display Slides 25-28 for the lyrics.

Have one facilitator extinguish the chalice while the other reads:

As we part now one from another, let these be our thoughts:

If that which is most holy lies within the human person, and if the greatest power in the world shines flickering and uncertain from each individual heart, then it is easy to see the value of human associations dedicated to nurturing that light: the couple, the family, the religious community.

For the power of good in any one of us must at times waver. But when a group together is dedicated to nurturing the power of good, it is rare for the light to grow dim in all individuals at the same moment.

So we borrow courage and wisdom from one another, to warm us and keep us until we’re together again.
Thank participants for their active engagement and enthusiasm. If the group will not return to this meeting space, remind participants to take with them the object they brought to symbolize “family.”

**Post-Workshop**

Take some time after each workshop to discuss your and your co-facilitator's experiences and your observations of the participants.

In your reflection and discussion consider these questions:

- What worked well in today's workshop? How can these elements or approaches be repeated or amplified in the future?
- What was most challenging? What could be done to make these parts easier or more effective?
- At what points were participants most and least engaged?
- Were all voices in the group heard?
- Was the room set up in a way conducive to group functioning?
- Did you have all the resources you needed?
- Did you feel prepared for any pastoral issues that emerged in the course of the workshop? How did you—and the group—respond? Is there anything you would do differently?
- Was your practical and spiritual preparation time adequate?
- Are there opportunities for improvement and modification in advance of the next workshop?

Keep the newsprint with the brainstorming and other notes to re-use in Workshop 2.
WORKSHOP 2: Church as “Family”

Workshop-at-a-Glance

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions 30 minutes
Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics 5 minutes
Activity 3: A Review of Building a New Way 5 minutes
Activity 4: The Good and Bad of "Church as Family" 20 minutes
Activity 5: How Things Develop 40 minutes
Activity 6: Shifting the Culture 45 minutes
Activity 7: Closing Worship 5 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Notes to Facilitators

If this workshop follows Workshop 1, use it as written. If, instead, this is participants’ first workshop, it will need some adaptation:

- As part of preparation, ask participant to view the Family Ministry Training introductory video, “Family Ministry Training: Introduction to Workshop 1”:
  https://uuacdn.s3.amazonaws.com/videos/family-ministry-workshop-1-video.mp4
- Adapt Activity 1, Opening Worship and Introduction to suit a group that is meeting for the first time. Use Workshop 1, Activity 1 as a model.

Keep in mind throughout this workshop that this training is not primarily for skill, although it offers some of that. This training is really about the philosophical and theological focus of our congregations’ lives. It is a fundamental assertion of the authors that shifting that “center” to our families with adults and children living together will not only improve our “family ministry” as it’s been traditionally understood, but will also be a catalyst to the
needed shift of our cultural paradigm if we are to truly evolve and transform into the anti-racist, anti-oppression, multi-cultural communities we claim to want to be.

**Goals**

This workshop will:

- Provide participants with an overview of family systems and developmental theories
- Explore ways that congregations are like a family, as well as ways they are different from families
- Help participants reflect on their current congregational culture while creating a vision of a congregation that sees family ministry as the heart of congregational life

**Learning Objectives**

Participants will:

- Continue to get to know one another and the facilitators
- Leave with a general understanding of relevant family systems and developmental theories and with suggestions for resources to learn more
- Become clearer about the ways a congregation is—and is not—like a family
- Begin to identify what successful family ministry would look like in their setting

**Preparation**

Ask participants in advance to:

- Bring a journal and writing instrument, or if they are bringing a laptop computer, ask them to bring their own power cord.
- Bring an object that symbolizes their understanding of “family.” This item will be placed on the communal centering table during the workshop.
- **If this is the first workshop**, watch the introductory video “Family Ministry Workshop: Introduction to Workshop 1” (9:08) ([https://uuacdn.s3.amazonaws.com/videos/family-ministry-workshop-1-video.mp4](https://uuacdn.s3.amazonaws.com/videos/family-ministry-workshop-1-video.mp4)).
- Optional: Look at the Supplemental Material in the online, shared folder, particularly:

o video, Friedman’s Theory of Differentiated Leadership Made Simple (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgcdcljNV-Ew) (6:44)

o video, Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory of Human Development (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpe18fKh AeY) (4:30)

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions (30 minutes)

Materials

- Chalice
- Candle and matches, or LED candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Table for resource materials
- Music player and music to play as people gather
- Laptop, projector, and screen
- Workshop 2, Slides 1-4
- Participants' objects for the centering table (see Workshop 1)
- Optional: Copies of Singing the Living Tradition, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

Preparation

- If the participants' objects for the centering table were removed, have the objects on a nearby side table so that people can pick them up as they enter the opening circle.
- Display Slide 1.
- Arrange chairs in a circle around the centering table and place the chalice on it.
- Optional: Arrange for musical accompaniment or volunteer to lead the singing.
Description

Greet participants as they enter the room. If applicable, invite them to reclaim their object from the side table.

Display Slide 2. Once everyone has gathered, have one co-facilitator light the chalice while the other speaks the chalice lighting words by Gordon McKeeman, from the UUA Worship Web:

*Deep calls unto deep, joy calls unto joy, light calls unto light. Let the kindling of this flame rekindle in us the inner light of love, of peace, of hope. And "as one flame lights another, nor grows the less," we pledge ourselves to be bearers of the light, wherever we are.*

Then say,

*As we light this flame, we reaffirm that if we are serious about building a new way of being in community—moving from an “I” culture to a “we” culture—if we accept that this culture shift we're talking about is a central calling of our faith, then it makes sense to move our families from their too frequent position at the periphery of our congregational life to its center. And so we say:*

*Families are the heart of congregational life!*

Display Slide 3 and invite all to sing “Gathered Here,” Hymn 89 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

Say these words or your own:

*In this workshop we’re going to move from considering the concept of "family" to looking at one of the most common analogies in our line of work—that a congregation is like a family. As we realized last time, "family" is a pretty complex idea, open to a wide variety of understandings and interpretations. This, of course, makes using it as an analogy for the community of our congregations a little challenging.*

Have the co-facilitator say, in these words or their own:

*Before we get into all of that, it’s always good to know who’s in the room with us. From day to day, moment to moment, we change. We are not all the same people we were the last*
time we gathered. Let’s go around the circle and each one remind the others of your name, the congregation you serve, and your role in that congregation. If there’s anything going on in your life that affects who and how you are [tonight or this morning or this afternoon], this is a good time to briefly share it.

If the centering table is still set with people’s objects from the previous workshop, skip this next part. If not, say something like:

*Please introduce yourself, and then place on the centering table the object you brought that represents your understanding of family. We ask that you do this without comment and simply let the object speak for itself.*

Display Slide 4. Model the introduction by giving your answers to the introductory questions first. Then invite each person to share their answers to the questions. After each person speaks, invite them to place their object on the centering table (without comment). If the centering table is still set with people’s objects from the previous workshop or after all have placed their objects, invite participants to take a moment of silence to focus their attention on the table, to simply observe how it is the same and how it is different from before, and to hold in their hearts and minds good wishes for each member of the group, for the group as a learning community, and for the people of the congregations all participants serve. After the silence, remark on the multifaceted beauty that is before the group, both on the centering table and among those gathered in the circle.

**Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics (5 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 2.1, Schedule for Workshop 2
- Handout 2.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
- Workshop 2, Slide 5
Preparation

- **If you did not do Workshop 1**, review Workshop 1, Activity 3 to help you introduce the “open-ended covenant.” Be ready for some participants to be unfamiliar, possibly uncomfortable, given how steeped UUs tend to be in the practice of negotiating a fairly detailed and specific covenant at the beginning of meetings. Prepare to convey that looking at our practices through an antiracist, anti-oppression lens reveals that many agreements UUs include in our covenants reflect assumptions born of, and perpetuated by, the white supremacist culture.

- Arrange for someone familiar with the site to explain logistics such as location of restrooms, arrangements for meals, etc.

- Display resource materials, including any that participants have brought.

- Prepare a sheet of newsprint for Parking Lot contributions. **If you did not do Workshop 1**, use Workshop 1, Activity 2, Preparation to help you explain the Parking Lot to the group.

Description

Introduce the on-site contact and invite them to share information such as bathroom locations, meal and snack plans, policies about moving furniture in the room and using tape on the walls, and Internet access.

Go over the workshop schedule on Handout 2.1 (Schedule for Workshop 2), adding time for breaks as needed. Refer people to Handout 2.2 (Preparation for Workshop Evaluation), encouraging people who wish to keep notes throughout the workshop or to take time after the workshop to jot down their thoughts.

Display Slide 5. Remind people of the open-ended covenant they created in Workshop 1.

Identify other resources for this workshop, including:

- The Parking Lot (sometimes referred to as the Bike Rack). Indicate the posted piece of newsprint or other location where you wish to record Parking Lot items as they arise. Explain that this is where participants may post questions as they arise. Say
that the facilitators will check the Parking Lot periodically and decide whether, how, and when to address Parking Lot topics.

- Resource tables. Invite participants to peruse resources in their free time and to add any brochures, programs, or other materials they have brought to share.

**Activity 3: A Review of Building a New Way (5 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Newsprint from brainstorm about family from Activity 4, What Makes a Family?
- Workshop 2, Slides 6-7

**Preparation**

- If the group has not done Workshop 1, prepare to adapt the “Review of Family” exercise to provide a brief discussion of participants’ feelings, impressions, or experiences of family that came up while watching the Introductory Video.

**Description**

Say these words or your own:

*Let's just take a few moments to refresh our memories of what we did in the last workshop when began to explore a “new way.” We said that [Display Slide 6]:*

- Unitarian Universalists tend to be individualistic…
- Our congregations often operate with a silo mentality…
- Our faith calls us to live into becoming a truly multicultural Association…
- Nondominant cultures tend to be communal (“we”) rather than individualist (“I”)

SO...the culture shift in our congregations we are advocating is:

- We are called to learn how to develop a “we” culture in our faith communities, both for our own sake and as a model for the world.
This is why a fundamental premise that underlies and supports everything else in this workshop is the assertion that [Display Slide 7]:

Families are the heart of congregational life!

Activity 4: The Good and the Bad of "Congregation as Family"

(20 minutes)

Materials

- Newsprint, markers, tape
- Paper and pens for each dyad
- Chime or bell
- Workshop 2, Slide 8

Preparation

- Take time to think through for yourself what is positive about the idea of congregation, or, church, as family and also how this analogy can be an unhelpful.

Description

Ask participants to form groups of four or five with enough space between groups to minimize distractions. Explain that you, the co-facilitators, will ask some groups to identify as many benefits as possible of thinking of the congregation, or, church, as a family. Other groups will be asked to name reasons why “congregation as family” is not a useful analogy. [Display Slide 8.] Tell everyone that they have five minutes to come up with as many things as they can—serious or silly. The goal is quantity! Give the groups their assignments (either thinking of the positives or how this analogy is not useful). Try to have an equal number of groups playing with both concepts.

Stress that the goal of this exercise is not to create the most thoughtful list but, rather, the longest list. Each group should generate as many ideas as possible. Not only will this most likely allow important insights to surface that would not have if participants had had the
opportunity to censor their thinking (e.g., saying only ideas that they would think are “good”), it should also make the exercise a lot of fun. If you see the energy wane, stir it up!

Give groups five minutes. Then, invite everyone back into one circle. Invite groups to share two or three "good" or "bad" things about church as family. Capture these on newsprint and then decide if there are any points worth exploring more fully as a group. Have someone take a photograph to post in the online, shared document folder. Next, invite the group to reflect on how congregational size might play a part. Is “church as family” more positive for congregations of certain size(s), and more negative for other sizes? Summarize on newsprint any relevant observations or key learnings from this discussion. Have someone photograph this, too.

**Activity 5: How Things Develop (40 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Handouts 2.3, A Beginning Bibliography; 2.4, Two Approaches to Developmental Theory; 2.5, Comparison of Some Developmental Theories; and 2.6a and 2.6b, Family Systems Scenarios
- Workshop 2, Slides 9-14

**Preparation**

- Review your understanding of family systems and developmental theory to ensure you feel comfortable and competent to give an overview of the slides’ and handouts’ content.
- This could very easily be boring—presentation more than participatory—so try to move through the material at a good clip so that there will be time for the discussion of how participants are applying, or could imagine themselves applying, these ideas.

**Description**

Say, in these words or your own:

*One benefit of thinking of congregations as “family” (even if we don’t say it out loud!) is that it encourages us to apply to our congregations the tools of both family systems theory*
and psychosocial developmental theories. Many resources are readily available and can give you a solid introduction, and many more can take you as deep as you want to go. [Refer to Handouts 2.3-2.6.] These handouts will remind you of what we talk about here, and also list some places you can go for deeper understanding. A search online will take you to literally hundreds more. For now, here is a brief overview:

Have the co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

*Remember that there’s not just one theory of human psychological, spiritual, emotional, social, or any other kind of growth.*

Display Slide 9. *Note:* This slide is intentionally overwhelming, as a humorous way to show the complexity of the thinking about human psychosocial development. Say:

*All the theories have one common idea—that humans develop through stages, and these stages are related to our chronological age. [Display Slide 10.] To look at just one example, the psychologist Erik Erikson said that from our infancy—when the foundational question we wrestle with is whether or not we’re safe in the world—we go through eight distinct stages, culminating in late adulthood when we either look back at our life and see it as an integrated whole, or with despair at a life we feel was wasted.*

If you wish, talk through the eight stages depicted on the slide.

Display Slide 11 and say that it names just a few of the people known for foundational work in the field of human development. Make sure to point participants toward the UU Identity Renaissance Module to learn more.

Have the co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

*Family systems theory developed as a therapeutic tool, a way of understanding the dynamics at work within any individual person through the lens of a particular “system” of which they are a part, rather than looking at the person in isolation. A family is such a system. Systems theory recognizes that within any particular*
system—like a family—people tend to play particular roles. [Display Slide 12.] A family may have an authoritarian, a clown, and someone who is seen as “the problem.” It’s usually one person in the family who tends to swoop in like a hero to save a person or a situation, and there’s often one person who seems to always be making peace between people. Identifying the role a person has been playing in a family can help to make sense of the dynamics at play.

A congregation is another system, and it also has its roles. [Display Slide 13.] There might be a matriarch or patriarch, a person or group that always seems to be fomenting discord, and someone who keeps coming up with creative solutions. Systems theory also teaches that unless the entire system is changed, these roles will continue to be filled even if the person or group filling them leaves. In the case of a family, if the so-called problem child begins to temper their behavior, someone else will step in to create the chaos the system has come to expect.

[Display Slide 14.] When you look at a congregation as a system, you are more likely to look at any particular event in a different way—you begin to look below the surface level to see the patterns, the systemic structures, the ingrained ways of thinking that are all involved in every interaction.

