

FAMILIES

A Tapestry of Faith Program for Youth

Jr. High School



BY BASED ON A PROGRAM ORIGINALLY CREATED BY HELEN BISHOP AND SUSAN GRIDER. DEVELOPMENTAL EDITOR: TRACEY L. HURD, PH.D

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Tracey L. Hurd is a psychologist and writer whose education includes a postdoctoral research fellowship from Brown University, a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from Boston College, and a Masters in Applied Child Development from Tufts University. A former teacher, Tracey was part of the UUA's Lifespan Faith Development staff group, focusing on children and families. During that time she wrote [Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook](http://mailuua.uua.org/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=706) (at mailuua.uua.org/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=706) and served as editor or writer of curricula and other publications addressing UU faith and children. Her academic work, published in journals and books, focuses on public policy for children and families, qualitative research, and feminist reflexivity. She has been a faculty member at Simmons College, Lesley University, and Boston College. She is currently Resident Scholar on-leave at the Brandeis University Women's Studies Research Center. Tracey and her family have been members of First Parish, Concord, for fifteen years.

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THE PROGRAM

Enduring and changing, the family is an important part of communities and of Unitarian Universalist congregations. Recently, the terms *family* and *family values* have become laden with political meanings. With UU Principles as a guide, we can reclaim and recognize the family as grounded in care and experiences of lived diversity. In their strength, endurance, and malleability, families demonstrate lived faith. They are diverse and often held in the eye of the beholder. Children who have parents who do not live together may be singular "keepers" of their family, which cannot be solely defined by locale. Children with families of multiple races and ethnicities may identify themselves as multiracial or multiethnic. Older adults living alone may define their families as being very small or large and extended. Increasingly families are defined by their functionality. How members care for each other matters most. Who is in a family varies widely and contributes to the diversity of healthy variation.

Program Overview

What is a family? What does a family do? Who defines family? This twelve-session program provides avenues for in-depth exploration of the diversity, commonality, and meaning of families. Designed for flexible use by junior and/or senior high school youth, the program combines a photo-documentary project with sessions that engage participants in deconstructing and reconstructing the notion of family. The curriculum relies on facilitators to create a safe space that allows youth to explore freely, to share their own thoughts, prejudices, hopes, and stories. The photo-documentary project allows youth to be leaders in an intergenerational congregational activity. In the process of the program, the youth will:

- Explore and share preconceptions and lived experiences of family life
- Reflect on the meanings, functions, stresses, and joys of families
- Learn about the true diversity of family life, both within their congregation and more broadly
- Gain an understanding of how Unitarian Universalist Principles can be enacted in families
- Deepen their respect, appreciation, and care for families through their project and session work
- Engage in the collaborative, creative, artistic, and ethical representation of families

- Engage as leaders in an intergenerational congregational project

Program Introduction

Families is a twelve-session, highly interactive youth program designed for groups of eight to twenty participants. It can be adapted for smaller and larger groups. Designed for both junior and senior high youth, it can also be used in a mixed age group. The photo-documentary project will need more or less supervision depending on the skills, maturity, interests, and tenor of the group. The sessions offer choices for activities; they can be adapted for the specific needs of the group. Each session is written to last one hour. Alternative activities are included for groups that meet longer than one hour. Facilitators are encouraged to read each session and make choices that suit their group. Many of the activities require no preparation and can be included at short notice as time permits.

Adapting the Program

Although the program can be adapted to meet a group's needs, the two opening sessions and the closing session are highly recommended. In the existing curriculum, Sessions 7 through 9—which examine family function—can be used out of order or omitted. Extending *Families* into a longer curriculum is possible by expanding sessions to span more than one sixty-minute period or adding more sessions that exclusively provide time to work on the photo-documentary project. Combining sessions enables the curriculum to be used in full weekend formats or weeklong retreats.

The combination of session-based and project-based curriculum allows participants to explore their own realities of family and experiences of representation before looking more broadly at others. The process of considering one's own lived experiences is a foundation for the sensitive understanding of others. For youth and leaders, the dual experiences of understanding self and others transcend any content about families and builds deeper faith.

GOALS

Families is part of the Tapestry of Faith, the lifespan integrated curriculum series developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Embedded in this program is attention to four strands of development: ethical, spiritual, Unitarian Universalist religious identity, and faith development.

Ethical Development

The program is designed to help adolescents:

- Broaden and deepen their understandings and definitions of families, including the roles and functions of families
- Explore the meaning of healthy families in a diversity of forms
- Value each person's individual worth and realize his/her unique perspective as an interpreter of our world and as a teller of our stories
- Build and foster the ability to understand multiple perspectives
- Develop the ethics of care and responsibility through the intimate and ethical process of engaging with and representing families

Spiritual Development

The program is designed to help adolescents:

- Understand and appreciate the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions of families
- Develop a personal sense of values regarding families
- Deepen spirituality through engagement with others and through their work with artistic media
- Engage in the shared ministry of focusing—literally and figuratively—on the faces and narratives of congregation members
- Grow and deepen their naturally compassionate souls
- Engage joyfully in the creation of art

Unitarian Universalist Religious Identity

The program is designed to help adolescents:

- Learn more fully that there is no "objective" point of view
- Understand how the living tradition of the UU faith and its Principles can interpret and guide families
- Learn how the fundamentals of photography translate to our way of living and interpreting the world in a more general way

Faith Development

The program is designed to help adolescents:

- Engage as leaders of a project that serves the greater congregation and affirms more deeply their place in interdependent, multigenerational, congregational life
- Collaborate with peers

- Experience the roles of photographer/artist and storyteller—visual and/or text—within a faith community

Other Skills

The program is designed to help adolescents:

- Learn and enjoy the complex process of seeing and interpreting
- Learn the fundamentals of photography, including framing, point of view, timing, and use of symbols/details
- Learn the mechanics and art of camera use and the display of photographic images

LEADERS

This program is designed for co-leadership. In addition to sharing the work of leading, there are many benefits of co-leadership, such as providing more than one role model, setting an example of collaboration, providing more than one adult with whom youth can develop trust, and reducing the potential isolation of leading without a partner. In addition, co-leaders regularly evaluate the program and offer critical and creative course corrections. Co-leadership often leads to a deep connection and appreciation between the leaders—some of the many rewards of engagement in this program.

The most important skill for co-leadership is the ability to sensitively and authentically interact with youth. The curriculum navigates issues close to the hearts of adolescents, and careful, empathic listening and questioning are necessary. Knowing how to gently probe or facilitate youth's sharing requires patience. These skills develop in the context of care and trust. Co-leadership makes connecting to individual youth possible. Knowing more about youth who seem reluctant to participate or are quiet during discussions is important in order to sensitively cater the program to meet group needs. Co-leaders can share the responsibility of facilitating the group and reaching out to individuals effectively.

The photo-documentary project requires some basic knowledge of photography and display. Although familiarity with camera use is helpful, it is not a requisite for leadership. Enlisting the help of someone who is willing to consult as needed will provide enough support for the photo-documentary project.

Sharing Leadership with Youth

Many of the segments of the sessions can be ably led by youth. Youth leadership builds participants' ownership and investment in the processes and

activities of the sessions. It also nurtures youth's developing abilities to lead and take initiatives. Simple activities that require little preparation, such as lighting the chalice, greeting participants at the start of the session, or acting as scribe during group generation of ideas, can be done easily by youth of all ages. There are many ways to involve youth in leadership, including:

- **Provide Program Input.** As a group, youth can help guide their own programs. Soliciting youth input about activity choices is respectful and appropriate when leaders are ready to act on participants' ideas. Choices about snack and closing and opening rituals are easy to plan collaboratively. Like adult leaders, youth provide the best input when they are given sufficient background. For example, if youth lead chalice lighting, they may need a hymnal or other sources for meditative words. If youth are asked to choose session activities, they need enough information to make good decisions.
- **Co-Lead a Session Activity.** With advance planning, youth can co-lead session activities. This challenge is often very appropriate for older adolescents, and a congregation can provide just the right environment for youth to take such leadership risks. Adolescents are seldom in communities that welcome their leadership; our faith communities can be an exception. Therefore, adults need to solicit youth interest in potential leadership roles and follow up. It is the adult leader's responsibility to support youths' leadership success. Youth, like adults, will have their own leadership style. Flexibility about style of leadership is both necessary and healthy. Encourage all interested youth to co-lead an activity. Hesitant youth may be more willing to attempt leadership after observing the success of their peers. Participating in leadership builds individual and collective identities as well as group process. Adult leaders can support youth by modeling attentiveness and cooperation during youth leadership and managing those aspects of the program that youth are not leading.
- **Co-Lead the Photo-Documentary Project.** Youth leadership is an inherent part of the photo-documentary project. While adult co-leaders will recruit congregational families for the photo-documentary, youth will engage directly with families about photography, narratives, and the families' reflections on their representation in the project. Adult leaders need to back up youth by addressing connections that are not made,

details that are overlooked, and other aspects of project work that need support. Often youth have wonderful ideas and plans that go unrealized. Adult leaders must skillfully walk the line between too much and too little support and guidance. A benefit of this curriculum is that adults can assure participants' success on the photo-documentary project without stifling their initiative and creativity.

- **Participate in Overall Program Leadership.** Leaders may wish to have senior high youth join the leadership team. Experienced youth, already seasoned in leading sessions, may join an adult in leading the entire program. Alternatively, youth can be effective co-leaders for full individual sessions. Planning is necessary, since session leadership often requires at least a week of preparation. To prepare, the adult and youth co-leaders read the session in advance, make activity choices, determine each person's responsibilities, and prepare to lead together. In this process the adult must maintain his/her responsibility of mentoring youth co-leaders and supporting the program participants.

PARTICIPANTS

The content and processes of *Families* is designed to meet the developmental needs of youth. Adolescence is a time of tremendous physical, psychological, and cognitive growth and development. Typically, adolescence marks the start of reflective thinking—an ability to think about thinking. Self-consciousness and awareness of others are heightened. Adolescents feel autonomous, but are still dependent on the network of others who care for them.

Early adolescence sometimes marks a period of diminishing communication between youth and their caregivers. At the same time, adolescents are considering their identity: who they are and who they wish to become. The process of identity development is intimately tied to youths' families. Although family relationships define young children's identities, adolescents embark on the journey of navigating independent, relational identities. Tensions from change—both internal developmental changes and external changes, such as death, divorce, remarriage, and inclusion of new family members—often arise. While adolescents may rebel against or even rebuke families, they need and depend on them. Belonging to a wider shared community, such as a faith community, can support adolescents and their families.

This curriculum is designed to provide space for youth to begin to look at their families. Understanding begins with

attending and listening to each other's descriptions of their own realities. This program offers opportunities for those processes to occur. By understanding their own families, learning more broadly about families, and representing a range of healthy families, youth will gain a greater sense of family functionality and their own efficacy in contributing to it. Thinking about who serves the functions of family in their own lives may broaden youths' visions and move them toward broader notions of family health and identity.