Invite participants to gather in one of two groups. Then say, in these words or your own:

Each group will consider a scenario through the lens of family systems theory. It is not necessary to be “experts;” do your analysis with the understanding you have. Each sheet also has a copy of the slide that’s on the screen right now to help facilitate your thinking. You will have 15 minutes for this exercise. It would be great if one person in each group would volunteer to take notes.

Assign Handout 2.6 (Family Systems Scenarios), 2.6a to one group and 2.6b to the other. Be sure participants understand that they are not expected to know all of the intricacies of systems theory; while this exercise may inspire them to learn more, the object is to begin to experience how systems theory can help analyze the dynamics in a congregation or community they serve.
Also, note that some people don’t like working with hypothetical scenarios; some prefer to form decisions based on all the information they might have, and these scenarios are of necessity lacking in detail. You can encourage participants to make up details that they think are relevant. When groups report back, you might ask why they thought a particular piece of information was important to fill in.

First Scenario: Handout 2.6a

The congregation’s Board is considering a new policy that states no all-congregation events can be scheduled unless child care is provided. Some members are enthusiastic; others are hesitant. One member, who has been a congregant for many years, brings up the congregation’s historical problem with funding its budget—“Where will the money for this come from?” Someone replies, timidly, “Maybe it could come out of the RE budget.” “The people who use it should have to pay for it!” another member announces. Several people immediately agree, although some privately don’t. Finally, the Board President suggests tabling the issue and creating a subgroup to look into what other congregations do. What’s going on?

Second Scenario: Handout 2.6b

The Director of Faith Development and Lead Minister are considering changing the Sunday morning schedule from 9:15 and 11:15 (with RE offered during both services), to 8:45 and 11:15 (with life-span faith development offered between the services). They call a joint meeting of both the Religious Education and Worship Committees, since both groups would oversee such a change. A lot of questions are raised, ranging from whether anyone would come to an 8:45 service to how they could find space for everyone in RE between services. One longtime member says that they’ve tried to have an earlier service before, and it’s never worked. Someone else declares that the presence of children in the sanctuary during worship is distracting. Someone else says, just loud enough to be heard, “The presence of some adults is distracting!” “Now, now, now,” another member says, trying to calm everyone down. “Maybe we could try it for a month or two as an experiment.” The discussion continues like this, and the Director of Faith Development and Lead Minister look at each other. They know it’s going to be a long night. What’s going on?
After 15 minutes, ring the chime, and ask each group to report on their discussion. Have someone make notes on newsprint. Give the group about 15 minutes to share what each group has done and then to reflect together on any lessons. Have someone photograph and post the notes.

**Activity 6: Shifting the Culture (45 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Workshop 2, Slides 15-18
- Notepaper and pens
- Participants’ journals
- Art supplies, including drawing paper, markers, crayons, etc.
- Music player (with speakers) and soothing music
- Chime

**Preparation**

- Set out art supplies on a side table.
- Cue the music and test to make sure the device you're using to play the music is fully charged and loud enough to be heard.
- Take note that in this activity participants will be asked to share one word about how they are feeling. This is intentional and important. We UUs tend to spend a lot of time in our heads and talk a lot about ideas. Especially at the end of a workshop that has presented some new, potentially challenging, ideas, participants may feel tempted to talk more about them. Encourage participants to resist any such temptation and to connect with what they are feeling—in their body, in their soul. Plan to offer the group a moment or two of silence before the sharing begins, to facilitate this movement from “head” to “heart.” As co-facilitators, plan to start the sharing, to model it.

**Description**

Say something like:
We will keep coming back to the idea that what we are really talking about is a culture shift. This is so much more than simply improving our Religious Education programs or finding ways to more fully integrate families into the life of the whole congregation. It is about helping congregations move from the dominant “I” monoculture to the “we” culture to which our multicultural aspirations call us. We’re focusing on families with children and adults living together, because we understand that they are the families with whom we interact most directly and potentially most powerfully in our congregations. The work you do with families with children will help the whole congregation develop their understanding of themselves as “we” communities so that they might nurture and lift up all families and all the different ways in which we are family.

Have the co-facilitator say, in these words or their own:

*In a great many of our congregations we talk a lot about how important it is that we reach out to "young families," and that "children are our future," yet in too many of our congregations the religious education programs that actually serve these families are relegated to a kind of second-class status. What happens in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings is "church." What happens in the RE classrooms is "our RE program." There are lots of reasons for this, and we’re not going to go into them right now. Instead, we’re going to simply acknowledge that this is the way things are in quite possibly the majority of our congregations.*

Invite everyone to take a few minutes to reflect privately on their own reaction to the idea of families being at the heart of congregational life. Display Slide 15. What does this idea mean to them? How have they experienced or not experienced families being at the heart of congregational life? In what ways does the congregation with which they are most familiar support and lift up families of all kinds? What feelings and thoughts does this way of thinking about congregational life stir up in them? Encourage participants to use their journals or the notepaper and pens provided. Encourage those who might like to take an artistic approach to use the drawing supplies available. Give participants about ten minutes for this exercise.
Call people back from their reflection. If possible, ask them to gather into groups from the same congregation. Otherwise, help them form groups of three or four.

Display Slide 16. Invite participants to use the prompt on the slide to assess their own experiences of their particular congregation. Remind participants that everyone may not have the same experience, and that people do not need to convince one another or agree. This is an opportunity for sharing, listening, and learning from one another. Give ten minutes for this exercise.

After ten minutes call for participants’ attention. Say these words or your own:

Conversations will start here that you simply won't have time to finish here today. If this wasn't one, don't worry. There will be at least one. The purpose of this workshop is not to finish our exploration of family ministry but to launch it.

[Display Slide 17.] Now we're going to move from "what is" to "what could be." This can be a tricky thing, because some of us take this prompting and begin to imagine what things could be like in a “best of all possible worlds,” as in Voltaire’s satire, Candide. Others think about what things could be like, given the real constraints in our day-to-day lives as religious professionals serving real congregations. When one person is talking about one of these and the other is talking about the other, problems can arise. In and of itself that disparity is not a problem. It becomes a problem, though, when we don’t realize we’re talking about two different things. So as we move into the next exercise, remember to be clear with each other about whether your visioning is more utopian or realistic.

Display Slide 18. Ask participants to use the prompts to guide their discussion. Give them 20 minutes for this exercise.

After 20 minutes sound the chime and re-gather the large circle. Ask people to go around and share one word to express how they are feeling about what they've just experienced (anyone can pass). After everyone who wants to has shared, take a minute of silence. Then ask people to go around again. What other words come up? When everyone who wants to has shared their word, thank them. Remind participants that this is a journey, and
that no matter how eager they may wish to arrive, the journey itself is where the work of ministry happens.

**Activity 7: Closing Worship (5 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Chalice
- Candle and matches, or LCD candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Participants’ objects for the centering table
- Music to play as participants leave
- Workshop 2, Slides 19-23
- Optional: Copies of *Singing the Journey*, supplement to the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

**Preparation**

- Pay attention to the energy and dynamics of the group, and be prepared to close the workshop with a song and words that meet the energy and needs of the group.

**Description**

Display Slide 19. Thank participants for the heart they brought to the workshop and for the curiosity they offered one another. Invite everyone to sing Hymn 1017, “Building a New Way,” in *Singing the Journey*.

Display Slides 20-23 for the lyrics.

After singing, have one co-facilitator read the following words while the other extinguishes the chalice.

*We think of ourselves as so independent,*

*so uniquely ourselves;*
yet truly—who we are depends on where we are,
and who we’re with,
and all the myriad interconnections
that we can’t even see.
As we look at ourselves,
and those with whom we work,
and all those we know and love,
may we remember this truth.
—Erik Walker Wikstrom

Extinguish the chalice. Thank participants for their active engagement and enthusiasm. Ask participants to retrieve their items from the centering table, because they will not be used in upcoming workshops (other objects participants were asked to bring will be used instead).

**Post Workshop**

Take some time after each workshop to discuss your and your co-facilitator's experiences and note your observations of the participants.

In your reflection and discussion consider these questions:

- What worked well in today's workshop? How can these elements or approaches be repeated or amplified in the future?
- What was most challenging? What could be done to make these parts easier or more effective?
- At what points were participants most and least engaged?
- Were all voices in the group heard?
- Was the room set up in a way conducive to group functioning?
● Did you have all the resources you needed?

● Did you feel prepared for any pastoral issues that emerged in the course of the workshop? How did you—and the group—respond? Is there anything you would do differently?

● Was your practical and spiritual preparation time adequate?

● Are there opportunities for improvement and modification in advance of the next workshop?
WORKSHOP 3: Ministry to Families

Workshop-at-a-Glance

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions 15 minutes
Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics 5 minutes
Activity 3: A Review of Foundations 10 minutes
Activity 4: Exploring Core Components of Ministry to Families 50 minutes
Activity 5: Naming Some Challenges We Face 35 minutes
Activity 6: Doing This Work Together 30 minutes
Activity 7: Closing Worship 5 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Notes to Facilitators

If this workshop follows Workshop 2, use it as written. However, if this is participants’ first workshop, it will need some adaptation:

- Participants will need help to identify components and characteristics of successful family ministry and celebrate what they are already doing well in their congregations.
- Adapt Activity 1, Opening Worship and Introduction to suit a group that is meeting for the first time. Use Workshop 1, Activity 1 as a model.

An overview of family systems thinking and developmental theory was presented in Workshop 2, and is reviewed in Activity 3, A Review of Foundations. If your group did not do Workshop 2, ask participants to review the following resources before coming to this workshop:

- The Reader (especially pp. 4-10) for the Unitarian Universalist Identity Renaissance Module (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/renmod_uuid_reader.pdf)


- Video, Friedman’s Theory of Differentiated Leadership Made Simple (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgdcljNV-Ew)
- Video, Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory of Human Development (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpE18fKhAeY)

Goals

This workshop will:

- Help participants identify components and characteristics of successful family ministry and celebrate what they are already doing well in their congregations
- Explore the challenges of this work and identify possible resources and sources of support
- Reflect on the power and potential of shared ministry to enhance a congregation’s ministries to its families

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn about and explore different facets of ministering to families
- Become clearer about the personal and systemic challenges to this work
- Reflect on how to begin or continue a dialog in their own congregation about the power and promise of shared ministry to families
- Identify a programmatic success to share with others

Preparation

In advance, ask participants to:

- Bring a journal and writing instrument, or if using a laptop computer, to bring a power cord.
● Bring an object or an image of an object that symbolizes one way their congregation ministers to families (such as a children’s chalice, a sanctuary activity packet, an item from a rite of passage ritual, etc.). This item will be placed on the centering table during the workshop.

● **If this is the first workshop of the series**, watch the Family Ministry Training introductory video, “Family Ministry Training: Introduction to Workshop 1”


● Look at the work of Karen Bellavance-Grace on developing a “Full Week Faith,” which we will refer to in this workshop as supporting the “home church.” (http://fullweekfaith.weebly.com/).

### Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions (15 minutes)

#### Materials

- Chalice
- Chime or bell
- Candle and matches, or LED candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Music player and music to play as people gather
- Laptop, projector, and screen
- Workshop 3, Slides 1-4
- Optional: Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

#### Preparation
● Invite participants to bring an object or image of an object that symbolizes one way their congregation ministers to families (such as a children’s chalice, a sanctuary activity packet, an item from a rite of passage ritual, etc.). Arrange chairs in a circle around the centering table and place the chalice on it. You might consider having tables and chairs in a circle for those who bring laptops or to make it easier for participants to take notes.

● Display Slide 1.

● Optional: Arrange for musical accompaniment or a participant to lead the singing.

Description

Greet participants as they enter the room. Invite them to place the objects they have brought with them on the centering table. Once everyone has gathered, one facilitator lights the chalice while the other speaks the chalice lighting words:

Speak the text while performing the gestures described in brackets.

*We light this chalice to celebrate Unitarian Universalism.* [When saying "Unitarian," cup right hand in a U shape. When saying "Universalism," cup left hand in a U shape.]

*This is a church of the open mind.* [Touch hands to head, then open them outward.]

*This is a church of the helping hands.* [Hold hands out in front of you, palms up.]

*This is a church of the loving heart.* [Cross hands flat over heart]

Together we care for our earth and work for friendship and peace in our world.

As we light this flame, we reaffirm that if we are serious about building a new way of being in community—moving from an “I” culture to a “we” culture—if we accept that this culture shift we’re talking about is a central calling of our faith, then it makes sense to move our families with children from their too frequent position at the periphery of our congregational life to its center. And so we say:

Families are the heart of congregational life!

Display Slide 2. Say these words or your own:
In recent years an accompaniment, or ostinato line, has been added to the song “Come, Come, Whoever You Are” when it’s sung as a round. The line “though you’ve broken your vows a thousand times” is also from Rumi’s poem and is repeated over and over as the song is sung. It speaks to the covenantal relationships we share.


Say these words or your own:

Welcome! We are so glad to gather in this circle and to have time for this important and soulful work with one another. In this workshop we will focus on ministering to families—an important part of all our work. We look forward to the opportunity each of us will have to share with one another about that work.

Have the co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

Before we get into that, it’s good to know who’s in the room with us. From day to day, moment to moment, we change; we are not all the same people we were the last time we gathered. Let’s go around the circle and remind one another of our name, the congregation we serve, and our role in that congregation. If there’s anything going on in your life that affects who and how you are [tonight, this morning, this afternoon], this is a good time to briefly share it.

Display Slide 4. Invite each person (beginning with one of the facilitators) to share their answers to these introductory questions. After each person speaks, invite them to simply name (not go into detail due to time constraints) what item they placed on the centering table. After all have spoken, take a moment of silence to focus participants’ attention on the table, to simply observe how it is different from before, and to hold in their hearts and minds good wishes for each member of the group, for the group as a learning community, and for the people of the congregations they serve. Lift up the beauty and creativity visible on the centering table that has been created by the objects.
Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics (5 minutes)

Materials

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 3.1, Schedule for Workshop 3
- Handout 3.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
- Covenant from Workshop 1

Preparation

- Arrange for someone familiar with the site to explain logistics such as location of restrooms, arrangements for meals, etc.
- Display resource materials, including any that participants have brought.
- Prepare a sheet of newsprint for Parking Lot contributions. If this is the first workshop, see Workshop 1, Activity 2, Preparation to help you explain the Parking Lot to the group.
- Prepare a sheet of newsprint with the heading “Ask Me about My…”
- Post the covenant. If this is the first workshop in your training, read Workshop 1, Activity 3 to help you introduce the “open-ended covenant.” Familiarize yourself with the information included in the preparation section of Workshop 1, Activity 3, so that you are ready if some participants are unfamiliar, possibly uncomfortable, with an open-ended covenant.

Description

Invite the on-site contact person to share information such as bathroom locations, meal and snack plans, policies about moving furniture in the room and using tape on the walls, and Internet access.

Go over the workshop schedule on Handout 3.1 (Schedule for Workshop 3), adding time for breaks as needed. Refer people to Handout 3.2 (Preparation for Workshop Evaluation), encouraging people to keep notes throughout the workshop if they wish or to take time after the workshop to jot down their thoughts.
Remind people of the covenant they’ve created (or, introduce the open-ended covenant). Ask if anyone has additions or changes to make.

Identify other resources for this module, including:

- The Parking Lot (sometimes referred to as the Bike Rack). Indicate the posted piece of newsprint or other location where you wish to record Parking Lot items as they arise. Explain that this is where participants may post questions or issues not directly related to the workshop topic. Say that the facilitators will check the Parking Lot periodically and decide whether, how, and when to address them.
- Resource tables. Invite participants to peruse them in their free time and to add any brochures, program resources, or other materials they have brought to share.
- Newsprint titled “Ask Me about My…” . Invite participants to write their name and contact information and a component of their congregation’s ministry to families that they would like to share with others. This is a chance for people to feel good about something large or small they are doing in their congregation. As co-facilitators, consider adding a first comment to set an example and get the sharing started. (For example, Leia, TJMC UU, leia@uucharlottesville.org. Ask me about my congregation’s lip sync battle!) Be sure to save this newsprint for use in future workshops.

**Activity 3: A Review of Foundations (10 minutes)**

**Preparation**

- Review materials about systems theory listed in the Notes to Facilitators at the beginning of this workshop, and prepare to briefly share the contents.

**Description**

Briefly review systems theory and developmental theory, drawing on the discussion from Workshop 2 and/or on the preparation materials from the Notes to Facilitators.

Ask participants what stood out for them about systems theory and development theory in Workshop 2 or from the preparatory work they did before the training. Capture and
address, or plan to address, any concept you believe needs more attention. Then, ask the group to briefly talk about why these theoretical concepts might be useful in the context of family ministry, especially as it is being explored in this training.

**Activity 4: Exploring Core Components of Ministry to Families**

*(50 minutes)*

**Materials**

- 2 easel stands
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Workshop 3, Slides 5-6
- Handout 3.3, Prompting Questions for Small Groups

**Preparation**

- If the group has completed Workshops 1 and 2, participants will not need much time to unpack the term “family ministry.” However, if Workshop 3 is the first gathering, go over Workshops 1 and 2, including Slides and Handouts, beforehand. Prepare with your co-facilitator how you will create a common, working understanding of “family ministry” and “families are the heart of congregational life.” You may want to remind participants in advance to watch the introductory video.

- Decide in advance which co-facilitator will lead the brainstorming and which will capture participants' thoughts on newsprint. Because it is likely many great ideas will be generated, plan to ask for a volunteer to be a second recorder to ensure everyone’s thoughts are captured.

- Optional: Do the large-group brainstorm with your co-facilitator so you will have some ideas to suggest if the group’s brainstorm seems to be losing steam.

**Description**

Display Slide 5.
Part 1: Brainstorming successful ministry to families (10 minutes)

Say these words or your own:

Who can say in a sentence or two what we think we all mean when we use the term “ministry to families”?

Make sure responses include ministering to all different types of families and family configurations as well as ages and abilities. It is important that the group really understands the foundation of this program—the idea of families being at the heart of congregational life.

Say these words or your own:

We’re going to jump into a brainstorming exercise. Call out your thoughts and examples of successful ministry to families, and we’ll capture them on newsprint. Is there someone in our circle who would be willing to help as one of our recorders?

Keep in mind, this brainstorming is not a time for dialog, debate, or questions. The intention is to quickly capture a lot of great ideas about what ministering to families might look like.

Ideally, the group will come up with all kinds of wonderful examples. Be sure your group’s list includes multigenerational holiday worship experiences and celebrations; social events; examples of rites of passage at all ages; pastoral care to families; parenting classes or groups; faith development classes for all ages, supporting Unitarian Universalism in the home through conversations, rituals, and activities; ideas about the physical space, including décor and play areas; accessibility; caregiver support groups; and components of Sunday morning fellowship, such as offering snacks. Are there nondominant-culture ideas that can be lifted up, explored, or included here?

After ten minutes, wrap up the brainstorming with appreciation to everyone for their great ideas. Say these words or your own:
The list we generated together provides instant and wonderful information and affirmation for our whole group about things our congregations are already doing to minister to families and also new ideas of activities we might like to try. Thank you all for sharing.

**Part 2: Exploring success in small groups (25 minutes)**

Facilitators will need to quickly assess the information the group generates during the brainstorming activity. Most of the examples captured will likely fit into at least one of these four categories:

1. Rites of passage
2. Support for the faith development at home
3. Special events and programming
4. Sunday morning experiences in a congregational setting

Without getting into a dialog about all the possible categories or what fits where, check with the group to see if these four categories make sense in this moment. If different categories make better sense in your situation, feel free to adapt the small groups (see below) however you need to create relevant prompting questions.

Say in these words or your own:

*In a minute, we will ask you to quickly divide into four small groups of mostly equal size based on which category you each are most interested in. We ask that each small group meet in a corner of the room to try to minimize distraction and noise between groups. Once you are in your small group, one person should act as your group’s recorder. Meet for about 12 minutes to discuss your area of interest in more depth using the prompting questions provided. Recorders will capture notes to share with the whole group, which will reconvene following small group time.*

Call attention to Handout 3.3 (Prompting Questions for Small Groups) and display Slide 6.

As small groups form, you may find a majority of participants interested in
one or two of the topics. Encourage people to make the groups of roughly equal size, so that each of these four aspects can be explored. Remind them that if they were not able to work on a topic that particularly interested them, they can later discuss it further with members of the staff team they came with.

Make sure groups are composed of roughly equal numbers of participants and to all participants. Move about the room during the small group discussion to make sure that conversations are going well and to help where needed.

**Prompting Questions for Rites of Passage**

What are the rites of passage observed in UU settings?

How do rites of passage support a congregation’s ministries to families?

What rites of passage might we be ignoring or missing?

What rite of passage do you wish you had experienced personally?

What is the most powerful rite of passage you have participated in, witnessed, or heard about?

How might rites of passages be used even more intentionally to provide ministry to families of all kinds?

**Prompting Questions for Supporting Faith Development at Home**

What are examples of faith development happening in the home that you have seen, experienced, or heard about?

How does helping families find ways to live their faith at home support a congregation’s ministries to families?

What aspects of faith development in the home do you believe might be the most impactful?

What faith development tools, resources, or rituals do you wish every UU family would make use of at home?
What do you wish your congregation understood about faith development in the home and how it supports ministry to families?

Prompting Questions for Special Events and Programming

What are examples of successful multigenerational special events you have seen or experienced in a UU setting?

How do these multigenerational special events and programming support a congregation’s ministries to families?

What special events and programming might we be ignoring or missing?

What special event or programming do you wish you had experienced personally?

What is the most powerful special event or programming you have participated in, witnessed, or heard about?

How might special events and programming be used even more intentionally to provide ministry to families?

Prompting Questions for Sunday Morning Experiences in the Congregation

What are examples of successful Sunday morning experiences in the congregation for families in your congregation?

How does the Sunday morning experience in your congregation support your congregation’s ministries to families?

What aspects of the Sunday morning experience in the congregation do you believe have the highest impact for families?

What faith development tools, resources, or rituals do you believe best support ministry to families?

What do you wish your congregation understood about ministry to families?

Part 3: Sharing as a large group (15 minutes)

Invite the small groups back into one large group. Say, in these words or your own:
There was so much rich sharing happening in each of the small groups. Since the four categories each group discussed are important to us all, we are going to take a few minutes to hear from each small group to get a sense of the deeper sharing and reflection you had with one another.

Invite the recorder from each group to share briefly the group’s notes. Each group has about three minutes to share. Add the notes to the shared folder.

**Activity 5: Naming Some Challenges We Face (35 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Workshop 3, Slides 7-8
- Participants’ journals and writing instruments or laptop computers
- Chime or bell
- Drawing and art supplies for those who want to express themselves artistically instead of journaling

**Preparation**

- Take time to think through your own sense of the challenges UU congregations face as they minister to families.
- Decide in advance which co-facilitator will lead the brainstorming on challenges and which one will capture participants’ thoughts on newsprint.
- Remember as you guide the group that brainstorming is not the time for dialog, for debate, or to ask questions.
- Be prepared for a variety of reactions; this exercise may be challenging for some participants. Some religious professionals have felt both personal and professional frustration for some time, often “suffering in silence.” Sadness or anger may come up for some of these people. Others may feel grateful and hopeful, hearing named aloud things they had thought or experienced but never said, and things they had intuited but been unable to name.
Part 1: Identifying personal and systemic challenges (25 minutes)

We’ve done a lot of good thinking together about how UU congregations minister to families and how we might like or wish our congregations were ministering to families. Along with all these exciting ideas and possibilities come frustrations and challenges. We are going to spend some time naming some of these challenges.

To start our exploration of the challenges, we invite you to get your journal. You will have the next few minutes for private reflection to look at challenges to ministry to families from two different vantage points: the individual and the systemic. We ask that you spend about five minutes reflecting with words or images on the personal challenges and frustrations you’ve experienced in your efforts to minister to families in your congregation. I will sound a chime to let you know when five minutes are up. You will be then be invited to journal for five minutes on systemic challenges, such as differences in power and authority or lack of resources that you have faced in your own efforts, or your congregation’s efforts, to provide ministry to families. You may begin your reflection now.

Display Slide 7 and sound a chime to begin the focused writing. After five minutes of writing time, sound the chime again and change to Slide 8. After a total of ten minutes for reflection and journaling, sound the chime a third time. Ask participants to find a stopping place—inviting them to return to their thoughts and journaling on their own later.

Invite everyone to return to the group. Tell them they will spend the next 15 minutes hearing from those who wish to share some of their reflections about challenges they have encountered. Do this in two rounds, first personally and then systemically. It is important for facilitators to keep the sharing focused on participants’ feeling and experiences and not let the conversation jump to problem solving—which will be covered next. If no participants name these explicitly, make sure the list includes:

● lack of resources, training, skills, experience

● the “silo” mentality of RE vs. Worship (for example), providing ministry to segmented age cohorts vs. ministering to the whole family

● support through times of challenging transitions—both transitions within the congregation and within the families being served

Another challenge might be a congregation’s identification with dominant culture norms. How does antiracist, anti-oppressive, multicultural work factor into the life of the congregation or the religious professionals serving the congregation?

After fifteen minutes, thank everyone for their gifts of sharing and listening.

Part 2: What can we do with these challenges? (10 minutes)

Say these words or your own:

As we’ve all just heard and as many of us testified, ministry to families can be fraught with challenges. Let’s take the next few minutes to lift up for one another some ideas of what we might do to face and overcome some of the barriers to successful ministry to families. Your suggestions and ideas will be captured on the newsprint. Following this workshop, feel free to add ideas to the list as they come to you!

Brainstorm with the group for ten minutes. Take care to listen to any ideas, without judgment, whether they are positive or negative, hopeful or dispiriting. When summing up at the end, make sure to highlight and emphasize the positive and hopeful.

To close the brainstorming, emphasize positive solutions or suggestions the group has generated, and direct people to the “Ask Me about My...” list that participants have created on newsprint (see description under Activity 2 of this workshop) as a source of positive examples.
Activity 6: Doing This Work Together – An Invitation to Dialog about Collaboration (30 minutes)

Materials

- Workshop 3, Slide 9
- Chime or bell
- Participants’ journals, extra paper and pens
- Drawing and art supplies for those who want to express themselves artistically instead of journaling

Preparation

- Practice reading the meditation so that you are comfortable leading it.
- Take time to prepare yourself emotionally for feelings that might arise about your own experiences as you lead the group through this exercise.
- Be mindful that a deeply, truly, and collaboratively shared ministry is not the experience of every religious professional in each of our congregations. One need look no further than the LREDA Professional Guidelines and those of the UUMA to understand the different ways in which “shared ministry” can be understood and embodied. Each member of a particular ministry team may experience that team in different ways. And sometimes these differences have led some religious professional to feel underutilized and undervalued. This exercise might therefore bring up hard and painful feelings for some participants.

Description

Say, in these words or your own:

"We’ve just spent some time thinking about challenges and possible solutions or responses. One challenge we often face is how to work with our congregational colleagues in ways that are satisfying and sustaining while allowing us to all share our greatest gifts. We acknowledge that this is part of the challenging dynamics that we live in"
as congregational leaders, and we applaud the ongoing work of the Implementation Task Force of the Excellence in Shared Ministry Team. There are no simple, one-size-fits-all solutions to congregational dynamics, and we know that we each bring our own histories and stories to this important work with one another.

Have the co-facilitator say, in these words or their own:

We will be entering into a time of exploration about shared ministry and collaboration. We will begin with a few minutes of guided meditation and then we will move directly into a period of silent reflection and journaling. Please have your journal and writing instrument where you can reach them. Find a comfortable place for yourself. You might want to sit or lie down on the floor. Give yourself plenty of room and make yourself as comfortable as possible.

Meditation

I invite you to make your eyes focus softly or, if you are willing, to close your eyes…and let your attention focus on your breath. [pause] Feel the air moving gently and peacefully in [pause] and out [pause], and notice your whole body relaxing. And take another deep breath and feel your entire being softening [pause] as you breath in [pause] and out. [pause]

Let your mind’s eye settle now on a beloved community you know—it may be one you grew up in [pause], it may be one your currently serve [pause], it may be one you were involved with in the past [pause], or perhaps it is some combination of any or all of these or one that is yet to be. [pause] Whatever place you’ve identified, let yourself breathe it in. [pause]

What is it about this beloved community that makes it beloved? [pause] What is it about this community that makes it a nourishing and vital place to those who are involved with it? [pause]

In your mind’s eye, take a look around this community now. Who do you see? [pause] What do they look like? [pause] Are they young, old, in between? Notice the color of their
eyes, the color of their skin, and the expression on their faces. [pause] What makes these people want to be here? What gifts do they have to bring? [pause]

As you let your mind’s eye look around this place, what else do you notice? What colors, textures, sounds, smells, and objects do you see? [pause] What catches your attention? [pause] What, if anything, or who is missing? [pause]

And as you let yourself take in all that you can of this experience, you become aware of a question bubbling up inside yourself… [pause] and you find yourself wondering, how do things get done in this community? [pause] Who are the leaders? [pause] How do these leaders share their power and leadership? [pause] Who decides how decisions are made? [pause] Is there room here for experimentation and trying new ways of being and doing? [pause] If not, what might need to happen for experimentation to be possible? [pause]

And as you ponder these questions, in your mind’s eye, you glance at the front of your shirt and see that you are wearing a name tag that identifies you as a leader in this beloved community. What does your name tag say about who you are and what role you play? [pause] What role do you have in this beloved community? How do you play a part in what makes things happen or gets things done? [pause] Are you satisfied with your role? [pause] What do you like about it? What do you wish were different? [pause] Is there someone you need to talk with about how you experience your role? [pause] Is this conversation possible? [pause] What might get in your way of having it? [pause] What support do you need? [pause]

While you continue to ponder these questions, imagine you hear the sound of laughter from a happy group of people nearby. Let their joyful noise bring you back to the present moment, to the here and now, with your heart and mind full of the visions, questions, and answers that came to you during this meditation.