By participating in the curriculum, and especially the photo-documentary project, youth are able to be congregational leaders. This shifts adolescents from the margins to the center of congregational life. Young adolescents are capable of profoundly abstract thought, but are sometimes uninterested in activities that are primarily verbal and/or intellectual. They need outlets that allow them to move about and to learn through experience rather than through a talking heads approach.

Developmentally, adolescents are ready to have some authority and autonomy. Creating and sharing artistic representations of families in the photo-documentary project, youth influence the congregation and act as leaders. In their work, youth may identify themselves as artists, and that enriches their emerging self-concepts and identities. The congregation also sees itself differently. The photo-documentary project serves as an interpretive mirror. Youth and the greater congregation are mutually served.

Some characteristics of the young adolescent include:

- Seeks support for self-esteem and body image as she/he transitions into an adult body
- Engages in abstract and hypothetical thinking
- Concentrates on self and other's perceptions of the self
- Engages actively with peers and social relationships
- Tries to reconcile the inner self with the outer self
- Explores gender, racial, and ethnic identities through affiliations
- Expresses criticisms of self and others
- Seeks belonging and membership and is concerned with social approval
- Takes on others' perspectives and understands that sharing perspectives does not necessarily mean agreement

- Expresses interest in religion that embodies values
- Sustains faith development by engaging with a community that allows questioning
- Seeks love, understanding, loyalty, and support

In older adolescents you may witness:

- An increase in independent functioning
- A firmer and more cohesive sense of identity
- A greater ability to think through ideas and examine inner experiences
- Conflict with parents beginning to decrease
- An increased ability for delayed gratification and compromise
- Increased emotional stability
- An increased concern for others
- Work habits becoming more defined
- More importance placed on one's role in life
- Development of more serious relationships
- A greater capacity for setting goals
- An interest in moral reasoning
- An increased emphasis on personal dignity and self-esteem
- Social and cultural traditions regaining some of their previous importance

The *Families* program offers ways to support the younger/older adolescent:

- Promote healthy body image and self-esteem
- Affirm and support the adolescent's many physical, emotional, and cognitive changes
- Model respect
- Be flexible and responsive
- Provide opportunities for complex thinking and the pondering of big questions
- Respect and take seriously the adolescent's self-consciousness
- Recognize that challenging authority provides an outlet for new cognitive skills
- Maintain clear expectations enabling adolescents to make independent decisions
- Keep some routines or rituals that provide continuity from childhood to adulthood

- Be a sounding board for youth's exploration of ideas
- Encourage involvement in multiple settings
- Actively support the adolescent's exploration of identity
- Encourage participation in a faith or religious community
- Provide outlets for questioning faith, religion, and creed
- Facilitate youth's work in the community
- Celebrate both change and continuity

By adapting activities or using alternate activities, you can help ensure that every session is inclusive of participants with a range of physical and cognitive abilities and learning styles, food allergies, and other sensitivities or limitations. Below, you will find general guidance on adapting the activities along with some resources for implementing inclusion.

As you plan your sessions, be aware of activities that might pose difficulties for youth who are differently abled. All spaces, indoor and outdoor, need to be accessible to anyone who might be in the group. Check the width of doorways and aisles, the height of tables, and the terrain of outdoor landscapes.

Find out about participants' medical conditions and their allergies, particularly to food, if you plan to serve snacks.

Each session mixes active and quiet, expressive and listening, and whole-group and individual activities, along with alternate activities that you can substitute for core activities if you feel they better suit a group. As you begin to recognize different learning styles among the participants, let this information guide your selection of activities for each session.

Some activity descriptions mention specific concerns or suggest adaptations under the heading "Including All Participants." Feel free to devise your own adaptations to meet any special needs you perceive. As the leader, you will know best how to provide a fully inclusive learning experience for the group.

In the Teacher Development section of the UUA website, you will find descriptions of [a helpful resource](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=756) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=756) Sally Patton's *Welcoming Children with Special Needs*.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Each session is outlined with the following sections:

Quote

A quote introduces the subject of each session. You may decide to read a quote aloud to your group as an entry point to the session. However, the quotes are intended primarily for leaders, and are not always at the youth's level of understanding or experience,

Co-leaders may like to discuss the quote as part of preparation for a session. Exploring a quote together can help you each feel grounded in the ideas and activities you will present and can help a team of leaders get "on the same page."

Introduction

The introduction provides a quick sketch of the session. It is just enough information for an e-mail update to youth or to pass on to others who may be interested.

Goals

The goals identify what the session strives to achieve. They are nested in the four strands of our entire lifespan integrated curriculum: ethical development, spiritual development, Unitarian Universalist identity development, and faith development.

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives state what participants will accomplish during a session. They are tied to the work of the session. They relate to the goals by articulating the processes through which the goals will be accomplished.

Session-at-a-Glance

The Session-at-a-Glance table lists the session activities in a suggested order and provides an estimated time for completing each activity within a sixty-minute session. The table includes all of the core activities from the Opening through the Closing. Although the table includes a Faith in Action activity, note that you will need additional time—often outside of the session itself—to complete the Faith in Action activity. Details about this follow shortly.

Session-at-a-Glance is a guide for planning. From the table, choose which elements to use and decide how to combine these to best suit your group, the meeting space, and the amount of time you have.

Keep in mind that many variables inform the actual completion time for an activity. Times listed always represent a minimum amount of time needed to complete the activity. Whole-group discussions will take longer in a large group than in a small group. Although six teams can plan their skits as quickly as two teams can, a group will need more time to watch six skits than to watch two. Remember to allow for the time it takes to relocate youth to another area of your meeting room and

the time you will need if you wish to include cleanup in an art activity.

The time estimates for completing Faith in Action activities include only the work the group will do when you meet. Leader planning and preparation are not included. For most Faith in Action activities, you will need to make special arrangements for participants, their families, other congregants, and sometimes members of the wider community to undertake activities outside the group's regular meeting time.

Spiritual Preparation

Each session provides a spiritual exercise that teachers may use to prepare themselves for leading the session. Taking five or ten minutes to center yourself within the session's purpose and content will support and free you to be present with the participants and focus on providing the best possible learning experience. The exercise will guide you to call forth your own life experiences, beliefs, and spirituality and relate these to the session you are about to lead. Take advantage of these exercises as a way to grow spiritually as a leader.

Session Plan

The session plan presents every element of the session in detail, within the sequence established in the Session-at-a-Glance table. Additionally, the session plan presents alternate activities, a Taking It Home section with extension activities for families, and a Resources section. The Resources section includes all the stories, handouts, and other resources you need to lead all of the session activities. The Resources section also suggests additional sources to help you, the leader, further explore the session topics.

If you are reading Families online, you can move as you wish among a session's elements; for example, Opening, Closing, Faith in Action, Activity 4, Resources, and so on. Each element occupies its own web page and you can click on "Print this Page" at any time. However if you click on "Download Entire Program" or "Download Session," you will have a user-friendly document on your computer that you can customize as you wish, using your own word processing program. Once you decide which activities you will use, format and print only the materials you need.

Welcoming and Entering

Adolescents often need time to "warm up." They do so naturally by chatting and connecting with one another. Sometimes the process excludes youth who are new to the program or more reticent about social interaction. Harnessing the "entering" energy of youth and engaging them in informal but focused activities provides shared focal points and common currency for connection. The

optional activities in Welcoming and Entering work well if participants do not all enter the program space together. The activities are done informally with other participants as they arrive. Late arriving participants who miss the entering activities will still be able to participate fully in the session.

The time to conduct Welcoming and Entering activities is not included in the sixty minutes allocated for each session, as the activities are considered "pre-gathering" activities. If the format for your session does not easily accommodate these activities, consider using them as alternate activities.

Opening

This marks the start of the sixty-minute session. The group gathers in a circle. As a way of marking the gathering as occurring in a religious context and claiming the time together as sacred, we light the chalice. Youth can take leadership in chalice lighting and the saying of words. Different formats are suggested and leaders/participants may develop a style that will work best for the group over time. The chalice lighting is followed by one or more activities that introduces the focus of the session and creates group cohesion.

Activities

Up to five activities form the core content of each session. The variety of activities presented within each session addresses different learning styles you may find among participants.

Presenting activities in the suggested sequence will help you provide a coherent learning experience. In general, sessions are structured to first activate youth's interest in and prior knowledge of the main topic; next, offer hands-on engagement with the topic; and finally, provide opportunities to process and apply new observations and knowledge. The suggested sequence alternates listening and talking, sitting still and moving about, individual exploration and team or whole group exploration to provide variation that will help youth stay engaged and on track. As you mix and match activities to form a session that will work well for you, keep in mind young participants' journey of learning and the benefits of a well-paced session that includes different kinds of activities.

Materials for Activity. This checklist, provided for each activity, tells you the supplies you will need.

Preparation for Activity. Review the bulleted preparation "to do" list for each activity at least one week ahead of a session. The list provides all the advance work you need to do for the activity.

Description of Activity. This section provides detailed directions for implementing the activity. For many activities, the description includes a rationale that links the activity thematically to the rest of the session and to the entire program.

Read the activity descriptions carefully during your planning process so that you understand each activity and its purpose. Later, when you are leading the group, use the description as a step-by-step how-to guide.

Including All Participants. Adaptation to include all participants should always be part of your planning process. For certain activities, an Including All Participants section suggests specific modifications to make the activity manageable and meaningful for participants with limitations of mobility, sight, hearing, or cognition.

Faith in Action

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

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

Before your first session, decide which Faith in Action activities you will do over the course of the program. As you plan each session, make sure you allocate the time you will need to move Faith in Action project(s) forward. Sessions that present Faith in Action activities provide estimates of how much time the group will need to complete this particular stage of the project.

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

Note: Faith in Action activities can also be used in ways independent of the *Families* program, such as for multigenerational groups or in a summer camp or other unique setting.

Closing

Each session closes with a brief time of re-gathering and reflection. This marks the end of the session. Sharing

reflections about the activities and a benediction or blessing provides closure. Reminders to participants about upcoming events or materials are listed in this section as well.

Leader Reflection and Planning

This section provides guidance, often in the form of questions, to help co-leaders process the session after it is concluded and use their reflections to shape future sessions.

Taking It Home

Taking It Home resources for each session are designed to help youth extend their religious education experiences by engaging in activities with their families. These resources may include games, conversation topics, ideas for incorporating Unitarian Universalist rituals into the home environment, and/or online sources for the session's themes. Download the Taking It Home section and adapt it to reflect the actual activities you have included in the session. You can print and photocopy the Taking It Home section for participants to bring home. Parents/caregivers may also be encouraged to download the section and use it to encourage their youth to share these experiences with the rest of the family.

Alternate Activities

Most sessions feature one or more alternate activities. You can substitute these for core session activities or add them to the core activities. Sometimes the alternate activities are simpler, useful if the group as a whole seems unready for the core activities or if the group includes children with vast developmental differences. Materials checklists, preparation, and descriptions for alternate activities appear in the same format as they do in Openings, Closings, core activities, and Faith in Action activities.

Resources

In a session's Resources section, you will find leader resources, handouts, and all other resources you will need to lead every element of the session.

Handouts. Here you will find any material that needs to be printed and photocopied for participants to use in the session or to take home.

Leader Resources. These are the components you need to lead the session activities. They may include a script for role playing or worksheets to help you plan a program budget.

Find Out More. This section lists books and videos, websites, and other selected resources that will help you further explore the session topics.

LEADER GUIDELINES

Families presents two special challenges: (1) sessions for which participants bring guests or sessions when participants who rarely attend are present, and (2) the amount of activity that happens outside of the session period. The former challenge will present itself more in later sessions when youth or teams of youth are reviewing and working on their pieces of the project. A participant who has not been actively involved could easily feel left out. Encourage youth to include visitors by asking their opinion in decision-making. Leaders will feel the need to give background and explain what has previously been accomplished. Temper this need with the awareness that time is limited and each session has a full set of activities you will want to accomplish. Be welcoming, but do not get derailed. This will only lead to frustration. Admit that we cannot be all things to all people and continue with the work that needs to be done.

The photo-documentary project makes this program unique. However, it also requires that you schedule activities outside of your normal meeting time (unless you are not meeting during the same time as congregational worship). Be frank with participants about this fact from the beginning. Alert them and their families before the start of the program. Recognize that asking youth to meet outside regular hours calls for more planning by the families of participants, but that this additional time is needed to produce a project of value. The additional time spent together will bond participants more closely, allow for more time to get acquainted with the families your group is photographing, and help youth understand that our Unitarian Universalist faith is not just something that happens on Sunday morning. It informs all aspects of our lives and sometimes calls for a greater investment of time and effort. As a result, the youth will feel a greater connection to their congregation and their faith. This is something our families deeply desire.

Because many of the activities in the program focus on family behavior, there is the possibility that a youth will disclose abusive behavior or situations. Before the program starts, leaders should have a conversation with the religious educator concerning the congregation's policies around disclosure. Leaders need to know what to do if a participant shares experiences or feelings that could be indicative of an abusive or dysfunctional situation. To protect the youth's privacy, leaders should not engage participants in conversations about potentially abusive situations during the sessions. However, what happens after the session? Should leaders talk to the youth who made the disclosure? Should the religious educator be present for this

conversation? What is the proper chain of communication? Should program leaders address the issue with the religious educator or minister first? When will someone speak to the adult family members of the participant and who will that someone be? These are some of the questions you will want answered during your conversation with the religious educator. Your congregation might cover this topic in a teacher training event.

Certain people who work with minors are required by law to report any suspicion of child abuse to the state authorities. Abuse includes sexual, physical, emotional, and mental abuse. This is called mandated reporting. What are your state laws concerning mandated reporting? Ask the religious educator which state laws apply to you. Understand how the state laws and your congregations policies intersect. Make sure you have the phone numbers you need to contact all parties.

No matter what policies you follow, these are extremely sensitive issues and you should proceed with caution. Balancing protecting our young people with privacy and confidentiality is not always easy. Allegations of abuse could affect not only one family, but the entire congregation and could lead to legal consequences. However, the safety of the youth must come first. A support system within your congregation whether it be the religious professional staff or a safe congregation team and clear policies will help you deal with any issues that may arise.

IMPLEMENTATION

The heart of this program is the photo-documentary project that places youth in a leadership role, listening, learning, and representing the lives of families in their congregation. Autonomy, creativity, and sensitivity are nurtured in the process. The end product is a visual, artistic representation of a diversity of families from the congregation. Typically, the project includes: photographs of families, descriptive information about families, and family members' comments—called write-backs—about their photos and provided information. A true diversity of families needs to be recruited by the adult leaders who are supporting the youth in the project.

Project Goals

Participants will develop many skills and abilities through their work on the project. In the process, youth will:

- Deepen their lived understanding, appreciation of, and connection to a diversity of families
- Develop and realize the ethics of care and responsibility through the intimate process of

engaging with families, taking their photographs, learning about their histories, and representing them in the project

- Grow and deepen their compassion for families—others' and their own
- Understand themselves as active interpreters and creators
- Realize that all that is told or represented is interpreted
- Become leaders within this project and their congregation

Project Formats

During the photo-documentary project, youth photograph and interview congregational families, create a collective, artistic display of their work, and share it with the congregation. The product or artistic display can take many forms, including a gallery display of photography and writing; a PowerPoint presentation of photography and writing; a slide show of photography accompanied by oral text or slide images of text; or an album or notebook.

Sharing the photo-documentary display is integral to project success. Youth need the opportunity to influence the congregation with their work. They also will benefit from receiving feedback from the congregation. Whatever format leaders choose for the product should highlight the youths' leadership in their photo-documentary project. A gallery display, including an opening event, is recommended. A PowerPoint presentation can also be wonderful. One advantage of a gallery display is that the artifacts of the project, including the photographs and the write-backs from the families, can be displayed for long periods of time. One advantage of a PowerPoint presentation is that it is economical, repeatable, and can engage a large number of congregants easily. A PowerPoint presentation can be included as part of a church service. Other formats can work equally well, and the presentation of all of them requires planning.

Project Equipment and Materials

The photo-documentary project requires the availability of cameras. Cameras are needed for four of the sessions and for photographing families. The type of photography equipment you use can influence the product. The degree of photographic experience of the leaders and youth and the availability of equipment will influence the complexity of the equipment you use. Leaders who wish to use larger and more complex equipment may need to draw on their own resources.

When deciding on type of camera and film, leaders need to consider the format of the photo-documentary end product. If the group decides to create a slide show, then slide-specific film is necessary for standard single lens reflex (SLR) 35 mm cameras. Digital cameras are recommended for print and PowerPoint projected images. Disposable 35 mm cameras can yield prints for a gallery or notebook display and CDs for PowerPoint displays. Doing a PowerPoint presentation decreases the costs associated with printing photographs, but makes engagement with participants completely dependent on work with computers.

Budget and the availability of loaned or donated materials will influence equipment decisions. If congregation members are able to loan photography equipment, expenses for the program are decreased. Disposable cameras can sometimes be obtained through donations. A congregational announcement might read, "Help our youth! Bring one disposable camera to the next service and we will list you as a sponsor of our youth *Families* program in the upcoming newsletter." However, disposable cameras may not be the most environmentally responsible choice. Digital cameras provide the most flexibility for the program and may yield the least expensive, most immediate print options. Images can be deleted or stored and transferred to computers. High-quality home printers combined with glossy photo paper create an inexpensive alternative to traditional film and printing. However, digital cameras themselves are expensive and may not be readily available to all youth. Budget considerations include cameras, film, batteries, the cost of prints, and any costs involved with mounting or otherwise displaying the final project.

The overall availability of cameras will influence the scheduling of photography for the photo-documentary project. If only one or two cameras are available, plan to gather many families together in one place—such as a fellowship hall—for photography sessions. Youth can simply take turns using the camera(s) when they are needed. If more than two cameras are available, there may be more flexibility in camera use.

Project Considerations

Although one method of doing the project is highlighted in the curriculum, there are many ways to approach the logistics of the project. Obtaining photographs, family information, and write-backs can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The following are the key considerations:

Recruiting Families

The success of this project rests on recruiting a true diversity of families to participate. The perspective of this

curriculum is that families exist in the eye of the beholder. A child of parents who are not living together may claim two separate groups as his/her family. One older person living alone may claim a large number of children, grandchildren, and other members as his/her family, while others may claim themselves as a family of one. Families vary in constellation, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, abilities, and composition. Careful recruitment assures that youth will capture a diversity of families that is realistic, not stereotypic. To ensure that a diversity of families is represented, you may need to recruit specific families. Be frank about why you are asking them to participate. Let them know that you need them to fill out the spectrum of congregational families to its fullest!

Ministers, religious educators, and lay leaders can all be helpful in recruiting families. Such a recruitment campaign can be complemented by youths' direct invitation to families to participate in the project. The recruitment of families through invitation should not replace a general, congregation-wide invitation. An open invitation allows families with a genuine interest to volunteer for the project. During the recruitment process you do not want to suggest that only selected families are invited to participate.

Youth Participation

Each group of youth has different strengths and needs. People often assume that younger participants will need more assistance in completing the project. This may or may not be true. Deciding factors include how much time youth can devote to the project, how easy/hard it will be for youth to make contact with families individually, and how much overall support youth will need during the project. If the congregation primarily lives in close proximity to the church, then photographing at families' homes may be feasible for even junior high school youth.

When choosing how to approach the steps of photographing and interviewing the families, leaders may be guided by the characteristics of the youth participating in the project. These characteristics can include interest and ability to work in small groups, the youths' availability to engage in project work outside regular session time, the regularity of individual youths' participation in the program, and the level of interest in the photo-documentary project.

Family Participation

A benefit of the photo-documentary project is the relationship building that occurs between youth and the congregation. When choosing how to accomplish photography and interviewing, consider what method will best build community and intergenerational respect. If

photography and interviewing happens during a congregational Family Event, then the Family Event itself becomes a benefit of participation for families and youth. However for some congregants, attending a Family Event may be prohibitive. The process *is* the product for families. Respect the families' points of view. Some families are so busy that they will need the process of photography and interviewing woven into the fabric of their lives. For others, connecting from family to family, as well as being photographed and interviewed, will be most appealing. Leaders will have to choose one method that they believe will best appeal to the largest number of families.

Project Method

What are some ways to do the project? The first step is to enlist the help of the ministers, religious educators, and lay leaders in recruiting families that represent a cross-section of the congregation. While there are many ways to accomplish the photo-documentary process, four of those options are:

- **Hosting Two Family Events.** We suggest initial family recruitment followed by two Family Events during which the families are photographed and interviewed. Ideally, all families involved in the project attend both Family Events. At the first Family Event, families are photographed. At the second Family Event, families view the photos of them, respond to the photos and narratives about them, and have an opportunity to create a write-back (in which the families express what they think of their photograph and the youth's interpretation; see Session 5 for a detailed description). It is also possible to have different families attend the two Family Events, thus leaving the collecting of write-backs to be done individually. If you can schedule only one Family Event, the gathering of write-backs can be collected individually or can be eliminated.