Display Slide 9. Invite participants to reflect privately on their reaction to the meditation. Let them know they will be invited to reflect with a partner following this private time of reflection. Encourage them to use their journals or the notepaper and pens provided. Invite those who might like to take an artistic
approach to use the drawing supplies available. Give participants about ten minutes for private reflection.

Call people back from their period of reflection and ask participants to find a partner. Invite participants to share with each other some of what came up for them in the mediation or journaling. Remind participants that everyone may not have the same experience, and that people do not need to convince one another or agree. This is an opportunity for sharing, listening, and learning from one another. Allow ten minutes for this exercise, then ask for everyone's attention.

Say, in these words or your own:

You will likely have started conversations here today that you simply won't have time to finish here today. The purpose of this workshop is not to finish our exploration of shared ministry or collaboration but to serve as starting place. Perhaps you might want to jot a note to yourself right now about what will be one next step you can take in exploring shared ministry in the context of family ministry in your congregation. If this exercise was particularly charged for you and you feel you need some support or care, I invite you to speak with one of the facilitators after the closing.

**Activity 7: Closing Worship (5 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Chalice
- Candle and matches, or LED candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Participants' objects for the centering table
- Music to play as people depart
- Workshop 3, Slides 10-20
- Optional: Copies of *Singing the Journey*, the supplement to the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share
Preparation

- Pay attention to the energy and dynamics of the group. Be prepared to offer a closing song and words that meet the needs of the group. Adapt the slides, as needed.
- Display Slide 10.

Description

Say, in these words or your own:

*We have covered a lot of ground in this workshop. You may be feeling a lot of emotions or be flooded with thoughts. You probably need some time to digest what you have experienced.*

Thank participants for their deep reflective work and for their support for one another. Invite everyone to sing “When Our Heart Is in a Holy Place,” Hymn 1008 in *Singing the Journey*. Display Slides 11-17 for the lyrics.

Display Slide 18. Lead the group to say the following words together in unison. Then, extinguish the chalice.

*Ministry is all that we do—Together*

*Ministry is that quality of being in community that affirms human dignity—beckons forth hidden possibilities, invites us into deeper, more constant, reverent relationships,*

*and carries forward our heritage of hope and liberation.*

*[Display Slide 19.]*

*Ministry is what we do together as we celebrate triumphs of our human spirit,*

*Miracles of birth and life,*

*Wonders of devotion and sacrifice.*

*Ministry is what we do together—with one another—*

*in terror and torment—in grief, in misery and pain,*

enabling us in the presence of death
to say yes to life.

[Display Slide 20.]

We who minister speak and live the best we know with full knowledge
that it is never quite enough…

And yet are reassured
by lostness found,
fragments reunited,
wounds healed,
and joy shared.

Ministry is what we all do—together.

—Gordon B McKeeman, Worship Web
http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/ministry-all-we-do

Post Workshop

Take some time after each workshop to discuss your and your co-facilitator's experiences and note your observations of the participants.

In your reflection and discussion consider these questions:

- What worked well in today's workshop? How can these elements or approaches be repeated or amplified in the future?

- What was most challenging? What could be done to make these parts easier or more effective?

- At what points were participants most and least engaged?

- Were all voices in the group heard?

- Was the room set up in a way conducive to group functioning?

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• Did you have all the resources you needed?

• Did you feel prepared for any pastoral issues that emerged in the course of the workshop? How did you—and the group—respond? Is there anything you would do differently?

• Was your practical and spiritual preparation time adequate?

• Are there opportunities for improvement and modification in advance of the next workshop?

Keep the newsprint with the brainstorming and other notes, because they will be used in future workshops.
WORKSHOP 4: Ministry within Families

Workshop-at-a-Glance

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions 30 minutes
Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics 10 minutes
Activity 3: What Does Ministry within Families Look Like? 45 minutes
Activity 4: Cultivating and Supporting Ministry within Families 30 minutes
Activity 5: Keeping It in the Family 25 minutes
Activity 6: Closing Worship 10 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Notes to Facilitators

This workshop is written as though you have done Workshops 1, 2, and 3 already. If you have skipped any of the previous workshops, you will need to make some or all of these adaptations to this workshop:

● As part of preparation, ask participants to view the Family Ministry Training introductory video, “Family Ministry Training: Introduction to Workshop 1”:
  https://uuacdn.s3.amazonaws.com/videos/family-ministry-workshop-1-video.mp4

● Ask participants to review the following resources before coming to this workshop:
  the Reader (especially pp. 4-10) for the Unitarian Universalist Identity Renaissance Module (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/renmod_uuid_reader.pdf);
  the article, “A Systems View of Congregational Life” by Ken Gordon Hurto (http://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/culture/165814.shtml); and these videos:
  Friedman’s Theory of Differentiated Leadership Made Simple (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqdcjNV-Ew) and Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory of Human Development (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpE18fKhAeY)

● Adapt Activity 1, Opening Worship and Introduction to suit a group that is meeting for the first time. Use Workshop 1, Activity 1 as a model.
• Plan to post and introduce newsprint titled “Ask Me About My …” during Activity 2, Agenda Review and Logistics, as described in Workshop 3, Activity 2, Agenda Review and Logistics.
• Workshop 1 gave an overview of family systems thinking and developmental theory which was briefly revisited in Workshop 3. Here, you will need to add provide the ten-minute review as explained in Workshop 3, Activity 3, A Review of Foundations. Add the review after Activity 3, What Does Ministry within Families Look Like? Plan to take the ten minutes from the allotted time for the activities that follow; we recommend that you take five minutes from each of the next two activities (Cultivating and Supporting Ministry within Families; Keeping It In the Family).

You may notice participant hesitancy about the idea of ministry within families. Many of us are conditioned to think of “ministry” as a service religious professionals provide within the congregational setting. The idea of “ministry” taking place in a family—in other words, outside of the congregational and without “professional” support—may be a new one. The curriculum Parents as Resident Theologians may be familiar to some, yet since it was last published in 1998, many will never have heard of it. Similarly, Karen Bellavance-Grace’s work presenting the idea of a Full Week Faith to be lived in “the home church” will be known by some and not others. Encourage those who have familiarity with such resources to talk about them, yet don’t get too far sidetracked.

Goals

This workshop will:

• Allow for exploration and reflection on the importance of family members ministering to one another
• Explore different ways religious leaders and congregations can nurture and support ministry within families with the goal of helping families live their UU faith at home, in the congregation, and in the wider world
Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Develop a greater understanding of what ministry within families looks like
- Reflect on how to actively support ministry within families and how religious professionals might collaborate to support ministry within families
- Reflect on strategies for raising lifelong UUs
- Talk about how to nurture ministry within the family throughout the life span

Preparation

In advance ask participants to:

- Bring a journal and writing instrument, or if using a laptop computer, also bring a power cord.

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions (30 minutes)

Materials

- Chalice
- Chime or bell
- Candle and matches, or LED candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Music player and music to play as people gather
- Laptop, projector, and screen
- Workshop 4, Slides 1-4

Preparation

- Arrange chairs in a circle around the centering table and place the chalice on it.
  Consider having tables and chairs, arranged in a circle, for those who bring laptops or for making it easier for participants to take notes.
- Familiarize yourself with the tune to Old Hundredth (Hymn 371 in Singing the Living Tradition).
● Display Slide 1.
● Optional: Arrange for musical accompaniment or a participant to lead the singing.

Description

Greet participants as they enter. Display Slide 2. When everyone is gathered, ring the chime or bell and invite people to settle into the space and find their breath. After a sacred pause, one of the facilitators lights the chalice while the other speaks the chalice lighting words:

As we light this flame, we reaffirm that if we are serious about building a new way of being in community—moving from an “I” culture to a “we” culture—if we accept that this culture shift we’re talking about is a central calling of our faith, then it makes sense to move our families from their too frequent position at the periphery of our congregational life to its center. And so we say:

Families are the heart of congregational life!

We light our chalice with words adapted from Ralph Waldo Emerson. Some families speak these words as a mealtime blessing. “For each new morning with its light, for rest and shelter of the night, for health and food, for love and friends, for everything life’s goodness sends. Thank you.” Some families also sing this blessing to the Old Hundredth tune.

Display Slide 3. Invite all to sing this blessing.

Say these words or your own, adapting them to your setting and the number of workshops your group has completed already:

Welcome. This is the [however many] workshop of [however many] workshops, and today [or tonight] we will be spending it together exploring ideas about family ministry. We’re glad to see that everyone made it here safely. Some of us know one another already, some here are strangers, yet all of us are here—we hope—to work together, to learn together, to have fun together, and to develop, together, a deeper understanding of the power and the possibilities of family ministry. As facilitators, we hope that by the time the
group completes our final workshop we all will have new ideas and new energy to take this deeper understanding back home to the congregations we serve.

Have the co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

It's always good to know who's in the room with us and why. We'll get to that second part—the why—in a moment, but for now let's go around the circle and have each of us say our name, the congregation or community we serve, our role in that congregation, and anything else that might feel particularly relevant for the group to know.

Display Slide 4 and invite each person (beginning with one of the facilitators) to share their answers to these introductory questions.

**Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics (10 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 4.1, Schedule for Workshop 4
- Handout 4.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
- Covenant from previous workshop, if applicable

**Preparation**

- Arrange for someone familiar with the site to be available to explain logistics such as location of restrooms, arrangements for meals, etc.
- Prepare a sheet of newsprint for Parking Lot contributions.
- Decide when breaks will be taken and post their times.
- Post the covenant. If this is the first workshop in your training, read Workshop 1, Activity 3 to help you introduce the “open-ended covenant.” Be ready for some participants to be unfamiliar, possibly uncomfortable, given how steeped UUs tend to be in the practice of negotiating a fairly detailed and specific covenant at the beginning of meetings. Prepare to convey that looking at our practices through an antiracist, anti-oppression lens reveals that many agreements UUs include in our
covenants reflect assumptions born of, and perpetuated by, the white supremacist culture.

- Display resource materials, including any that participants have brought.

Description

Invite the on-site contact to review information such as policies about moving furniture in the room and using tape on the walls, the locations of bathrooms, meal and snack times, Internet access, and any other important details.

Go over the workshop schedule on Handout 4.1 (Schedule for Workshop 4), adding times for breaks as needed. Go over Handout 4.2 (Preparation for Workshop Evaluation) and invite participants to use it to take notes as the workshop progresses. Ask them to give any feedback about the site, lodging, or food arrangements (if applicable) directly to the coordinator or the on-site contact. Encourage them to speak directly to one of the co-facilitators as soon as possible about any problem they perceive with facilitation or group dynamics so that the situation can be addressed.

Remind people of the covenant they've created. Ask if anyone has any need for additions or changes.

Identify other resources for this workshop, including:

- The Parking Lot (sometimes referred to as the Bike Rack). Indicate the posted piece of newsprint or other location where you wish to record Parking Lot items as they arise. Explain that this is where participants may post questions or issues not directly related to the workshop topic. Say that the facilitators will check the Parking Lot periodically and decide whether, how, and when to address questions.
- Resource tables. Invite participants to peruse them in their free time and to add any brochures, programs, or other materials they have brought to share.
- The newsprint from Workshop 3 titled “Ask Me about My…. ” Invite participants to add or correct anything. Continue to save this for use in future workshops.
Activity 3: What Does Ministry within Families Look Like? (45 minutes)

Materials

- Participants’ journals
- Paper and pens for small groups to take notes
- Easel stand, pad, markers, tape
- Workshop 4, Slides 5-7

Preparation

- Before leading this activity, take time to reflect on your own about your understanding of the concept of ministry within families.
- Familiarize yourself with the flow, questions, and prompts for participants in this activity.

Description

Display Slide 5 and say, in these words or your own:

_We’re going to take some time to explore together what we mean when we use the phrase “ministry within families.” Does anyone want to offer an idea as to what ministry within families is about?_

Invite comments from participants and affirm their responses. Then say:

_The definition we are going to work with right now is “Ministry within families is about interactions between family members that reflect the care and tending of one another’s souls.”_

_I invite you to get out your journal or whatever you want to use for private written reflection. [Display Slide 6.] Think for a minute about your own family—the people who raised you as a child and youth—this could be your family of origin, your chosen family, your adopted family, or other caregivers. What have you learned from these people about ministering within the family? What messages as a child or youth did you receive? What messages..._
were given explicitly and implicitly or were part of the fabric of your interactions or environment or culture? Now think about your current family (birth, adopted, chosen, extended) and the culture in your current family about ministering to one another… What is going on there? And finally, what messages about ministering within the family have you received from faith communities throughout your life?

Give participants about seven minutes to reflect on these questions privately.

Have the co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

Now let’s unpack this a little more as a group, trusting that you can continue your personal journaling on your own later if desired.

Ask participants to quickly get in to groups of three and choose someone to be the group’s recorder. Allow people to move into their groups and then say:

You will have five minutes to list together examples of things people do within their families to minister to one another. As quickly as you can, think of as many examples as you can. Be specific—such as:

- children ministering to their parents by splashing in mud puddles and connecting them to joy
- siblings ministering to each other by teaching each other how to do something new
- parents ministering to their children by modeling deep listening or helping explain what happens after a loved one dies
- family members providing loving assistance to older adults
- people of all ages sharing stories with one another or singing together

As you list your examples, be sure to include how extended or chosen family members are involved in ministry within families.

After seven minutes of group work, ask each group to share one or two ideas they generated. Next, ask the whole group what seems important or relevant about ministry within families, and capture these ideas on newsprint. The ideas will be used in the litany the group will speak together later in this workshop. Have a brief discussion as ideas from
the small groups are shared. Be sure that the ideas of strengthening familial bonds and connection as well as embodying UU values and faith are among the group’s responses. Invite the recorders in each group to post notes in the shared folder.