The scheduling of the Family Events needs to be well coordinated. Many congregations have families that live some distance from the congregation. A Family Event that requires additional travel to the congregation outside of regular worship or religious education times might be prohibitive. Therefore, scheduling a Family Event either before or after the regular worship service might work best. Consider a pizza party, baked potato bar, an ice cream social, or a Family Event breakfast. Providing food will not only ease the concerns of families in need of breakfast or lunch, but will also provide an atmosphere more conducive to extended fellowship.

- If your congregation has regular programming on a weeknight—such as Wednesday night programming—a weeknight might work. Be sure to take into consideration families with young children who have an early bedtime or elders who might not wish to drive after dark. These families might be unable to participate in a weeknight event.
- **Hosting One Family Event.** Hosting two Family Events gives youth the opportunity to engage with families longer and provides time for families to review the photographs and produce the narrative portion of the project. However, if scheduling allows for the hosting of only one Family Event, youth can set up individual appointments for photo feedback and narrative development. Remember to keep safety in mind. Individual appointments with families are best scheduled at the congregation when other adults are present.
- **Including *Families* in Other Programming.** If you are using *Families* as part of weeknight or youth group programming and the sessions are held at a time that does not conflict with congregational worship, you could invite families to two sessions: one for portrait photography and another for feedback and narrative development. If you choose this option, you will need to either add two sessions to the program (making a total of fourteen sessions) or replace two existing sessions with these two. If you decide to replace sessions, choose between Sessions 7, 8, and 9.
- **Photographing Families in Their Homes.** A home setting often makes the family photographs more interesting. If participating families need to represent absent family members in their photos, photography in the home can make the task easier. Photographs of absent family members or props that represent them can be included in the documentary photograph. The difficulty with this approach is that you must schedule each family individually, coordinate transportation for your youth participants, and make sure your congregation's safety policies are enforced. Safety steps might require youth to be accompanied by an adult family member or one or more of the *Families* co-leaders.

When considering how to carry out the project, allow time for:

- Inviting and scheduling families

- Photographing families
- Interviewing families
- Developing or printing and selecting photographs
- Conducting write-backs where families respond to the photographs and youth writing

Co-leaders are ultimately responsible for the safety and happiness of both the participating youth and families. To that end, leaders need to design and oversee the project process.

Project Ethics

Representing others is a privilege. Accompanying youth through the process of representing others provides an opportunity to nurture the lived principle of respecting the inherent worth and dignity of all beings. Throughout the program, youth will have opportunities to experience the feelings associated with sharing representations of themselves. This helps develop an effective basis for the sensitive representation of others.

As youth represent others, you may need to develop and guide their ability to be actively compassionate. Reminding them that there is no way to be truly objective can free them from a false sense of objectivity and nurture authentic interaction. Ultimately the project's aim is to represent participating families in the way those families wish to be represented. Leaders must make sure that families have completely offered consent. It is important to have families view the representations and provide their own interpretations *prior* to the final display. If families object to any aspect of the representation, then that representation—whether it is a photograph, text, or write-back—must not be included in the final display. Engaging respectfully in the representation of others is a faithful act, which nurtures mutual respect and trust.

BEFORE YOU START

Read through the entire program before embarking on it. The photo-documentary project requires behind-the-scenes work of the program leaders, summarized below:

- Contact congregation leaders, both staff and lay. Enlist their help in recruiting families for the photo-documentation program. Explain that a key program goal is to deepen and broaden definitions of family; ask for their assistance in uncovering the diversity within the congregation. Follow up on leads with preliminary invitations asking families to participate. If you will be following the Family Event protocol, advise families of the dates.

- Procure or arrange for photography equipment for the program.
- Arrange the logistics of congregational space for photo-documentary display and Family Events. Secure dates.
- Review Sessions 2 and 4. If you plan to have guest speakers for either of those sessions, make initial contacts.
- If you would like to have a photography consultant to this program from the congregation, make arrangements.
- Discuss your congregation's safety policy with the religious educator. In particular, you need to understand policies concerning mandated reporting (see 'Leader Guidelines for more details).

THE PHOTO-DOCUMENTARY PROJECT: SESSION BY SESSION

Use the resource to help track the stages of the project throughout the program. If you decide to skip or rearrange sessions, this resource will help you distinguish how those decisions will affect the project.

There is no one "right" way to do the photo-documentary project. It is very possible to create the photo-documentary project using a myriad of methods. Create or follow a plan that is comfortable to all program participants and to the congregation of which it is a part. The outline below is provided as an example of one way to guide the photo-documentary program process.

Starting the Program

To start the program, make initial contact with families who might be participants in the photo-documentary project. Youth may not know a diversity of families: often they know families with similar age children/youth. You, your religious educator, minister, and lay leaders can insure the project's success in representing a diversity of families by inviting diverse families to be potential participants and leading youth toward them in their work. Envision feasible ways of presenting the final photo-documentary project and explore tentative plans about logistics. It is good to know what options are feasible so that you can explore them with youth participants.

Sessions 1 and 2

This period is an ideal time to contact and recruit families directly or assist youth in doing so. Make sure two Family Event dates are scheduled, confirmed, and provided for families. There are two ways to use the Family Event. In the first method, the same group of families attends both Family Events: they are

photographed at the first event and they meet with youth to talk about the photographs, be interviewed, and create the write-backs at the second event. Another method of using the Family Events is to invite some families to one event and other families to the second event. In this method, photographing the families takes place during both events, and then youth make arrangements to meet with the families individually to talk about the photographs, perform interviews, and create the write-backs. Be sure to support youth in these processes.

Session 3

During this session decide on logistics for doing the photo-documentary. Make decisions with participants about how they plan to organize—in teams, as a large cooperative group, or as individuals—in order to photograph and interview families. Youth may also make posters to advertise the Family Event during this session.

Session 4

This is the session before the first Family Event. Confirm logistics for the Family Event, including how participants will accomplish photographing the families. Decide who will print the photographs from the Family Event for the next session. Copy consent forms for the Family Event. Help youth learn about the process of obtaining and respecting informed consent from participating families.

Session 5

In this session, participants review Family Event photographs together and learn about methods of gathering information about families. If youth will not have the opportunity to interview and create write-backs during a second Family Event, make plans for how youth will contact the families and arrange to meet with them for these steps. You may want to follow up with youth via e-mail. This is a good time to check in with them about the shared vision for the final project. Confirm congregational logistics so that space, time during or independent of a service, and/or an area for display are all reserved.

Session 6

Confirm family participants for the Family Event 2. Check in with youth about the project. Although no direct work is done on the photo-documentary project during this session, the activities will make youth more aware of how each photograph and each interview can only reflect the point of view of the interpreter.

Session 7

During this session youth may make posters to advertise Family Event 2. If youth plan to interview the families

they photographed during the first Family Event, check in and see if they need leader support. Confirm Family Event participation for Family Event 2.

Session 8

This busy session precedes the Family Event 2. Confirm all logistics: who will be photographing whom and who will print the Family Event photographs for the next session. Follow up with e-mail as you see fit. Copy consent forms for the Family Event. If youth are photographing new families during Family Event 2, they should arrange a time when they can review the photographs and develop write-backs with those families. It is important to arrange the follow-up time immediately, since the project is on a tight schedule right to the end.

There is a way to accomplish both photography and interviewing/write-backs with new families at the same time. If you set up a computer at the Family Event, youth can take digital photographs (before dinner), put them on the computer (during dinner), and then interview the families about the photos (after dinner). If this is not possible, be sure that youth make arrangements to follow up with the families before the families/youth leave the Family Event.

Session 9

This is another busy session, during which participants review the family photos they took at Family Event 2 (either of new families or additional images of the previously photographed families). It is imperative that the follow-up meetings with newly photographed families—at which youth will gather interview information and write-backs—happen soon after this session.

Check in with youth participants about their progress on the photo-documentary project at each session, or via e-mail between sessions, to make sure they are receiving enough support in their work and that the final photo-documentary project can take place on schedule. Ideally youth will finish gathering write-backs by the next session (Session 10). During the next session, youth will create the part of the photo-documentary project that represents themselves. Have work that the youth completed in earlier sessions available at the next session for youths' collective self-representation.

Session 10

An important part of this session is a check-in about the youths' progress on the photo-documentary project. All materials are "due" at the next session (Session 11). Offer support as needed and encourage youth to help each other. During this session, youth create their own part of the photo-documentary project: Meet the Creators. Encourage youth creativity! Outside the

session, arrange congregational publicity about the upcoming photo-documentary display.

Session 11

During this session, youth put the photo-documentary project together. You may need additional time outside this session. Confirm all logistics with the greater congregation, including continued publicity, arrangements for food, plans for congregational feedback, and so on. Highlight youth project leadership and creativity!

Families Display and Opening Event

This occurs outside of regularly scheduled program time.

Session 12

This closing session offers a time to reflect together about how things went. Some groups may have to dismantle their displays during this session. This is a session during which groups and their co-leaders can celebrate all the efforts, joys, troubles, and work they shared during the photo-documentary process.

PLANNING THE FAMILY EVENT

Purpose of the Event

The Family Event has multiple purposes. The curriculum-centered purpose is to provide a context in which the participating youth can photograph, interview, and get to know the families they will profile for the photo-documentary project. The congregational purpose for these events is to provide a context in which families can get to know the youth and observe them as leaders of the photo-documentary project. In addition, the Family Event serves the authentic building of community—for families and for the entire congregation.

People at the Event

Religious educators, program leaders, and other congregation leaders will need to support youth by recruiting diverse families from the congregation to participate in the photo-documentary project. Although much of the *Families* program is shaped by youth initiative and work, family recruitment is the responsibility of the adults supporting the youth. Inviting and ensuring family participation in these events should be the responsibility of program leaders; the youth will be in charge of photography and interviewing of families.

Form of the Event

The Family Event can take many forms. In general, it should encompass some activity in addition to the tasks of photographing and interviewing families for the photo-documentary project. Food-centered events such as

potluck dinners or lunches, afternoon tea/lemonade gatherings, ice cream socials, pizza parties, or a breakfast are recommended.

Activities at the Event

It is good to have some kind of plan for the event itself. Provisions and plans with youth for photographing and interviewing families are essential. In addition, families will enjoy having a sense of involvement. For example, they could help facilitate or maintain some aspect of the event (such as scooping ice cream) or family-specific activities (such as leading simple games or the writing of family poems). Activities designed for intergenerational events will work for these Family Events if the activities allow for the ebb and flow of participation. Allow time for youth to photograph and interview families during the event.

Structure of the Event

Regardless of form, each Family Event will need some limited structure. Some structure is automatically provided by the activity (e.g., eating pizza) and by having the space and provisions ready for the event. In addition, each event will need (1) an opening or welcome, (2) a middle activity period, and (3) a closing or thank-you. Plan to have someone mark all three portions of the event. If youth lead these transition points, support them to ensure their success.

Sample Family Event: Family Potluck Lunch

Preparation

The religious educator and program leaders arrange: the invitation to the event; follow-up with families who plan to attend; and the logistics of the day, time, and location of the event. In addition, the program leader gathers input from participating youth and ensures that food and other event provisions are present at the Family Event. Adults should oversee the process to ensure success. Youth are entirely responsible for photography equipment and supplies related to interviewing families.

Structure

An outline of the afternoon's schedule is posted on a large piece of newsprint. This will allow everyone present to have a sense of what to expect.

Welcome

One youth participant and the *Families* program leader share the task of welcoming families. They express the following ideas:

"Welcome to the Youth Family Project dinner. Tonight we'll start with introductions around the room, followed by an icebreaker activity for all of us. Then we'll have dinner. Youth from the *Families* program will sit with

invited families and will try to learn about them. Youth may even take notes! During that time youth will also photograph participating families. *[If youth use a digital camera, the next sentence may make sense.]* Families will be able to view the photographs in the camera and share their delight or despair about them with the youth. Youth may follow up the photo shoot by asking families some interview questions they prepared during one of the *Families* program sessions. Then we'll have dessert and a few words to close the evening."

Schedule of Events

- Welcome and introductions
- Icebreaker activity (perhaps a continuum game from the *Families* program)
- Optional blessing or grace before the meal
- Dinner, youth with families (Youth will use this time to find out about families. They may even use prepared questions.)
- Photography of families (This will happen during staggered photography breaks for families during the meal.) Youth take turns photographing families, after inviting families to decide where/how to pose for the photographs, and asking families to talk about who or what is missing from the photograph.
- Photo reviews and family interviews
- Dessert
- Good-bye and thank you
- Benediction or a familiar hymn (optional)

Follow Up

Youth will have time to reflect on the process and products of the Family Event during class sessions. After the event, youth contact the families to get more information and to ensure that families are happy with how the youth represented them. In addition many youth obtain write-back information—written reactions to the representations—from families. The second contact between youth and families can occur at a second Family Event or with individual meetings.

Thank families for their participation in the photo-documentary project, and invite them to any showing of it.

PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES

There are seven principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

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

Unitarian Universalism (UU) draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;

- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

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

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

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

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

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

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

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

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

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

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

WORKSHOP 1: INTRODUCING THE PROGRAM

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards.

- [Anatole France](http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Anatole_France/) (at www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Anatole_France/) ,
The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard

The first three sessions of this program introduce participants to the topic of families. The process raises participants' awareness of what they already know, think, and feel about families. It allows them to safely examine preconceived notions and stereotypes about families and then look at families anew. Developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky said that all good education stems from "making the familiar unfamiliar and making the unfamiliar familiar." In these sessions, participants uncover not only what they know about families, but also how they think about families.

This program explores families through venues that are based in the central tenets of UU faith. The focus is on what matters to and about families. The program first examines the composition of families and then moves on to how they function. This shift sets the stage for participants' project work—trying to understand families in their congregation. By thinking about family function, participants move beyond accepting simple appearances toward empathic inquiry. Focusing on family function and respecting families as matters of the heart will empower youth to ask the people they photograph more about what they think and feel about their families.

Session 1 introduces participants to each other, to the photo-documentary project, and to the focus on families. After an introduction to the project, participants create a covenant that will guide their future work together. The rest of the session includes an activity that will help participants begin to think more about families.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Collaborate with peers
- Broaden and deepen understandings and definitions of families

- Understand and appreciate the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions of families
- Grow and deepen their naturally compassionate souls
- Understand how the living tradition of the UU faith and its Principles interprets and guides families

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Start to build a respectful community, with structures for order and freedom that facilitate participants' full engagement
- Begin to explore dimensions and functions of families
- Uncover their own ideas about families
- Learn about the photo-documentary project

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Project Introduction	10
Activity 2: Creating a Group Covenant	15
Activity 3: Plan for Youth Leadership	10
Activity 4: Family Continuum	10
Faith in Action: Helping Families	60
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Acting Like a Family	20
Alternate Activity 2: What Makes a Family? (Review)	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Today you meet for the first session of this program. This is the beginning of a new project for you and the participants. You may know some of them well or this

may be your first encounter. Consider how you want to be with them. How will you meet their emotional, physical, and intellectual needs? How will you show them that this is a safe, compassionate gathering to which they may bring their honest selves? The establishment of the group environment on this first day is important. You will have many chances to start

again—you need not be perfect—but this meeting is a special start. Give yourself time to imagine how you will encounter the group. What images do you have that will keep you feeling connected to your best self? What phrases are helpful to remember? How can you model honest, compassionate interaction with one another? What will help you enjoy this new beginning?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Instant processing camera with film (or digital camera, if an instant camera is unavailable)
- Small squares of paper and markers (necessary only if you use a digital camera)
- Glue or glue sticks
- Large colored poster board
- Snack, napkins, and cups
- Name tags
- Fine line markers, stickers, and other supplies to decorate name tags
- Photo books about diverse families—see Leader Resource 1, [Books about Families](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Always check your equipment well before class! Keep extra film, batteries, and/or memory sticks on hand.
- Create an area for taking participant photos. Prepare an area where participants can add their photograph to a poster. If you use a digital camera, prepare an area where participants can draw a representation of themselves with markers.
- Set up snack for participants to self-select as they enter.
- Set out name tag making materials.
- If you decide to display books about families, plan well ahead of time to obtain them from your church or public library. You might need the help of the congregation's religious educator. Be selective in your choice of books; even many "multicultural" books reinforce stereotypes. Create a comfortable area for browsing books.

Description of Activity

Welcome

Welcome participants at the door. Tell participants they will first engage in informal activities and then after ten minutes or so, they will gather together as a group. Invite and encourage them to go to all the activity areas. If crowding occurs, direct individuals to less crowded activities. Have youth continue to engage in the activities

as their peers arrive. Youth who arrive late and miss these activities can still participate fully in the session.

Participant Photographs

Invite participants to take instant photos of each other and then affix the photographs to a poster. (When it's complete, make sure the poster includes photographs of all participants.) If participants use a digital camera, invite them to sketch a representation of themselves to use as a placeholder until the photographs are printed. Have participants replace their sketches with photographs when they become available. Participants will use these sketches/photos for activities. Ask a co-leader to supervise this activity.

Snack

To set a relaxed tone for the session, offer a snack as an opening activity. Doing so supports the early activities of learning about the project and creating a group covenant. Consider routinely providing a snack during the Welcome process.

Name Tag Making (optional)

Invite participants to make reusable name tags. This is an excellent activity when participants are not acquainted with each other or when you have visitors.

Books about Families (optional)

Arrange books about diverse families, suggested in Leader Resource 1, [Books about Families](#), in a comfortable area.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Gathering

Gather participants and invite them to sit in a circle. Welcome participants; go around and say names. If participants are meeting each other for the first time, engage them in a "get-to-know-you" activity. Choose one of the two activities described below or create your own.

Round Robin Sharing. Go around the circle and ask participants to name a favorite food, favorite kind of music, favorite place to vacation, and so on.

Step In, Step Out. Begin the activity by saying, "This game is just to help us know about some things we may have in common. I am going to read a statement. If you agree, move three steps into the circle. We will look

around to see who has moved and who has not. Then we will step back into the large circle and I will read another statement." Participants simply indicate agreement by stepping inside the circle. Make sure the starting circle is fairly large. Read statements and allow participants to move into the circle as they agree. After a statement is read and those agreeing have moved in, allow time for participants to step back into the original circle. You may use the statements below or make up your own.

- I prefer the mountains to the beach.
- I protect the environment.
- I recycled today.
- I like anchovies on my pizza.
- I am good at cooking or baking.
- I cooked or baked something this week.
- I would choose a trip to Alaska over a trip to France.
- I like to sleep late.
- I like watching basketball.
- I like playing basketball.
- I am political.
- I am radical.
- I tell people I am a Unitarian Universalist.

Chalice Lighting

When you light the chalice, use the words provided below or those of your own choosing.

We light this chalice
With thanks that we can all be here
together
And with faith
For the joy of our coming work together.

Overview

Provide an overview of the rest of the session; post the day's schedule if you prepared one. Explain that subsequent sessions of the program combine activities and ongoing photo-documentary project work.

Including All Participants

If movement poses a difficulty, have participants raise their hands instead of stepping in and out of the circle.

ACTIVITY 1: PROJECT INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Provide an overview of the program. You might say:

"The program that we are starting explores families, photography, and narratives or stories. During the course of the program we will look at our congregation and see the diversity of families that exists right here—even within families that might "look" alike. We will photograph families in our congregation and use the photographs in a photo-documentary project. Ultimately we will create a visual display that showcases the photographs, and then end the project with a culminating celebration!"

Ask participants, "What makes a family?" or "What do you already know about families?" Give participants a moment to ponder these questions. Record their ideas on newsprint. Save the newsprint for use in Session 7, Families Function: Families Work. If there is little response, simply continue to describe the project. Use the script below if it is helpful.

"First we will discuss what a family is, as well as its purpose, and how we can learn more about the concept of family. Next we will learn about photography. We will photograph ourselves, our families, and other families and see how that process relates to Unitarian Universalism. Then we will gather the stories and perspectives of the people we photograph and find a way to represent them well in a visual display. The display might take the form of a gallery display, a PowerPoint or conventional slide show, or a collaborative album. Finally we will have a formal 'opening' in order to share our photo-narrative art with the congregation and lead the congregation to think and know more about families. Throughout this creative process we will work together and have fun."

If you plan to engage participants in choosing the format for the photo-documentary, now is a good time for that discussion. Inform participants of material or monetary constraints that you are aware of and problem-solve the issues with them. Discuss the benefits of each presentation format and develop a plan with the group. Answer any questions that participants have.

ACTIVITY 2: CREATING A GROUP COVENANT (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers

Description of Activity

Invite participants to create a group covenant to guide them in their work. Use the following discussion prompts as appropriate:

- What is a covenant?
- Has anyone in the group ever created a covenant? If so, ask if they are willing to co-lead the covenant creating process.
- Think of a time when you were part of a group that worked well together. What qualities or characteristics of the group allowed that to happen?
- What guidelines will help group members be comfortable with and respectful of each other?

Work with participants to create the covenant. Allow time for participants to think and reflect. List responses on newsprint. Encourage positive wording. If participants do not suggest them, share the following guidelines, based on those proposed in the UUA *Youth Advisor's Handbook*:

- Respect confidentiality; personal sharing stays in the room.
- Show concern for each other's welfare; when it's their turn, everyone has the right to either pass or share.
- Be genuine; insults and sarcasm are not allowed.
- Make sure everyone is heard; no interrupting others.
- Be inclusive; help everyone feel like they are part of the group.
- Remain committed to others.