Say, in these words or your own:

*Throughout the next few exercises be thinking about the messages you give—directly or indirectly—about ministering to each other in your current family (birth, adopted, chosen, extended). You could ask yourself about the messages you have received from previous or other faith communities about ministering within the family. Your responses to these exercises might even be inspired by your observations of families who do this very well and the characteristics you’ve seen in those families.*

Have the co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

*Often parents get anxious when they hear talk of the home being a place of ministry. “I’m not a minister,” they say. “I don’t know how to talk to my kids about religion. I don’t even know what I believe!” Resources like the classic curriculum Parents as Resident Theologians and more recent books like Michelle Richards’s Tending the Flame and Power and Clark’s Sticky Faith can certainly help parents feel more prepared for talking with their kids about the so-called Big Questions.*

*But it’s important to remind all of our people, including parents, that, as Unitarian Universalists, we have a pretty expansive view of what constitutes a “theological conversation.” It is likely that family members have these conversations with each other all the time; they just don’t recognize that’s what they’re doing. But whenever we talk about values or the wonders of life or life’s injustices and our feeling compelled to respond, we’re having theological conversations, whether we’re using traditional religious language or not. And when parents listen to their children, encouraging them to find ways to articulate their own experiences, then they are most definitely doing this work.*

Ask participants if they have ever had congregants express this reluctance. Do they think this new framing might help? How do they think the parents in their congregation would feel about this way of understanding “theological conversations”?

Say these words or your own:

Another thing often trips up parents when they talk about the home as church. For some, that idea seems to have something of a “fundamentalist” feel to it, an overly evangelical tone. And we UUs are often reluctant to explicitly tie the ways we live our lives back to our faith as Unitarian Universalists. Few of us articulate, or even acknowledge, that we do the things we do, and value the things we do, and celebrate and mourn the things we do because we’re Unitarian Universalists. So right now we’re going to create a litany together that will give us some practice. We’re going to read aloud the things you brainstormed a moment ago, the ways you all imagined ministry happens in families. After each one, we will all say together, “We do this because we’re Unitarian Universalists.”

The facilitators take turns reading items listed on the newsprint, leading the group in responding to each one, “We do this because we’re Unitarian Universalists.”

The activity of creating a litany together can be very powerful. Some of the ideas generated in the brainstorm may not easily lend themselves to litany form, so you may have to be a little creative. There also may be some participants at the workshop who do not identify as UUs, so be sure to make space for them by reminding people that they can “pass” if they do not want to participate in this activity. And, some participants may want to argue with the idea that they do this or do that because they’re Unitarian Universalists. Do not let them derail this experience. Invite them to speak with you about it during the break instead.

Afterward, ask participants to share briefly how it felt to do that, and how they think people in the congregations they serve would react.

Next, say, in these words or your own:

One important piece of ministry within families is its capacity to span generations. We are going to focus now on varying needs and abilities across the human life span. We will start our exploration by forming a continuum. Think for a minute about an age you think of with fondness—it could be from your early childhood, or it could be your current age, or it could be a future developmental stage or an age you are looking forward to. And if you are
having trouble thinking of an age or stage with fondness, choose one that you are curious about, one that is a focus of your work or a growing edge for you.

Invite participants to form a continuum with one end representing birth and the other representing death. Identify other points along the continuum such as infant and young toddler (newborn to age two), preschool (ages two to five), the young school-age child (ages five to seven), the older school-age child (ages seven to twelve), the young adolescent (ages twelve to fifteen), the middle adolescent (ages fifteen to eighteen), the older adolescent and young adult (ages eighteen to twenty-two), partnered and/or parenting young adult, middle-aged adult, “young” older adult, and “old” older adult. Let the participants navigate their positions on the continuum based on the age or time in life they remember fondly or would most like to work with.

As needed, clarify that participants are not being asked to identify the age group that they currently do work with, or the age group into which they, themselves, would fall, but an age group that they would like to be working with, for the sake of this exercise.

Once everyone has determined where they are on the continuum, starting at the birth end of the continuum, ask participants to name aloud the age or stage they are marking. Once everyone has spoken, ask participants to look around and simply notice where others are standing and invite reflection on both the simplicity and complexity of the various stages and ages—we all share similar basic needs and yet the variety of our experiences and abilities makes for diversity and complexity.

Next, ask participants to form a group of three with people in closest proximity to them on the continuum. Participants should clarify to their small-group partners the age group or life stage they were marking on the continuum and then take seats together. Depending how the small groups come together, people in the group may represent different ages on the continuum. Each group should decide together which age on the continuum they want to work with; then identify one person to serve as recorder. The idea is to reflect again on the idea of ministry within families, but this time, identify all the ways a person in this age group or life stage might offer ministry to other members of the family as well as all the
ways a person in this age group or life stage might be ministered to by members of their family.

Display Slide 7. If one or more age or stage is represented in the group, given time constraints the group should choose one age or stage to work with.

After ten minutes of reflection, ask each group to share two or three of their examples with the whole group. Capture these responses on newsprint for posting. After all small groups have shared, ask the whole group again what they are noticing about the possibilities and importance of ministry within families. Allow a few minutes of group discussion and capture these responses on newsprint for posting. Invite recorders to post notes in the shared folder and ask for a volunteer to take photos of the newsprint.

Activity 4: Cultivating and Supporting Ministry within Families (30 minutes)

Materials

- Easel stand, newsprint, markers, tape
- Chime or bell
- Participants’ journals, paper, writing instruments
- Workshop 4, Slide 8

Preparation

- Familiarize yourself with the questions and prompts for participants in this activity.
- Post a sheet of newsprint on the wall titled “Resources and Ideas for Cultivating and Supporting Ministry within Families.”
- Make sure a maker is near the posted newsprint for resources and ideas so that participants can add their information to the page.

Description

Say these words or your own:
We have been doing a lot of good thinking and sharing with each other about the realities and possibilities inherent in ministry within families. We are going to take some time now to focus on ways that we, as religious leaders, can intentionally cultivate and support ministry within families. [Display Slide 8.] Let’s explore these ideas together.

Lead a discussion with the group using the following prompts and inviting responses from as many voices in the room as possible.

- Name some of the ways your ministry or your congregation’s ministry cultivates and supports ministry within families.
- What are some things you wish you or your congregation were doing to cultivate and support ministry within families?
- What help, support, or resources do you have for this work? What help, support, or resources do you need for this work?
- How can ministry teams of religious professionals collaborate and support each other in this work?

Point out the piece of posted newsprint entitled “Resources and Ideas for Cultivating and Supporting Ministry within Families.” Encourage participants to add the ideas and contact information to it at the end of the workshop or during a break. Ask for a volunteer to post these in the shared folder.

After participants have shared, affirm the good work being done to cultivate and support ministry within families in UU congregations. Make sure to highlight some of the UU practices and resources intended to help families minister to one another (such as the curriculum Parents as Resident Theologians and parenting circles, the creation of tools and resources for families to use at home, such as chalice lightings, etc.). Be sure to also acknowledge the hopes, dreams, and challenges that have been shared. Encourage participants to reach out to one another over breaks or meals to continue sharing questions, ideas, resources. Remind people of the posted newsprint and invite them to share ideas there later. Ask for a volunteer to take photos of the newsprint at the conclusion of the workshop and post in the shared folder.
Be aware, this exercise may elicit a number of different reactions. Some will recognize all that they are already doing, while others will see what they wish they could be doing. Some will be excited by possibilities they now see, while others may feel frustration at the ways they have felt blocked from doing what they know could (and, perhaps) should be done to support families in the congregations they serve. Be mindful of these (and other) reactions as they surface. While not dismissing people’s negative reactions, try to focus the group on positive and hopeful visioning.

Activity 5: Keeping It in the Family (25 minutes)

Materials

- White or light-colored card stock, at least 1 sheet per participant
- Pencils with erasers
- Color pencils, fine-tipped markers
- Workshop 4, Slides 9-12
- Handout 4.3, Full Circle “Road Map”
- Quiet, soothing background music to play during map-making exercise

Preparation

- If possible, obtain a copy of Full Circle: Fifteen Ways to Grow Lifelong UUs by Kate Tweedie Erslev ([http://www.uuabookstore.org/Full-Circle-P16733.aspx](http://www.uuabookstore.org/Full-Circle-P16733.aspx)). This is a didactic activity; co-facilitators should familiarize yourselves with the material so you can speak more comfortably than if you were simply to read from the slides (although that is fine, too!).

Description

Say, in these words or your own:

All this good work is pointing us toward the goal of supporting families as they live their UU faith at home, in their congregations, and in the wider world. We are called to help UU families connect with and commit to our faith so that our church’s children remain lifelong UUs and so that parents of children in our congregation continue participating even after
their children are grown. We are called to minister to all families in our congregation throughout the life span, recognizing that everyone exists in a family system no matter the configuration of their family. We are called to this transformative and lifesaving work. We answer this call with the help of one another, in partnership with our colleagues, and with the very families we are serving!

In her book Full Circle: Fifteen Ways to Grow Lifelong UUs, Kate Tweedie Erslev (now going by Katie Covey) gives us the start of a road map for this work. [Display Slide 9.] Her fifteen points, slightly adapted, are:

1. Embrace our UU identity
2. Recognize religious education or faith development as an important portal to institutional involvement
3. Share the value of attending the congregation regularly, at least three times a month
4. Ritualize holiday events and celebratory activities
5. Prepare all for the negative side of community

[Display Slide 10.]

6. Provide background for teachers in every weekly session plan
7. Provide parent handouts in every session plan and educate the congregation about what the children and youth are learning and doing
8. Offer opportunities for all ages to live out UU values
9. Offer engaging church school for kindergarten through sixth grade

[Display Slide 11.]

10. Take every opportunity for religious professionals and lay leaders to mentor children and teens
11. Sweep teens into immersion experiences
12. Bolster and protect youth groups

13. Connect with young adults

14. Sing together

15. Celebrate founders, lifers, and heritage

To Erslev’s fifteen points on growing lifelong UUs, we add a sixteenth.

[Display Slide 12.] It is “Encourage and support the development of active spiritual practice(s).” If we fail to help families find ways that call them back again and again and again to the importance of tending their souls, they run the risk of losing their way on the path and falling out of relationship and connection with their home in Unitarian Universalism. We don’t want this to happen!

Although Erslev’s work focuses on growing lifelong UUs starting from childhood, the points she identifies and the sixteenth one we’ve added are applicable, with slight additional adaptations, for growing adult UUs as well. For example, small group ministry for adults could be substituted for “youth groups” in Point 12.

We have identified sixteen points on a road map for “keeping it in the family”—for raising lifelong UUs, for helping the parents of children in our church continue their active engagement even after their children are grown, and for ministering to all families in our congregation throughout the life span. Unfortunately, in this workshop today, we don’t have the ability to delve more deeply into the sixteen points. But this is certainly something you could do with colleagues, religious education committees, or small groups at church. We strongly encourage you to seek out Erslev’s book, engage with what she has written, and use it to help you in your ministry and your congregation’s ministry.

Now we are going to take a few minutes to play with the idea of the road map. You will be given a piece of blank card stock, and a variety of markers and color pencils are available for you to use. Take about ten minutes to create your own rendition of a road map using the sixteen points. Draw your map in any way you like, adding additional points to your map, writing out or drawing pictures to indicate specific examples of actions that reflect the sixteen points. The point is for each of us to have some time with this material and create
a visual reminder for ourselves of how to live our call to help nourish and cultivate ministry within families.

When you invite participants to “play with the idea of the road map,” some will want more concrete directions. Invite them to respond to the invitation in whatever way they feel drawn to do so. There is no “correct” way to engage with this exercise. How a participant chooses to do it may have as much to tell them as what they do.

Begin playing background music as map-making materials are passed out to participants. Allow participants to work on their maps for ten minutes. Then turn off the background music and sound the chime inviting everyone back to the circle. Once the circle has gathered, thank participants for their willingness to engage in this activity. Invite anyone who would like to share what is arising in them at this moment, out of all the experiences in this workshop, to do so. Allow a few minutes for the sharing, then express gratitude to those who share. Invite a moment of silence before transitioning into the closing.

Activity 6: Closing Worship (10 minutes)

Materials

- Chalice
- Candle and matches, or LCD candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Music to play as people depart (and equipment)
- Workshop 4, Slides 13-16
- Optional: Copies of Singing the Living Tradition, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

Preparation

- Invite participants to return chairs to a circle (if they are not already).

Description

Display Slide 13. Thank participants for the being part of this important work
and for the gifts of their ministry. Lead the group to sing “Guide My Feet,” Hymn 348 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Display Slides 14-17 for the lyrics.

Following the hymn, invite everyone to join hands. One facilitator extinguishes the chalice while the other says:

*As we part now, one from another, let the words of this prayer fill our minds and hearts:*  
*Spirit of life, may we remember that ministry within families is about interactions between family members that reflect the care and tending of one another’s souls. May our work to help family members minister well to each other be imbued with the knowledge that what we are doing is holy work. May we know that the ministry we offer will ripple out and affect others beyond what we can even imagine. May we and the families we serve be guided along the path toward connection, community, service, and a greater sense of purpose and peace. Amen and blessed be.*

—Leia Durland-Jones

Thank participants for their active engagement and enthusiasm. If needed, remind people to pick up both the object they brought to symbolize “family” and the pre-workshop creation they brought.

**Post Workshop**

Take some time after each workshop to discuss your and your co-facilitator's experiences and note your observations of the participants.

In your reflection and discussion consider these questions:

- What worked well in today's workshop? How can these elements or approaches be repeated or amplified in the future?
- What was most challenging? What could be done to make these parts easier or more effective?
- At what points were participants most and least engaged?
- Were all voices in the group heard?
• Was the room set up in a way conducive to group functioning?

• Did you have all the resources you needed?

• Did you feel prepared for any pastoral issues that emerged in the course of the workshop? How did you—and the group—respond? Is there anything you would do differently?

• Was your practical and spiritual preparation time adequate?

• Are there opportunities for improvement and modification in advance of the next workshop?

Keep the newsprint with the brainstorming and other notes, because they will be useful in other workshops.
WORKSHOP 5: Ministry by Families

Workshop-at-a-Glance

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions 10 minutes
Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics 5 minutes
Activity 3: A Review 10 minutes
Activity 4: What Do Families Have to Offer? 85 minutes
Activity 5: Making It Real 35 minutes
Activity 6: Closing Worship 5 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Notes to Facilitators

This workshop assumes that your group has completed Workshops 1-4. If your group skipped any of these workshops, modify this workshop to be your group’s first:

- Ask participants to review the following resources before coming to this workshop: the Reader (especially pp. 4-10) for the Unitarian Universalist Identity Renaissance Module (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/renmod_uuid_reader.pdf); the article, “A Systems View of Congregational Life” by Ken Gordon Hurto (http://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/culture/165814.shtml); and these videos: Friedman’s Theory of Differentiated Leadership Made Simple (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgdcjjNV-Ew) and Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory of Human Development (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpE18fKh AeY)
- Adapt Activity 1, Opening Worship and Introduction to suit a group that is meeting for the first time. Use Workshop 1, Activity 1 as a model.
• Workshop 1 gave an overview of family systems thinking and developmental theory which was briefly revisited in Workshop 3. **If the group has not covered this topic,** in this workshop you will need to provide the ten-minute review explained in Workshop 3, Activity 3, A Review of Foundations. Add the review to Activity 3, A Review. Plan to take the ten minutes from the allotted time for the activities that follow; we recommend that you take five minutes from each of the next two.