Review the covenant. Then ask, "What should happen if someone breaks the covenant?" Discuss appropriate responses, such as using "I statements" (for example, "I feel that the remark was belittling." Instead of "You made a belittling remark.") to point out which guideline has been broken. Resolve the problem and review the solution in light of the covenant. Revise the covenant as needed and make sure the group agrees on it. Explain that the covenant will be posted and that the group can revisit, add, and revise it so it remains meaningful. Thank participants for creating the covenant as a group and for sharing the responsibility of keeping the covenant together.

ACTIVITY 3: PLAN FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Take time to discuss potential youth participant co-leadership. This topic may be more interesting for high school youth than for junior high youth. Discuss with participants the options you have decided are appropriate for the group. You may need to describe exactly what co-leading each activity involves. Some of the options you might present include:

- Chalice lighting
- Opening and closing readings
- Selection of session activities
- Co-leadership with adults a session activity
- Youth leadership of session activity
- Youth co-leadership of a full session with adults
- Youth co-leadership of a full session with other youth, but without adults

Suggest to participants that volunteering to co-lead enables them to help shape the program and reflects the leadership patterns witnessed in our UU congregations. Let participants know that you and other adult leaders will help with preparation and providing resources. Ask if there are any questions, and then enlist the commitment of youth volunteers. A sign-up sheet may suffice for volunteer chalice-lighters. Create a tentative plan with youth and invite them to continue thinking about possibilities for sharing program leadership. Co-leadership of activities and sessions will require more discussion and planning. Follow up with youth who express interest during the upcoming sessions. It is possible that youth will become more interested in leadership during the process of participating in the program. Periodic prompts in the Leader Reflection and Planning section will remind you of ways to support youth leadership in the program.

ACTIVITY 4: FAMILY CONTINUUM (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Invite participants to do a continuum activity. Explain that you will read a number of statements. After each statement, participants will place themselves on a continuum that is as wide as the room and extends from strongly agree to strongly disagree. As a group, decide where the two endpoints and the midpoint of the continuum will be. Read the statements and invite participants to move to a spot on the continuum that

best represents what they think or feel. Ask for volunteers to explain why they placed themselves where they did. Be sure to keep the pace lively.

Continuum statements:

- The perfect family has a mother, father, boy, and girl.
- If two people live together they are a family.
- Kids have to have families to grow up.
- Your family has to love you, no matter what you do.
- A person can be part of more than one family.
- Everyone is part of some family.
- Religions and congregations should guide families.
- A perfect family does not have conflicts.
- You cannot choose your family.
- You have only one family.
- Perfect families do not exist.

Talk about this notion of "a perfect family." Often the media portrays the typical family as consisting of a mother, father, brother, and sister. However, the reality is that a very small number of families actually reflect this composition. Throughout *Families*, participants will be asked to examine this idea of a "perfect family": where does it originate, how is it used, and how does it reflect our reality.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Letter to Youth and Their Families](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy Handout 1, Letter to Youth and Their Families, for all participants

Description of Activity

- Gather the group in a circle.
- Pragmatics:
 - Who has cameras for use in this project? Make a note of this information.
 - Distribute Handout 1, Letter to Youth and Their Families, to program participants.
- Invite participants to reflect on the session:

- What did they enjoy?
- What worked? What didn't?

- Engage the group in a closing circle, and say a simple blessing or benediction. Use one of the benediction blessings offered below or choose one of your own.

We light this chalice
With thanks that we can all be here
together
And with faith
For the joy of our coming work together.
Spirit of life,
Join with us as we gather
Learning about each other and our
families.
Help us see the beauty of each person
and celebrate who we are,
Together and apart.
May we hold love as a family's most
enduring strength.

Alternative Benediction

"As we leave each other today, we give thanks for time together and share faith in the joy of our future work together."

FAITH IN ACTION: HELPING FAMILIES (60 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Be prepared to present possible options to the group. One good place to start is with your Justice Committee or [Volunteer Match](#) (at www.volunteermatch.org/) online. Contact the Department of Human Resources (DHR) if you are considering the foster care option or the coordinator for the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN).

Description of Activity

Since this is your first Faith in Action project, you might want to keep it simple. One possibility is any activity that helps families in need in your community. Your area might have an IHN. The IHN is different from most homeless shelters in two ways: it keeps families together and the "shelter" rotates to a different house of worship each week. If your congregation is not a host, contact another congregation that is hosting soon and ask if your program participants can coordinate a dinner. Coordinating a dinner usually involves providing enough food for all the families and your group, having dinner together, and enjoying fellowship until lights out. Youth can bring board games or movies to share.

Another possibility is connecting with youth in the foster care system. Contact the DHR in your state to find out ways you can help. Such help might involve collecting toiletries to make care packages. Many times young people do not have advance notice that they must leave home to move in with a foster family. Care packages can provide their basic needs. Ask if you may include a special gift in each package, such as a book or a journal. The DHR might be able to provide a guest speaker who can talk to program participants while they create care packages. Consider asking the Social Justice Committee for funds to purchase toiletries.

Another option involves using [Volunteer Match](http://www.volunteermatch.org/) (at www.volunteermatch.org/) to look for a simple community service opportunity.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- During the upcoming weeks, e-mail or call participants and remind them to bring forms about camera availability.
- Save the instant photographs of participants or print the digital photographs taken during this session.
- Save notes on family, as you may use them again in future sessions.
- Post the covenant before each session.
- Arrange for and/or confirm a guest speaker for Session 3, Activity 3, Conversation with a Guest, if you choose to have one. Be sure to discuss the goals of this program with the guest speaker so that diversity, richness, variety, and function of families is highlighted.

TAKING IT HOME

The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards. -- [Anatole France](http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Anatole_France/) (at www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Anatole_France/), *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We found out about the activities that are a part of *Families*, including the photo-documentary project. We discussed ways in which all participants can help lead some activities, signed up for some future activities, and

all worked together to create a group covenant. We talked about what makes a family.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

What makes a family? Ask your family this question. Different family members might have different ideas. Have those ideas changed over time? In what ways?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

A congregation is a lot like a family. Does the perfect congregation have a certain structure or a certain look? Do they have to love and accept you no matter what? Is there a "perfect" congregation? If so, what is it like? Can you belong to only one congregation, and do you get to pick it? Do kids need a congregation in order to grow up? How has your congregation played a role in the way you are growing up?

A FAMILY GAME

Most people like it when you ask for their opinion. Why not play the continuum game at home, with your family? To start, gather everyone who wants to play. Designate one side of the space to be "I agree" and the other "I disagree." Read each statement and have players go to the side of the space that reflects their answer. If you have time, ask volunteers to explain why they chose the answer they did.

Write your own statements or use the ones we used today:

- The perfect family has a mother, father, boy, and girl.
- If two people live together they are a family.
- Kids have to have families to grow up.
- Your family has to love you, no matter what you do.
- A person can be part of more than one family.
- Everyone is part of some family.
- Religions and congregations should guide families.
- A perfect family does not have conflicts.
- You cannot choose your family.
- You have only one family.
- Perfect families do not exist.

A FAMILY DISCOVERY

Use these questions to spark a discussion: What do we promise each other as a family? Families have spoken and unspoken rules, promises, and expectations. What do we, as family members, promise each other? What

are some of our family expectations and rules? How are they different from or the same as the expectations and rules of other families to which we may have belonged? How do family members know the rules? How does our family handle rule breaking? Do we hold family meetings? Do you remember a time when you broke a family rule? How did the family handle it?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ACTING LIKE A FAMILY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Masking tape
- Markers
- Poster board

Description of Activity

Tell participants, "This activity will give you a chance to think about what you know about families and then work together and act out being in a family." Randomly divide participants into groups that will be "families." Since families are a variety of sizes, vary the sizes of the groups. After you designate the groups, explain their tasks.

Ask each group to define and create a visual representation of itself as a family. The groups need to decide the role of each member of their family. Using their photographs or the sketches they made when they arrived, have the groups create a poster depicting their family. The posters will function like movie posters and "advertise" scenes the groups will create later in this activity. Have groups use masking tape to assemble the posters so the photos can be removed later and returned to the larger poster they created during the Welcome. Have participants who arrived too late to be photographed, or to create a sketch of themselves, draw a quick sketch now for this activity.

Next, have each group come up with a family scene to perform in a skit. Ask participants to think about scenes they envision when they think of a family—perhaps scenes from their own experiences within their own families or with others—and share them. Invite them to choose one to develop into a skit. Encourage groups to highlight family roles and responsibility, and tell them the skits can be humorous. Allow ten minutes for the groups to prepare. Sound a two-minute warning to alert groups that it is almost time to gather back in the large group.

When the participants have gathered into a large group, invite families to present their poster and then perform their skit.

Engage participants in discussion about the skits. Use the following prompts if they are helpful:

- How did they decide which family members to include?
- What influenced their ideas about who is in a family and what a family does?
- What stereotypes did this exercise uncover?
- What seems "easy" about being part of a family?
- What seems challenging or "hard" about being part of a family?
- What do the presented families have in common?

Including All Participants

Observe the small groups as they plan, to make sure everyone has an opportunity to contribute.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: WHAT MAKES A FAMILY? (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers

Description of Activity

Ask the group: "So, what makes a family?" Ask a volunteer to help list attributes on newsprint. Remind participants that you will be exploring this question together in the weeks ahead. Save the newsprint for use in Session 7, Families Function: Families Work.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 1: HANDOUT: LETTER TO YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

Please review this with your family and return during the next session.

Dear Youth and Parents/Caregivers,

We are starting our program, *Families*, which explores the diversity of families through activities and a creative project. As part of the program, youth will work together on a photo-documentary display representing families. They will be photographing families from our congregation and interviewing them about their family life. At the end of the program, you will be invited to a gallery-like opening that will present the display.

To make the program work, we need your help. We need cameras! Our preference is digital cameras, with access to a printer. The cameras will be used by youth during certain program sessions and to photograph families. If you have a camera that you are willing to lend for approximately four sessions, that would be wonderful. We will return the camera after the prints are made. Also, if you have skills and/or equipment that we may find helpful during the project, please let us know.

If you can help, please fill out the form below and have your child bring it to our next session of *Families*. Thank you for your support.

In faith,

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

_____ I have a camera that I can loan for some session.
(Please indicate camera type): digital 35 mm other:

_____ I am able to help print photographs.

_____ I am able to help with the costs of printing photographs.

_____ I can provide consultation about photography.

Comments? Other offers of assistance?

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 1: LEADER RESOURCE: BOOKS ABOUT FAMILIES

Here is a short list of books about families to have on hand for this and other sessions. You might find others in your congregational or local library. Remember to provide images of diverse family structures.

Beard, Jean J., and Peggy Gillespie, with Gigi Kaeser. *Nothing to Hide: Mental Illness in the Family*. New York: The New Press, 2002.