Exercises in this workshop ask participants to think about families as families with children. In Workshop 1, participants were encouraged to think of “family” in the broadest possible terms, yet the added layers of complexity that would bring to the activities in this workshop could easily be overwhelming, especially for people who are already being challenged to think in new ways. Remind participants to embrace diversity among families with children: Encourage participants to think in their brainstorming about unique things adoptive families, families of divorce, families in which children are being raised by grandparents, foster families, childless families, and others have to offer. Participants can also be encouraged to expand their analysis in their journals or in conversations with their ministry teams at a later date.

As participants brainstorm the things families have to offer, and the unique challenges they face, be prepared to follow up with questions like, “Why is that something that’s unique to families?” so as to try to distill these unique dimensions of family life in the congregation.

**Goals**

This workshop will:

• Help participants identify ways that families offer unique gifts to the congregation
• Encourage participants to celebrate the ways in which the congregations they serve have successfully invited families to minister to the congregation
• Support participants in beginning to imagine new ways of nurturing the forms of ministry only families, as families, can provide
Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Share examples of successfully integrating families into congregational life as ministers
- Consider possibilities for drawing families more fully into the role of ministers

Preparation

In advance, ask participants to:

- Bring a journal and writing instrument, or if using a laptop computer, also bring a power cord.

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions (10 minutes)

Materials

- Chalice
- Chime or bell
- Candle and matches, or LED candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Music player and music to play as people gather
- Laptop, projector, and screen
- Workshop 5, Slides 1-6
- Optional: Copies of Singing the Living Tradition, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

Preparation

- Arrange chairs in a circle around the centering table and place the chalice on it. You might consider having tables and chairs in a circle for those who bring laptops or to make it easier for participants to take notes.
- Display Slide 1.
- Optional: Arrange for musical accompaniment or a participant to
lead the singing.

Description

Greet participants as they enter the room. Invite each one to place the symbolic object they have brought with them on the centering table. Once everyone has gathered, display Slide 2 and have one facilitator light the chalice while the other speaks the chalice lighting words:

*We light this chalice for our children and youth, and for us:*

*celebrating the flame of faith lit in each of us,*

*honoring the light each of us brings to the world,*

*rejoicing in the community we create together.*

—Christian Schmidt and Alexis Capen, UUA [Worship Web](https://www.uxa.org/worship)

As we light this flame, we reaffirm that if we are serious about building a new way of being in community—moving from an “I” culture to a “we” culture—if we accept that this culture shift we’re talking about is a central calling of our faith, then it makes sense to move our families from their too frequent position at the periphery of our congregational life to its center. And so we say:

**Families are the heart of congregational life!**

Invite all to sing “I Seek the Spirit of a Child,” Hymn 338 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Display Slides 3-5 for the lyrics.

Say these words or your own:

*Welcome! We are so glad to gather in this circle together and to have the time for this important and soulful work with one another. In this workshop we’re going focus on ministry by families—something that we often don’t think about, at least not in such an explicit way.*

Have the co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:
It’s always good to know who’s in the room with us. From day to day, moment to moment, we change, so we are not all the same people we were last time we gathered. Let’s go around the circle and remind one another of our name, the congregation we serve, and our role in that congregation. If there’s anything going on in your life that impacts who and how you are [tonight, this morning, or this afternoon], this is a good time to briefly share it.

Display Slide 6. Invite each person (beginning with one of the co-facilitators) to share their answers to these introductory questions.

**Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics (5 minutes)**

**Materials**
- Easel stand, newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 5.1, Schedule for Workshop 5
- Handout 5.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation
- Covenant from previous workshop, if applicable

**Preparation**
- Arrange for someone familiar with the site to be available to explain logistics such as location of restrooms, arrangements for meals, etc.
- Prepare a sheet of newsprint for Parking Lot contributions.
- Display resource materials, including any that participants have brought.
- Post the covenant.
- If needed, create a newsprint sheet titled “Ask Me About My …”

**Description**

Invite the on-site contact to review information such as policies about moving furniture in the room and using tape on the walls, the locations of bathrooms, meal and snack times, Internet access, and any other important details.

Go over the workshop schedule on Handout 5.1 (Schedule for Workshop 5), adding time for breaks as needed.
Discuss Handout 5.2 (Preparation for Workshop Evaluation) and invite participants to use it to take notes as the workshop progresses. Ask them to give any feedback about the site, lodging, or food arrangements (if applicable) directly to the coordinator or the on-site contact. Encourage them to fill out the evaluation form, looking not just at this workshop but at the entire workshop series (if they have not already evaluated previous workshops). Remind people of the covenant they’ve created, or take time to make a group covenant.

Identify other resources for this training, including:

- The Parking Lot (sometimes referred to as the Bike Rack). Indicate the posted piece of newsprint or other location where you wish to record Parking Lot items as they arise. Explain that this is where participants may post questions or issues not directly related to the workshop topic. Say that co-facilitators will check the Parking Lot periodically and decide whether, how, and when to address the items.

- Resource tables. Invite participants to peruse them in their free time and to add any brochures, programs, or other materials they have brought to share.

- Either continue to use from previous workshops or add a newsprint sheet titled “Ask Me about My...” Invite participants to write their name and contact information and a component of their congregation’s ministry to families that they would like to share with others. This is a chance for people to feel good about something large or small they are doing in their congregation. Facilitators are encouraged to add the first comment to the paper to set an example and get the sharing started (for example, Leia, TJMC UU, leia@uucharlottesville.org; ask me about my congregation’s lip sync battle!).

**Activity 3: A Review (10 minutes)**

**Preparation**

- Whether this workshop is the first, fifth, or some number in between, as facilitators it is important that you be familiar with the material in all of the workshops in this training. Make note of anything you think would be important for your group to know, or think about, before heading into Workshop 5.
Description

If the group has done Workshops 3 and 4, the facilitators should briefly remind participants of what they examined regarding ministry to families and ministry within families. Ask participants if they have any further insights or questions.

If the group has not done Workshops 3 and 4, explain that those workshops addressed ministries to families, and ministries within families. Ask participants to (briefly) discuss what the differences might be. Refer to the notes you made when reviewed previous workshops. If the ideas you identified do not come up naturally as the group thinks about the differences between ministry to families and ministry within families, make sure to bring them up yourselves!

Activity 4: What Do Families Have to Offer? (85 minutes)

Materials

- 2 easel stands with newsprint
- Markers and tape
- Paper, crayons, markers
- Chime or bell
- Workshop 5, Slides 7-14

Preparation

- Decide who will lead the brainstorming exercise and who will capture participants’ thoughts on newsprint. Consider asking participants to help with scribing.
- Set up a shared document or folder (if you haven’t already done so) where brainstorming and small group discussions can be shared with all participants.
- Keep in mind that, very often, the services we offer to families and the challenges we know families face to participate in programs we offer are the lenses through which we look at families. Thinking of families as providers of ministry may be a real paradigm shift for participants. It’s especially important, then, to attend carefully to how participants respond during this activity. Do not let the status quo understandings...
of what families can and can’t do get in the way of seeing the possibilities for families to be in new relationships with the congregation. Remember that the purpose of this exercise is not making the most inclusive or descriptive categories for distinguishing various phases of family life, but to have participants look at what families have to offer in different phases. The facilitators might want to brainstorm some other ways of categorizing these phases—perhaps using the developmental theories lifted up in Workshop 2—simply to be aware for themselves other possibilities.

- Decide whether to allow a group of one, or if they would prefer to ask any solitary participants to join another group. There are pros and cons to each approach. Regardless of the facilitator’s decision about the make-up of groups, it is important to encourage the groups to think of as many ways families in this phase can offer ministry to the congregation. The goal is rapid-fire brainstorming—quantity above “quality.” The open discussion that follows will need to be actively facilitated so as not to get stuck in any one place. Remind participants that they will be able to continue the conversation with their ministry team, in their journal, and in other ways with other participants and other colleagues. Try to elicit as many comments and observations as possible, even at the expense of following any one deeply.

- If your group did not do Workshop 1, familiarize yourself with the expansive understanding of “family” that workshop explored. If a participant balks at the limited definition of family used in this workshop, you will be ready to address it.

**Description**

**Getting started** *(20 minutes)*

Display Slide 7. Say in these words or your own:

*When we say “families are the heart of congregational life” and when we think of family ministry, what most people think about are the programs and resources we offer to families in the congregation. Yet if we really do embrace the paradigm shift implied by the idea that “families are the heart of congregational life,” then we would be missing a tremendous opportunity if we don’t also think about the ways*
families—as families—can offer ministry to the congregation as a whole. In other words, can we think of families as the providers of ministry as well as its recipients?

Have the co-facilitator say, in these words or their own:

For the purposes of this exercise, we are going to focus on families with children. Thinking about the ministries families have to offer—as families—is challenging enough while looking at this subset of “families.” Including the varieties of families we are now seeing in our congregations could make this exercise so complex as to make it virtually impossible in the time frame we have. But we hope you will take what you learn and discover back to your congregation and use it to identify the ministries all families have to offer.

Display Slide 8. Invite participants to brainstorm gifts that families with children—as families—have to offer. What is it that these families uniquely have to offer? What is it that they specifically can see and do that others may not be able to? What might a congregation be oblivious to—have forgotten about or never known—that families could be uniquely qualified to bring back into consciousness? Some ideas worth mentioning might include the wonder and innocence of childhood, a reminder for congregants of their own childhoods, a reminder for congregants of their own parenting years, youth to mentor (and be mentored by), a younger family for older congregants to be a part of (especially if their own families are not close by), a reminder to the congregation to be mindful of how it schedules meetings and events, a more direct connection to what’s trending now, a visceral connection to the needs of children throughout the country and around the globe (which can sometimes seem removed and abstract).

Remember as you guide the group that brainstorming is not the time for dialog, for debate, or to ask questions. The intention is to quickly capture a lot of great ideas.

After about six to eight minutes, invite participants to consider unique challenges experienced by families participating in congregational life, including families of lay and professional leaders. Display Slide 9. Some worth mentioning might include the demands on a family’s time, parental
exhaustion, children who don’t want to engage, concern about how a child’s behavior might be perceived, the schedule of family life being out of sync with church activities, and the feeling that family-style leadership is too informal or “messy.”

After about five minutes, move into the next exercise. Be sure to ask for a volunteer to take photos of the brainstorm sheets to post in the shared folder.

**Some detail (20 minutes)**

Display Slide 10. Say, in these words or your own:

*One way to look at the stages families with children go through is by the age of the children. We’ve identified seven stages: infancy, preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, and then, shifting to the place of the adults, parents whose children have grown up and gone out into the world (whether the home is now an “empty nest” or young adult children live at home), and for many the stage of becoming grandparents. We could debate the biases present in these categories, but let’s not. Instead, recognizing that for this exercise we need some kind of tool for categorizing different stages and phases families go through, let’s agree to use this one today.*

Have the co-facilitator say, in these words or their own:

*Now let’s gather in groups of three or so to focus on each of these stages. For example, those who are interested in the middle school years would be one group, those who have affinity for grandparents would be another group.*

Once the groups are formed, ask each group to select a recorder and think of as many ways families in that category can offer ministry to the congregation. The aim is quantity; every idea, no matter how small or strange is to be recorded. Give participants ten minutes for brainstorming.

After ten minutes ring the chime and invite participants back into one group. For the next eight minutes ask the groups to share their ideas with the whole group. Encourage participants to lift up any themes or commonalities they notice. Ask recorders in each group to post the brainstorm sheets in the shared folder.
A time for imagining (10 minutes)

Invite participants to find a place to reflect and make some notes quietly on their own. The instructions are intentionally vague as to how to record their imaginings. Encourage participants to do something rather than worry about the "right" way of responding, or trying to figure out what the facilitators are "really" looking for. The only thing that matters is that what each participant chooses to do makes sense to them.

Say, in these words or your own:

We’ve just spent some time thinking about the unique gifts that families with children bring to congregational life and some of the challenges they face in engaging with our congregations. We’re now going to take about ten minutes to imagine what it would look like if you could create a congregation that is truly friendly to families with children.

[Display Slide 11.] What would it look like if these families had created and designed your faith community? This is a time to think outside the box, to recreate both what you do and how you do it…maybe even where and when you do it. How might families with children change your congregation’s structure if they could wave a magic wand? How might they change your current schedule of activities, and maybe even change your current schedules? How might they change your priorities? Feel free to write a narrative description or just some notes, draw a family-centric organizational chart or a picture of what the congregation could look and feel like.

After about ten minutes, move to the next exercise.

Sharing in pairs (25 minutes)

Invite participants to find a partner and talk about how they responded to the last exercise. NOTE: As has been the case with activities in previous workshops, it is intentional that participants are invited to first look at how they felt while doing the exercise, saving any ideas they had for the second round. This can be very challenging, yet it is important for two reasons: there will be participants whose primary mode of analysis is feeling, and they are often overlooked in settings that emphasize what people are thinking. Also, there are feelings involved in participants’ reactions to what may be radically new ways of thinking.
about their congregations and about its ministries, and these feelings will color any action (or inaction) that may follow. Encourage everyone to at least be aware that there are feelings may well help ministry teams function more collaboratively moving forward.

After the pairs have formed, say these words or your own:

The sharing will be done in two parts. For the first ten minutes talk about how you were feeling while doing the last exercise. Let me say that again: this is time to talk about FEELINGS that came up during the last exercise—not ideas. Maybe what you were feeling was excitement, or fear, or confusion, or frustration, or maybe something else or some combination of things. You will talk about ideas in a moment, so please focus on how it felt while you imagined your congregation as families with children might redesign it. Take turns, with each partner getting five minutes to share. The other person should ask only clarifying questions. We’ll let you know when it’s time to reverse roles. [Display Slide 12.]

After five minutes, ring the chime and tell participants that if they haven’t already, they should now switch so that each person has an opportunity to share.

When those five minutes are up, ring the chime. Say these words or your own:

Now we’re going to switch things and talk about IDEAS. What ideas did you come up with as you imagined your congregation designed by families with children to serve the unique needs and challenges of families with children? What were some of the differences you envisioned? What things didn’t change? You’ll have about fifteen minutes for this, and we encourage you to bounce your ideas off one another. [Display Slide 13.]

After 15 minutes ring the chime and ask the pairs to stop. Remind them that they can continue sharing at another time, for example, with their partner via email or phone. Invite groups to post ideas in the shared folder.

Sharing highlights (10 minutes)
Call the participants back together in one group and ask if there is anything in particular they noticed in either their sharing about their feelings or their ideas. Capture these ideas on newsprint and ask for a volunteer to take photos to post in the shared folder.

**Activity 5: Making It Real (35 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Workshop 5, Slide 14
- Participants’ journals and writing instruments or laptop computers
- Chime or bell
- Drawing and art supplies for those who want to express themselves artistically instead of journaling

**Description**

Invite participants to get into ministry teams from their congregations or in small groups of three and to again find a quiet space in which to work. Say these words or your own:

*We’re now going to take our thinking to the next level. Think of one program, one ministry, that could be offered by a family (or families) with a child or with children to the rest of the congregation. It would be something you’re not doing yet. It might be an idea you’ve heard here, something you’ve been thinking or talking about for a while, or something that’s just come to mind now. Take that idea and try to work through the details of it. This is a time to be realistic and think of something doable. It may be a dream, but for now, we ask that it not be a fantasy. Your team will be pitching your idea to the larger group. [Display Slide 14.]*

- What is the program you’re imagining?
- Who would you invite to facilitate it? Do you have a particular family (or group of families) that you’d ask? If not a specific family, what concrete qualities can you identify for the ideal family?
- What resources would this ministry need? Money? Space? Staff support?
• Who would need to “approve” this new ministry? The congregation you serve may have a formal process for getting new ministries off the ground, and there may be certain people whose blessing you want to get before trying anything new. Another way of asking this is, whose buy-in would you want (or need) in order to make this new ministry a success?

• How would you sell it to the congregation? How would you describe and advertise it so that people would want to participate?

Take 20 minutes to think through your responses to these basic questions and as many of the little details that emerge as you can. If you think you’ve thought it all out, think again. Some answers may be hard to come up with—they may depend on details you can’t know at the moment. Don’t hesitate to make some up! Be as realistic as you can, but don’t let yourself get stuck.

Move around the room to check in with participant progress, especially looking in on any who seem to have completed the task quickly. Note any places in their plan that seem unclear or underdeveloped. Ask questions and challenge their assumptions.

After 20 minutes, call the participants back together.

In the 15 minutes remaining in this activity, invite two or three teams to volunteer to pitch their idea to the group. One team at a time, have them present their thinking, using the newsprint as needed. Give team about five minutes, including time for the rest of the group to ask clarifying questions. Encourage participants to ask questions of the team that’s presenting their idea, looking for unclear or incomplete thinking. The goal is to try to anticipate any potential hurdles, and to see all the possible benefits.

After five minutes, thank the presenters and invite the next team to share. Invite those who are comfortable sharing their plans to post them in the shared folder.

Activity 6: Closing Worship (5 minutes)

Materials

• Chalice
• Candle and matches, or LCD candle
• Centering table with cloth
• Participants’ objects for the centering table
• Music to play as people depart
• Workshop 5, Slides 15-23
• Optional: Copies of Singing the Living Tradition, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

Preparation

• Pay attention to the energy and dynamics of the group. Be prepared to offer a closing with a song and words that meet their energy and needs.
• Display Slide15.

Description

Say, in these words or your own:

_We have covered a lot of ground in this workshop. You may be feeling a lot of feelings or be thinking a lot of thoughts and probably need some time to digest what you have experienced._

Thank participants for the deep reflective work this workshop calls them to and for their support for one another. Invite everyone to sing “Come, Sing a Song with Me,” Hymn 346 in Singing the Living Tradition. Display Slides 16-23 for the lyrics.

Read the following words, “Closing Words by Youth,” and extinguish the chalice.

_We are never complete. We are never finished. We are always yet to be. May we always allow others to be, and help and enable each other to grow toward all that we are capable of becoming. Amen._

(Anonymous author, UUA Worship Web)

Post Workshop

Take some time after the workshop to discuss your experiences with your co-facilitator and note your observations of the participants.
Consider these questions:

- What worked well in today's workshop? How can these elements or approaches be repeated or amplified in the future?
- What was most challenging? What could be done to make these parts easier or more effective?
- At what points were participants most and least engaged?
- Were all voices in the group heard?
- Was the room set up in a way conducive to group functioning?
- Did you have all the resources you needed?
- Did you feel prepared for any pastoral issues that emerged in the course of the workshop? How did you—and the group—respond? Is there anything you would do differently?
- Were your practical and spiritual preparation times adequate?
- Are there opportunities for improvement and modification in advance of the next workshop?

Keep the newsprint with the brainstorming and other notes as they will helpful in other workshops.
WORKSHOP 6: Putting It All Together

Workshop-at-a-Glance

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions 10 minutes
Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics 5 minutes
Activity 3: Lingering Questions 10 minutes
Activity 4: Nurturing the Next Generations of UUs 25 minutes
Activity 5: Families Are the Heart of Congregational Life 65 minutes
Activity 6: The Process of Moving Forward 20 minutes
Activity 7: Making Commitments 10 minutes
Activity 8: Closing Worship 5 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Notes to Facilitators

This workshop assumes that your group has already completed all five previous workshops. This workshop provides appropriate closure to any of the other workshops and, particularly, to the entire series. If your group has skipped any workshops, make sure they have had a chance to review key ideas before the workshop (see Preparation instructions for this workshop.)

Be ready to suggest, as participants consider the implications of mission-level changes, that they carry Workshop 2 and this workshop back to the congregations they serve and offer them to congregational leaders as a way of moving a vision forward. It may seem a bit of a stretch to say that truly embracing a call for a more robust expression of family ministry will lead to changing a congregation’s mission statement, yet it seems to us to be a logical conclusion. If we accept the assertion that the majority of congregations see their Sunday sanctuary worship as the most clear, most full expression of congregational life,
then it must also be recognized that for many congregations, RE families are seen on the periphery (even if unconsciously). Throughout this curriculum we argue that to grasp the full potential of family ministry, UU congregations need to reverse this orientation and make families, including those with children, the heart of congregational life. If a congregation does this, then it begins to look at everything through the lens of how it affects and is affected by this new reality. And once a congregation begins to look at everything it does through a single lens, it can be argued that it has discovered its mission in the world.

It should be noted that there is a subtle, yet possibly very important, difference between a congregation having a clear mission and having a clear mission statement. This is why these are asked as two separate questions. Some congregations, perhaps especially smaller ones, may be very clear about who they are and what they feel called to do in the world, yet have never felt the need to write it down. Conversely, other congregations may have gone through a wonderful process of crafting a pithy statement that they put in a file somewhere and never think about again. Still, of course, it is best for a congregation to have both a mission and a mission statement—a clear sense of their purpose and a written articulation of it.

Participants may ask where these ideas are already in practice. There are two ways of responding. The first is to turn the question back to the group and ask for examples of who is moving in this direction. The other is to honestly acknowledge that at this time no congregations (that we know of at this writing) have fully implemented it. The fact that some congregations are doing pieces of this, yet none yet do all of it, does not mean that it’s not possible. Remind participants that paradigm shifts take time.

**Goals**

This workshop will:

- Provide an opportunity for participants to address questions that came up in previous workshops
• Offer participants a chance to process more fully the idea that “families are the heart of congregational life”
• Encourage participants to consider the broadest implications of the approach to, and understanding of, family ministry that has been presented in the previous workshops
• Synthesize the ideas presented in the previous five workshops

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

• Explore more fully the central concepts of the curriculum
• Consider the larger implications of truly adopting the perspective advocated throughout the course
• Make personal commitments for ongoing work

Preparation

In advance, ask participants to bring a journal and writing instrument. If they plan to use a laptop computer, ask them to also bring a power cord.

If this is the only Family Ministry Training workshop that you are offering, ask participants ahead of time to watch both the Introductory video and the video, Family Ministry Workshop: It’s About a Paradigm Shift (15:37). Prepare also to summarize for participants the contents of “A Systems View of Congregational Life” by Ken Gordon Hurto.

Activity 1: Opening Worship and Introductions (10 minutes)

Materials

• Chalice
• Chime or bell
• Candle and matches, or LED candle
• Centering table with cloth
• Music player and music to play as people gather
• Laptop, projector, and screen
• Workshop 6, Slides 1-8
• Optional: Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

**Preparation**

• Arrange chairs in a circle around the centering table and place the chalice on it. You might consider having tables and chairs in a circle for those who bring laptops or to make it easier for participants to take notes.
• Display Slide 1.
• Optional: Arrange for musical accompaniment or a participant to lead the singing.

**Description**

Greet participants as they enter. When everyone is gathered, ring the chime or bell and invite people to settle into the space and find their breath. After a sacred pause, one of the facilitators lights the chalice while the other speaks the chalice lighting words:

*The Light for Everyone Who Comes into the World*

Reverently I offer this symbol of our hope and high intent
Reverently I bequeath this flame to you.
This is the light that is lit for everyone who comes into the world.
Bear this light to others, one by one.
Let the flame go from life to life till all is lit with its warmth.

Tell that the light means wisdom
Tell that the light means kindness
Tell that the light means understanding
Tell that the light means tolerance
Tell that the light means sacrifice
Tell that the light is a vision of a fairer world.

Tell that this is the light that is lit for everyone who comes into the world.

Display Slide 2. Invite all to sing “Enter, Rejoice and Come In,” Hymn 361 in Singing the Living Tradition. Display Slides 3-7 for the lyrics.

Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome. This is our final workshop together exploring ideas about family ministry. As facilitators we’re hoping that you have found our time together stimulating, provocative, and even fun! We’re hoping that if it hasn’t happened already, you will leave at the end of [tonight, this morning, or this afternoon] filled with excitement and enthusiasm for spreading this new vision of family ministry back to the congregations we serve and throughout our wider movement.

Have the co-facilitator say, in these words or their own:

At the beginning of each of these workshops we’ve introduced ourselves and said a little something about what’s going on in our lives that affects who we are in this circle at this time. So, if anyone has something they feel the need to share, let’s take a moment to hear one another.

Display Slide 8. Invite each person who wishes to respond to the prompts on the slide. After all have spoken, invite participants to take a moment of silence to hold in their hearts and minds good wishes for each member of the group, for the group as a learning community, and for the people of the congregations they serve.

**Activity 2: Agenda Review and Logistics (5 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

• Handout 6.1, Schedule for Workshop 6  
• Handout 6.2, Preparation for Workshop Evaluation  
• Covenant from previous workshop

Preparation

• Preparation details will vary depending on how many workshops you are offering.  
• Arrange for someone familiar with the site to be available to explain logistics such as location of restrooms, arrangements for meals, etc.  
• Decide when breaks will be taken and post their times.  
• Post the covenant.  
• Display resource materials, including any that participants have brought.

Description

Invite the on-site contact to briefly review information such as the locations of bathrooms, meal and snack times, Internet access, and any other important details. The length of time needed for this will depend on how often participants have heard it before!

Pass out and review the workshop schedule on Handout 6.1 (Schedule for Workshop 6), adding times for breaks as needed.

Pass out Handout 6.2 (Preparation for Workshop Evaluation) and invite participants to use it to take notes as the workshop progresses. Ask them to give any feedback about the site, lodging, or food arrangements (if applicable) directly to the coordinator or the on-site contact. Encourage them to fill out the evaluation form, looking not just at this workshop but at the entire workshop series (if they have not already evaluated previous workshops).

Remind people of the covenant they've created. Ask if anyone has any need for any additions or changes.

Activity 3: Lingering Questions (10 minutes)

Materials

• Pens or pencils  
• Sticky notes, several for each person
Preparation

- Distribute sticky notes and pens or pencils.
- Designate wall space for newsprint.

Description

Say something like:

No doubt at least some of us have questions that raised during our time together so far and have been lingering in the backs of our minds. They may have been lifted up as a “pressing question” during a previous workshop or have come from our own reflecting on what we’ve done. Let’s take a few moments and capture some of these.

Give participants a few minutes to write their question(s) on a sticky note (one per sticky note). When ready, invite participants to call out their question and post it on newsprint.

After about five minutes, look for themes and arrange the sticky notes accordingly. Some questions may have specific concrete answers—ask if anyone in the group knows the answers to such questions. If no one does, promise to follow-up. Many of the questions will not have such a concrete conclusion, so invite participants to take a few moments to share their responses with one another. Note that this is not an attempt to answer all of these questions but to respond to them so that people are satisfied that they have at least been addressed. Be sure to keep this discussion moving and avoid getting bogged down in problem solving. What is really going on here is not so much the responses being given to people’s questions but the experience of recognizing one another as resources.

After five minutes, thank participants for their willingness to share, and remind them that the end of this workshop series doesn’t need to be the end of their active collaboration.

Activity 4: Nurturing the Next Generations of UUs (25 minutes)

Materials

- Newsprint, markers, tape
Preparation

Before facilitating this activity, reflect on the questions you'll present in terms of yourself and the congregation(s) you serve. Discuss with your co-facilitator your feelings and thoughts about changing your congregation’s mission to “nurturing generations of Unitarian Universalist families.” As you think through the implications of changing the mission, review Workshop 1, Activity 7, which explores the call to develop a “we” culture in our congregations as part of a commitment to building antiracist, anti-oppressive, multicultural community. We cannot overstate the importance of working through your own thoughts and feelings about this idea. It is important to reiterate that we are not saying—neither we, the authors, nor will you, the facilitators—that congregations should change their mission statement to this one, or even that they should change their mission statement at all. Instead, this is what’s sometimes called a “thought experiment”—what would it be like if a congregation were to do this? What would it be like for your congregation to move families with adults and children living together so completely into the center of congregational life that nurturing generations of Unitarian Universalist families became its clear mission? Before you invite participants to play with this idea, it is vitally important that you wrestle, or dance, with its ramifications for yourself. To make this change would entail a truly radical shift for most congregations, and it would touch on many aspects of congregational life.

Description

What is meant by “nurturing generations of Unitarian Universalist families” (10 minutes)

Say in these words, or your own:

So far we’ve been looking at what we might call a conceptual or a cultural change from the way most UU congregations view themselves to an understanding that families are the
heart of congregational life. Now we’re going to take this a step further to play with what it might mean to embrace this not just as the way of understanding our congregations but as the foundation from which the mission of our congregations comes.

[Display Slide 9.] In the average congregation—not just UU congregations, by the way—there may be a general sense of having a “mission,” there may even be a “mission statement” that was arrived at by sometimes an arduous process, yet that sense of a congregational mission is more of an idea than a reality. You can see that this congregation is going along, doing the things it does, but that they may or may not to be particularly intentional about tying those things back to their mission.

[Display Slide 10.] By contrast, congregations that have really made their mission a deep part of their identity look a little different. For one thing, their mission statement is usually a lot shorter. It’s clear and concise, and it’s pretty unambiguous. It’s also the driving force for all that the congregation does and does not do. A congregation with a strong sense of mission can explain how each activity they engage in—whether inside or outside the congregation—is directly related to the mission they have identified as their unique role in their community.