Ewald, Wendy. *I Wanna Take Me a Picture: Teaching Photography and Writing to Children*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.

Jenness, Aylette. *Families: A Celebration of Diversity, Commitment and Love*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990.

Kaeser, Gigi, and Peggy Gillespie. *Of Many Colors: Portraits of Multiracial Families*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994.

Ommer, Uwe, with Sophie Furlaud and Pierre Verboud. *Families*. New York: Universe, 2003.

Recommended for older youth:

Goldberg, Jim. *Rich and Poor*. New York: Random House, 1985.

WORKSHOP 2: MANY FAMILIES

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

According to reports from the Census Bureau, a majority of all households in the nation are now headed by unmarried adults. There are now more one-person households (28.7 million) than there are households containing married couples with minor children (24.1 million). Family diversity has become the norm.

- UnmarriedAmerica.org

For the first time in the 210-year history of its existence, the U.S. Census 2000 allowed Americans to identify themselves as multiracial. This is important because the multiracial community of children, who now account for four percent of all children under age 18, is continuing to grow. Most multiracial, bicultural/biracial, or mixed-race children have, from birth, been intimately exposed to more than one lifestyle, speech pattern, cultural norm, and racial group.

- Northwest Regional Education Laboratory

This session explores families, with particular emphasis on uncovering stereotypes and realities about what constitutes a family. The central activity of this session focuses on the film *That's a Family!*, which introduces the lived reality of many shapes and forms of family through the voices of children and youth. Procure the film in the weeks before this session (see Activity 2, *That's a Family!*). This film is not as age appropriate as is ideally desired; however, the interviews present a wide range of families, which is not found in other films. Acknowledging that the film is not as age appropriate as you would like before showing the film will help participants feel less as if the film is "talking down" to them. Other activities in this session engage participants in examining how we and the media recognize different family structures.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Broaden and deepen their understanding and definitions of families, including the roles and functions of families
- Explore the meaning of healthy families in a diversity of forms
- Understand and appreciate the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions of family
- Grow and deepen their naturally compassionate souls
- Begin to understand how the living tradition of the UU faith and its Principles interpret and guide families

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Inspect the prevalence and content of stereotypes about families
- Examine their own knowledge and preconceptions about families
- Understand the notion of "family" as culturally embedded
- Discuss how what matters to a family defines the character of the family
- Appreciate that families come in diverse forms

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Media Awareness	10
Activity 2: <i>That's a Family!</i>	40
Faith in Action: Diverse Families on Display — Long Term	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Is That a Family?	20
Alternate Activity 2: Family Matters	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take a moment to think about what the word *family* means to you. While there is more exposure to diverse families in our culture than ever before, many people maintain the view that the ideal image of a family is one in which all members are of a single race and that a married man and woman are the heads of the household. Even today our culture leaves many families underrepresented in the media. We undoubtedly carry

stereotypes despite all the work we may have done to the contrary. This is in part because of a lack of exposure. What kinds of families are underrepresented in your circle of friends and family: bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender people (BGLT); singles; multiracial; older; younger; single parent; adopted; minority racial; disabled; small families; large families? How are your views of family affected by the lack of exposure? How will that affect your presentation of the material in this session?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Instant processing camera (or digital camera)

Preparation for Activity

- Place instant camera, poster with images of participants, glue, and markers in a work area.

Description of Activity

Welcome

Welcome participants at the door. Invite them to engage in the opening activities. Collect forms indicating camera availability. Encourage new participants to add a photograph of themselves to the poster. Invite all to look through the magazines for media images of families.

Participant Photographs

Arrange an area for taking photos with an instant camera or digital camera. Ask one adult leader to supervise the area. Invite new participants to let a peer take their photograph. You will use these photos in future sessions. Display the poster with photos from last session.

Including All Participants

Make sure the camera(s) and poster showing participants' photographs is accessible to all.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Gather participants together in a circle. Ask participants if anyone would like to light the chalice or offer words—either their own or the prayer below. If no one volunteers, lead with this prayer.

O creative flame,
Quicken our spirits when we fear,
And warm us where pain resides,
As we celebrate the new and the eternal,
Chalice of our faith,
Challenging and healing.
Rev. Adele Smith-Penniman

Overview

Introduce the new session. You may wish to ask participants what they remember from last week, as a means of sharing the summary of what happened last

time. Tell participants that today you will focus on images and realities of families.

ACTIVITY 1: MEDIA AWARENESS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A variety of magazines
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Poster board
- Markers

Description of Activity

Place magazines and other print media on a table with scissors, poster board, markers, and glue sticks. Invite participants to review and cut out images of families and affix them to a sheet of poster board. The finished piece will be a collaborative poster expressing media images of families. Tell participants that they have five minutes in which to find and glue images to the poster board.

After five minutes, share the images that participants have gathered. Invite comments. Ask one volunteer to lead and another to be a scribe who records observations and comments. If a volunteer leads, support him or her with comments. Use the following prompts as you see fit:

- Who is presented as members of a "typical" family?
- What are families usually shown doing?
- What stereotypes did you find?
- How is gender portrayed?
- How is race or ethnicity portrayed?
- How are older people portrayed?
- How are multiracial families portrayed?
- Who is not shown in family photographs?
- How do images in the media matter or not matter? To you? To others?
- Which images of families seem "UU" to you? Which images do not? Why?

ACTIVITY 2: THAT'S A FAMILY! (40 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- VCR/DVD player
- Film, *That's a Family!*
- Newsprint and markers (optional)

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain the film *That's a Family!*. You may purchase it from [New Day Films](http://www.newday.com/films/Thats_a_Family.html) (at www.newday.com/films/Thats_a_Family.html). If the price is prohibitive and you wish to borrow this film, contact the Lifespan Faith Development office at the Unitarian Universalist Association at religiouseducation@uua.org (at <mailto:religiouseducation@uua.org>).
- Prepare the film for viewing. Advance it to the opening title, which follows the opening montage of comments.

Description of Activity

To introduce the film you might say, "We are going to watch a short film called *That's a Family!*. You will notice that this film is aimed at an audience younger than you. For this reason, you may find it a bit simplistic. However, we are showing this film because it is the best one we have found for representing true family diversity. Still, it cannot show us every family configuration because each and every family is unique. Yet we think it represents more diversity than you generally find in movies, on TV, or in other forms of the media."

Before viewing the film, offer the following questions if they are appropriate for your group. List them on newsprint as you see fit.

- What matters to the children in the film?
- What do the children say about how other people perceive them or their families?
- Do they define or talk about their families in ways that feel similar to or different from your situation?
- What is difficult or joyful about the children's families?
- Do stereotypes of families seem to influence the children's thinking?

View the film.

Invite participants to reflect on the film. What questions did the film raise? What family struggles did they detect? What joys? If needed, use the questions you posed

before the film as prompts. Allow participants to make connections between their own experiences as members of a family and those of the youth in the film.

Including All Participants

Use closed captioning options, if needed. Make sure everyone can see the television.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a circle.

- Invite participants to comment on what did and did not work.
- If you choose, ask participants to say one word to express how they are feeling right now.
- Close with a parting benediction (see below) or round robin sharing of one word of blessing. To do a round robin blessing, invite volunteers to offer one word of goodness or wellness, such as peace, happiness, wisdom, kindness, and so on, to the group.

Parting Benediction

Go out into the world in peace,
Have courage
Hold onto what is good
Return to no person evil for evil
Strengthen the fainthearted
Support the weak
Help the suffering
Honor all beings. - Benediction based on the Gospels

FAITH IN ACTION: DIVERSE FAMILIES ON DISPLAY — LONG TERM

Materials for Activity

- Access to a computer with Internet capability or printouts of information from the [Family Diversity Projects](http://www.familydiv.org/) (at www.familydiv.org/) website
- The *Family Diversity Projects* planning pamphlet and exhibit (see Preparation for Activity, below)
- Index cards and pencils (optional)

Preparation for Activity

- At least six weeks before you plan to engage in this activity, visit the [Family Diversity Projects](http://www.familydiv.org/) (at www.familydiv.org/) website to get information about hosting an exhibit and order an information packet. If you will not have Internet capability during the session, print out

pages describing the possible exhibits beforehand.

- Check with the leaders of your congregation (religious educator, minister, and/or congregational president) to see if you can host a photo exhibit. Alternatively, you might consider co-hosting an exhibit with a local library, school, or non-profit organization. This could be an opportunity for interfaith work: consider asking the youth ministry coordinator of a house of worship near yours if youth from that congregation would like to work together on this project with your group.

Description of Activity

Bring one of the photo displays from *Family Diversity Projects* to your area. Engage youth in a conversation about the exposure that diverse families get in your community. What might all families gain if family diversity is valued? *Family Diversity Projects* has several different photo displays that each emphasize different forms of diversity within families. If you have access to a computer and Internet capability, visit the [Family Diversity Projects](http://www.familydiv.org/) (at www.familydiv.org/) website with participants. If you don't have Internet capability, show youth the available exhibits that are shown on the pages you printed out. The participants can help decide which diversity issue is most underrepresented in your community and commit to hosting that particular display. This project can also give youth some ideas for their own final photo project.

Issues for Discussion

When considering whether participants wish to commit to this activity, include commitment in three areas:

- Leadership. One or more participants and leaders need to volunteer to be the contact person, organize fund-raising, keep an account of funds, order and receive the exhibit, organize exhibit set-up, advertise the exhibit, and ensure the proper and safe return of the exhibit.
- Funds. There is a fee involved. The *Family Diversity Project* is a non-profit, so you must consider the cost of hosting an exhibit. Fees can range from a few hundred dollars to \$1200 for a two-week exhibit, but there is a great deal of flexibility. The *Family Diversity Project* tries never to say no, so do not let issues with expensive fees prevent you from hosting an exhibit. Your group can raise funds through seeking donations or by other methods such as having a bake sale, sponsoring a car wash, and the like. If you decide to co-host an exhibit with another congregation or organization, you can

split the fees. One or more persons must be charged with the keeping and accounting of these funds.

- Manual labor. Once the exhibit arrives, someone must set it up. The display may also require some upkeep. After the display period, someone needs to take it down and return it to the *Family Diversity Project*.

If participants decide to do this activity, use the information in the pamphlet to devise a schedule and a to do list. Assign items on the to do list to participants and schedule how all parts will fit together.

Consider reserving part of the exhibit space as an area where viewers can make comments. A stack of index cards and pencils, along with a sign encouraging comments, should suffice. Review the comments before participants do, in case any are inappropriate.

After viewing the exhibit, use the following questions to process this activity:

- What was your impression of the display?
- Did you receive any comments from congregants or members of the public about the display?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Review Session 3, Activity 3, Conversation with a Guest, and Session 4, Alternate Activity 1, Photography as Art (with guest speaker). If you decide to invite a guest speaker for one or both of these activities, make the necessary arrangements.
- Follow up on "camera availability" forms. If you need more equipment, obtain assistance from congregation and/or staff.
- Arrange and/or confirm youth co-leaders for next session (optional).