And this can also be true for regions in the UUA or the UUA itself. In the New England Region, for example, they name their purpose as “bringing the love and grace of UUism to our families’ lives everywhere.”

Have a co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

We’re going to go out on a limb here for a moment, maybe to the edge of some of our comfort zones. If we accept that it would be a real culture shift for the majority of UU congregations to truly embrace the self-understanding that “families are the heart of their congregational life,” we’re going to imagine what it would be like to declare that the mission of a UU congregation—any UU congregation—is “to nurture generations of Unitarian Universalists families.” [Display Slide 11.]
This is about as far as you can take the idea of family ministry as we’ve been exploring it—naming it as the very mission of the congregation!

Of course, it’s important to note that a mission like this would involve a lot more than simply expanding the RE programs for children and youth. The congregation would need to believe that we as Unitarian Universalists have something unique to offer the world. The congregation would need to ask itself what it thinks it is uniquely positioned to do in its community and the wider world. The congregation would need to recognize the importance of understanding that their children and youth are part of families and of helping families raise them with UU ideals and values so that they, in turn, can contribute to the work of creating a more just and loving world. This means that people in congregations would model Unitarian Universalist faith and values through not only what they did in the world but how they were with one another. All of this, and no doubt more, is included in these words—“to nurture generations of Unitarian Universalist families.”

**Individual reflection (15 minutes)**

Encourage participants to sit with this idea for a moment. Then invite participants to take out their journals and to find a place to sit by themselves. Display Slide 12. Tell them that they will have about 15 minutes to consider the questions on the slide. Note that the first ones can have “yes” or “no” answers. As the questions go on, however, they get more demanding, and some participants will find that they are not able to fully consider them in the time allotted.

After 15 minutes, sound the chime and call people back into one group. Ask if anyone has any insight to share briefly from this exercise.

**Activity 5: Families Are the Heart of Congregational Life (65 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Workshop 6, Slides 13-18
Preparation

The group has been introduced to the idea that families are the heart of congregational life either through Workshop 2 or through viewing the video *Family Ministry Workshop: It’s About a Paradigm Shift* (15:37), or both. There is likely energy around this idea, especially since it is not the way the majority of the congregations represented would see themselves. The implications of making such a change will seem minimal to some and mind-boggling to others. Be ready to give participants a moment to sit with this idea when you first introduce it. You can allow for some clarification responses, yet do not let the entire workshop become focused on processing this one idea.

Description

*It’s a radical notion* (5 minutes)

Display Slide 13. Remind everyone that it’s a radical notion to understand families as the heart of congregational life. Invite participants to share comments and observations about the ways in which this new framing is helping them see new possibilities in their own situation.

*Playing with this idea: More brainstorming* (10 minutes)

Display Slide 14. Ask the group to brainstorm to whom in their congregation they would like—or need—to take this idea to help it take hold. Who are the influential individuals who would need to be sold on the idea? Whose enthusiasm for it would participants want to tap? There may be official groups to ask for input and perhaps even permission. Guide participants to note any patterns and differences among responses.

*Fish bowl* (50 minutes)

Say, in these words or your own:

*We’re now going to take some time to try out the conversations we were just imagining we would need to have to move this idea forward. To help us, we’re going to make use of the process known as a fish bowl. One group of people will sit together and have the conversation, while a larger group will sit in a circle around them, listening in, as it were,*
on what the inner group is saying. It can be hard to both talk and process our talking, so this fish bowl model allows for both action and observation.

We’re going to do three rounds of this, and after all are done, we will have an opportunity to reflect on what we’ve done.

Ask participants to put a few chairs together and to put the others in a circle around these. The exact number for each group will depend on the total number of participants, but ideally the inner group will not be larger than five people and no fewer than three. It is also good if the outer circle can be larger than the inner. Ask for volunteers to sit in the inner circle, and have everybody else sit in the outer. Try to form inner circles that include as rich a mix as possible of professional religious educators, ordained clergy, and other ministry team members.

During the inner circle’s conversation, be ready to interject clarifying questions or refocus the group as needed. Encourage participants to speak from their individual roles in congregational life; you are likely to find that ordained clergy, religious educators, administrative directors, or others will have different ways of understanding and explaining the ideas, and different feelings and thoughts as to the importance of lifting up families as the heart of congregational life. Help clergy take in a religious educator’s perspective, and vice versa.

Once the chairs are arranged, say, in these words or your own:

For this first round, let’s have the inner group talk together about how they would explain this idea to the ministry team in their home congregation. [Display Slide 15.]

How would you share with the ministry team the idea that the congregation you serve could change the way it thinks about itself to have a conscious understanding that “families are the heart of congregational life”? How do you think they would respond?

While they have this conversation, the folks in the outer circle should listen to what is being said, and also what is not being said. Imagine how the conversation might go in your congregation. Remember, we’ll have a chance to process all of this together in a bit.
Encourage inner circle participants to talk from their own experience and position in the congregation. Ordained clergy should speak to why they as ordained clergy see this shift as important to the entire congregation. Directors of Religious Education can speak from their role and experiences about how a family focus can positively affect the faith development efforts of all members of a congregation.

After ten minutes, thank the inner circle for their willingness to participate in this way. Then ask for a new set of volunteers. Once the new group is seated, say these words or your own:

For the second round we’ll be thinking about a slightly different scenario. The inner group will talk together about how they would explain this idea to the RE Committee.

Display Slide 16. Remind the outer circle to listen closely, and remind those in the inner circle to speak from their own experiences and positions. After ten minutes, thank the inner circle for their willingness to participate.

Ask for another set of volunteers. Once everyone is seated, say, in these words or your own:

Instead of bringing this idea and its implications to the RE Committee, this group will talk about how they would have this conversation with their Board. [Display Slide 17.]

Remind the outer circle to listen closely, and remind inner circle participants to speak from their own experiences and positions. After ten minutes, thank the inner circle for their willingness to participate.

Ask the group to rearrange the chairs into one circle. Display Slide 18.

Ask participants for any observations they have from the three rounds, using the questions on Slide 18 as prompts:

- How did it feel to be having these conversations?
- Did it seem easier to talk about this new idea with one of the groups?
- Were there things said that you hadn’t thought of?
Were there things you’d thought of that weren’t said?

Capture important ideas briefly on the newsprint.

Participants may be inclined to continue the conversations from the fish bowls during the whole-group processing at the end. Yet, as with so much else in the Family Ministry Workshop, the goal here is to focus on the feeling element: How did it feel to be having these conversations? Were there any differences in how it felt between the three audiences? Even those in the outer circle most likely had emotional reactions, both as they listened to the inner group and as they imagined themselves in that situation. Make sure to elicit their input.

The third question really is directed more those who’ve been in the inner circle, and the last to those who’ve been in the outer. Yet, again, elicit feedback from everyone. And here it is most important to let each person speak to their own experiences of the process rather than get into a wider discussion (interesting though that might be).

After ten minutes, bring the conversations to a close. Remind participants that while they may still have things to say, this is only the beginning of the work that they can continue on their own. If the observations captured on newsprint would be helpful to save, ask for a volunteer to take a photo and post in the shared folder.

**Activity 6: The Process of Moving Forward (20 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Newsprint, markers, tape
- Chime or bell
- Paper and writing instruments
- Workshop 6, Slides 19-20

**Preparation**

- Familiarize yourself with the concept of “the change curve” (Slide 19). Participants may ask about the four different colors of the Xs on the chart. The Xs represent people; there is no deeper meaning in their
colors, at least not in the context in which we’re using it.

Description

Say something like:

*Let’s pause here for a moment to remind ourselves of something that if we didn’t learn somewhere, we most likely have intuited.* [Display Slide 19.] *A new idea is rarely introduced and universally celebrated and immediately put into practice. Change takes time. Generally speaking, when a new idea is introduced, people’s reactions follow a fairly typical pattern. First, there is denial that any kind of change is necessary. Then there is doubt about the particular change being suggested. After a while, acceptance begins to win the day. And finally, the group moves forward with the idea; what was a change is now the new norm. The visualization of this movement is generally called “the change curve.” Although the change curve originated in Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’s work with death and dying, it has been adapted in countless ways since.*

*But it’s not as easy as it may seem. The chart on the slide shows that people do not move along the change curve at equal speeds. Some may move through stages quickly to accept the new way of doing things, even while a majority of people are in “doubt” or “denial.” It is especially important for the people who are introducing the new idea—who’ve been thinking about it and talking about it and getting excited about it—to remember that the moment they present this great new thing they will be immediately greeted by people who will maintain that there’s absolutely no reason to do anything differently than they’ve been doing it all along. Some who do see the need for a change will strongly doubt that this is it. This can be tremendously frustrating for everyone involved unless the leaders who are introducing the new idea remember this reality. Don’t take the denial and doubt personally; do take the time to be with the rest of the group as they make their way.*

Have the co-facilitator say, in these or their own words:

*This has been true here in our group, too, of course. It’s possible that some people here have not yet been convinced that their congregation needs to change anything about the way family ministry is done or that there’s any reason to go this far with it. And that’s okay.*
But for the sake of the exercise, let’s say that you do want to encourage the congregation you serve to change its current understanding and articulation of its mission to a mission of “developing the next generations of Unitarian Universalists.”

Add, in these words or your own:

The authors of Family Ministry Training believe that an informal, implicit change of mission is at best a half step. Without being explicit about a change like this, it is questionable as to whether any change has really occurred. As noted earlier, a strong mission statement is clear and concise. A congregation with a strong sense of its mission can evaluate how they are living it out. If a congregation’s mission is informally held by the congregation’s leadership, it most certainly cannot be fully embraced by the congregation as a whole. We are not demanding that anyone go back to the congregations they serve and change their mission statement. However, if you want to make a meaningful change, you will want to do it explicitly and formally.

Display Slide 20. Ask participants to consider the two questions on the screen:

● Who needs to be brought on board (and in what order)?
● Should this be an explicit or implicit change?

Say these words or your own:

We’ve already thought about with whom you would need or want to share the idea that families are the heart of congregational life. Now we’re imagining nothing less than possibly redefining the congregation’s mission! Think about that context as you consider the first question.

The second question is whether or not this would need to be an explicit (in other words a formal) change—requiring changes to policies and bylaws—or if it would suffice for it to be an implicit or informal change in the way leaders think about and do things without formalizing it.

Be alert for participants getting stuck on thinking that changing their congregation’s mission statement is impossible. You might say, in these words or your own:
A good place to start might be looking at, and changing, the RE Committee’s mission statement or leading the Board through a mission process that allows them to create a mission for their work together that does not replace the church’s mission statement (at least for now!).

Be sure to consider both the symbolic and practical dimensions of formally changing a mission statement—it conveys that this is not just a passing fad or the feeling of a few but is for the congregation a new way of seeing itself. It also makes it easier to help committees, groups, and individuals know if they are, indeed, working in alignment with this vision or not.

Give participants a few minutes to privately reflect on these two questions. If there is time, ask if anyone would like to share what they are thinking or feeling.

**Activity 7: Making Commitments (10 minutes)**

**Materials**
- Newsprint, markers, tape
- Chime or bell
- Paper and writing instruments
- Workshop 6, Slide 21

**Preparation**
- Look at the questions on Slide 21 for yourself and the congregation(s) you serve. Discuss with your co-facilitator your feelings and thoughts about changing a congregation’s mission to “developing the next generations of Unitarian Universalists.”

**Description**

Say, in these words or your own:

*Our time together is nearly at a close. As we’ve said all along, this isn’t the end of your creative work with family ministry. We hope it’s a new beginning. In fact, some of you might want to stay in contact in some way to support each other as you try to bring about*
change in your congregation’s culture. It’s easy to come away from a workshop like this excited by the possibilities you have seen…and then get pulled back in to the day-to-day demands of the ways things are being done now. You can lose sight of your vision of the way things could be. So we’re going to ask you to make a few commitments to yourself.

Display Slide 21. Invite participants to find a space for themselves and to take out their journals. Using the questions on the slide as prompts, encourage people to write down specific and concrete responses—something small, achievable, measurable (so that they’ll be able to tell if they’ve done it or not), and with a date for completion.

- What is the story I am going to tell about my time exploring these ideas here? Who am I going to tell and how?
- What commitment am I willing to make to myself to keep moving forward with the ideas that have excited me here?
- Who are the kindred spirits I have met here (or already know), and what is my plan to connect with them?

Note that in considering making connections with kindred spirits for this work, they should first decide together how they want to work—what kind(s) of contact (email, voice, walks, etc.), how regularly, and how to best support one another. Be clear that it will be up to participants, and not the facilitators, to make these or any other connections themselves.

After ten minutes, sound the chime and invite everyone back into a circle for the closing.

**Activity 8: Closing Worship (5 minutes)**

**Materials**

- Chalice
- Candle and matches, or LED candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Music player and music to play as participants depart
- Workshop 6, Slides 22-39
Optional: Copies of *Singing the Journey*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, to share

**Preparation**

- Invite participants to return chairs to a circle (if they are not already).

**Description**

Display Slide 22. Thank participants for the heart they brought to the training and the curiosity they offered one another. Invite them to go around the circle and share briefly one thing they will take away from this experience or a word or two about how they’re feeling right now. When everyone who wants to has shared, thank the group again for participation in and co-creation of the experience. Invite everyone to sing “The Fire of Commitment,” Hymn 1028 in *Singing the Journey*. Display Slides 23-28 for the lyrics.

One of the facilitators extinguishes the chalice while the other reads aloud:

**To Blanket the World**

*One snowflake is a marvel, a miracle;*

*Four snowflakes, five, and the kids begin to run around in the yard*

*One hundred and the cars start slowing down;*

*One thousand, two...you can see where this is going.*

*We are strengthened in coming together, joining with others, blending our efforts with those of the Unitarian Universalist [UU] congregation in the next town or the next state. Together we are more than we could ever be alone. One congregation, one UU, is a miracle, a marvel. As an Association we can help to create a wonderland—a world blanketed with love and justice, understanding and hope.*

—Erik Walker Wikstrom, UUA Worship Web

Thank participants for their active engagement and enthusiasm. Display Slide 29.
Post-Workshop

Take some time after the workshop to discuss your and your co-facilitator’s experiences and your observations of the participants.

In your reflection and discussion consider these questions:

- What worked well in today's workshop? How can these elements or approaches be repeated or amplified in the future?
- What was most challenging? What could be done to make these parts easier or more effective?
- At what points were participants most and least engaged?
- Were all voices in the group heard?
- Was the room set up in a way conducive to group functioning?
- Did you have all the resources you needed?
- Did you feel prepared for any pastoral issues that emerged in the course of the workshop? How did you—and the group—respond? Is there anything you would do differently?
- Was your practical and spiritual preparation time adequate?
- Are there opportunities for improvement and modification for the next time this workshop or training are offered?