TAKING IT HOME

According to reports from the Census Bureau, a majority of all households in the nation are now headed by unmarried adults. There are now more one-person households (28.7 million) than there are households containing married couples with minor children (24.1 million). Family diversity has become the norm. - UnmarriedAmerica.org

For the first time in the 210-year history of its existence, the U.S. Census 2000 allowed Americans to identify themselves as multiracial. This is important because the multiracial community of children, who now account for four percent of all children under age 18, is continuing to grow. Most multiracial, bicultural/biracial, or mixed-race children have, from birth, been intimately exposed to more than one lifestyle, speech pattern, cultural norm, and racial group. - Northwest Regional Education Laboratory

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We analyzed mainstream media images of families for family diversity. We watched a film that affirms family diversity through the use of children who talk about how they feel about their families.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

Diversity within your own family. How are the families of your parents or caregivers diverse? Often we think about ethnic diversity, but there are many ways to be different. For instance, do all members of your extended family come from the same region of the country? Do some families prefer rural living to urban? Is there religious diversity present?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

Examining how your family expresses its values. How do families in your neighborhood know you support family diversity? How do they know you believe that love is the foundation of a family? Have a discussion among your family members. How can you show support? Perhaps you already do with a rainbow sticker on your door or car or with a rainbow flag. In what other ways can your family show visible support for family diversity?

[Q Gifts Online](#) (at www.gqgiftsonline.com/store/index.html) has many stickers and bumper stickers. [Northern Sun](#) (at www.northernsun.com/) also carries these items, posters, and t-shirts.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

One of the things that experts say makes a family healthy and strong is the time they spend together. In our busy world, it is often hard to find that time. With your family, make a list of all your activities, as individuals and together. Review the list and discuss the following:

1. What is most important activity you engage in individually and as a family?

2. Which activities are least important? What activities, if any, do not bring you much happiness? Are you willing to cut out one or more of these activities to have more family time?

3. If so, develop some suggestions of ways to use this extra time together, and plan an activity.

4. If you already spend a good amount of time together, are you spending it in a way that feels right to all family members?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: IS THAT A FAMILY? (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Is That a Family?](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

Photocopy Handout 1, *Is That a Family?*, for all pairs or small groups

Description of Activity

Help participants gather in pairs or small groups. Explain that they will receive a handout listing potential "families." Their task is to decide why the group is a family or why it is not. Give each pair/small group a copy of Handout 1, *Is That a Family?* Encourage participants to share their ideas with others.

List of Potential Family Groups

- Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
- An eighteen-year-old living alone
- One youth, two households: one with a mother, stepfather, and sister; and another with a father
- A foster child living with two children and a dad
- A woman and her two children living with her sister, who also has two children
- A boy living with his mother; his aunt living with his uncle and two girl children; a grandmother living in an assisted-living facility
- A mother, one child, and a live-in nanny

When the discussions are finished, gather everyone together and share reflections. Facilitate discussion about form, function, and purpose of a family. Record ideas on newsprint if you wish and save the newsprint for use in Session 7, *Families Function: Families Work*. If it seems appropriate, encourage debate by asking one volunteer to argue why a certain grouping is a family and another volunteer to argue against him or her. If the group engages in "mini debates," monitor the process

for individual and group safety. Refer to the covenant as needed.

Close the activity by asking, "So, what makes a family? What do we need to keep in mind as we figure out the answer to that question?" Help participants list traits of families (help each other, love each other, and so on).

Extension Activity (optional)

Older participants may be interested in the idea that some people hold their families in their hearts, even when they may seem to have no family at all. Share the following true story from a UU congregation as you see fit:

Within one UU congregation there was a celebration of newly signed members at the start of the worship service. An older man, with whom the congregation was acquainted, explained his decision to become a member by saying: "When she was alive, my wife was always telling me that I should join this place, join this congregation. As you know she died two years ago. And since that time she has been even more insistent, so I'm giving in. Now I'm a member."

Invite youth to reflect on what the man meant. Are there times when they "hear" family members, even when they are not present?

Including All Participants

The optional story deals with death. Be sensitive to any participants that might have recently experienced death and are grieving.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: FAMILY MATTERS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Family Matters](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Make enough copies of Handout 2, Family Matters, so that each small group has one. Cut the phrases into strips; each strip should contain one "how term." Cut three or four blank strips for each group as well.

Description of Activity

During this activity, participants consider their ideas about ideal families by prioritizing different aspects of families. The group can either work as a whole if it is

small or in small groups. Introduce the activity and decide with participants if they will work as a whole group or in small groups.

Give each group a full set of the "How" statements, cut into strips, along with some blank strips. Invite youth to imagine what would make a family truly healthy. Have them consider the "How" statements as possible answers. Their task is to put those terms in order either from most important to least important or from best to worst possible answers. For example, if a group thinks a rich family is a healthier family, they should put "how much money the family has" near the top of their pile. The three blank strips or cards give them a chance to add some new "How" statements that they think are important. Give the groups five minutes to complete the task.

Here are the "How" statements for this activity:

- How loving the family is
- How often the family has meals together
- How much money the family has
- How much family members cheer each other on
- How many interests family members have in common
- How large the family is
- How the family solves problems
- How peaceful the family is
- How the family compares to the national average
- How much the family talks to each other
- How nice a home the family has
- How many friends the family has
- How much the family wants to be together
- How the family spends its time together
- How religious the family is
- How clean the family's home is
- How welcoming the family is to others outside the family
- How educated the family is
- How much family members express affection for each other
- How much time the family spends together
- How many traditions or routines the family has

When the groups have completed the task, gather them together and facilitate discussion. Start by asking participants if they enjoyed the task. You may want to consider the following prompts:

- Is it possible for a family to be good for some family members and not for others?
- Are there any "absolutes" to what makes a family work?
- What makes a family healthy?
- Is a happy family necessarily a healthy family?
- Are there any UU ideas that shape your ideas about what makes a healthy family?
- How did this exercise challenge or reinforce your preconceptions about families?

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 2:

HANDOUT: FAMILY MATTERS

Each small group needs one set of "How" statements that has been cut into strips, as well as three or four blank strips.

How loving the family is

How often the family has meals together

How much money the family has

How much family members cheer each other on

How many interests family members have in common

How large the family is

How the family solves problems

How peaceful the family is

How the family compares to the national average

How much the family talks to each other

How nice a home the family has

How many friends the family has

How much the family wants to be together

How the family spends its time together

How religious the family is

How clean the family's home is

How welcoming the family is to others outside the family

How educated the family is

How much family members express affection for each other

How much time the family spends together

How many traditions or routines the family has

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 2:

HANDOUT: IS THAT A FAMILY?

Are the following groups families or not? You decide.

- Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
- An eighteen-year-old living alone
- One youth, two households: one with a mother, stepfather, and sister; and another with a father
- A foster child living with two children and a dad
- A woman and her two children living with her sister, who also has two children
- A boy living with his mother; his aunt living with his uncle and two girl children; a grandmother living in an assisted-living facility
- A mother, one child, and a live-in nanny

WORKSHOP 3: OUR FAMILIES

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Family life is full of major and minor crises—the ups and downs of health, success and failure in career, marriage, and divorce—and all kinds of characters. It is tied to places and events and histories. With all of these felt details, life etches itself into memory and personality. It's difficult to imagine anything more nourishing to the soul.
- Thomas Moore

In this session participants explore their own families. This is a critical, yet sensitive step in learning more broadly about families. Lived experiences of being a part of a family influences participants' learning about other people's families. As participants talk about their own families, they will gain sensitivity that they will use in their future photo-documentary work. The safe space of this group and session will make it possible for many youth to engage fully, but some may feel uncomfortable talking about their own families. Allow opportunities for reluctant youth to pass or to do activities envisioning their "prototypical family" instead of reflecting on their own families. This affords an option for engaging in activities without disclosure. Model respect and care for participants. In this session participants will learn more deeply about their own and other families in the congregation.

Activity 3, Conversation with a Guest, calls for participants to ask questions of someone who is very familiar with the families of the congregation. This might be you or you might need to invite your religious educator, minister, membership committee chair, or another congregational leader. Extend your invitation well in advance, and send the speaker a reminder a few days before the session.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Broaden and deepen their understandings and definitions of families, including the roles and functions of families
- Value each person's individual worth and realize his/her unique perspective as an interpreter of our world and as a teller of our stories

- Understand and appreciate the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions of family
- Learn more fully that there is no "objective" point of view
- Experience the roles of photographer/artist and storyteller—visual and/or text—within a faith community

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand that families are defined by its members and that each family member may define his/her family differently
- Practice representing families visually through drawing
- Become familiar with the diversity of family structures within the congregation
- View the similarities and differences among families
- Start preparing for the first Family Event (see Introduction, Implementation)

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Family Event Posters	10
Activity 2: Drawing Our Families	20
Activity 3: Conversation with a Guest	15
Activity 4: Building Teams	5
Faith in Action: Ads for Families	20
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Uprooting Our Family Tree	20

one item with you, what would it be?" is the family photo album. If you have such an album or a collection of photographs, spend some time with it before this session. How do you feel when you view photographs of your family? What feeling do you hope the families involved in the project will experience when they view their photos? You might want to share these feelings with the group and ask them to keep in mind that, as they create a lasting record of families, they are also creating a path to memories and special feelings that families can return to time and time again.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

One of the most common answers to the question, "If there was a fire in your home and you could only take

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

- Albert Schweitzer

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers or a dry erase board
- Photographs of a variety of families—from magazines, books on diverse families, or websites. You can go to [Photolibrary](http://www.photolibrary.com/) (at www.photolibrary.com/) and type "families" in the search word box. You can also see samples from books by going to the [Family Diversity Project](http://www.lovemakesafamily.org) (at www.lovemakesafamily.org) website. For each book listed, first go to the book, and then go to "exhibit samples," to find three examples of family photographs from the book.
- Index cards and pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Set out family photographs, including any you printed from the above websites, with index cards and pencils. Write the prompts below on a dry erase board or newsprint:
 - What do you know about this family by looking at the photograph?
 - What do you not know about the family by looking at the photograph?

Description of Activity

In this exercise students will use an interpreter's eye to ask: "What can you tell about a family by looking at a photo?" Invite participants to look at the photos you have gathered. On an index card, have them jot down what they know and what they don't know about each family they view in a photo.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle. Invite volunteers to light the chalice and offer the words provided below or their own. If no one volunteers, lead the chalice lighting yourself.

At times our own light goes out
And is rekindled by a spark from
another person.
Each of us has cause to think with deep
gratitude
Of those who have lighted the flame
Within us.

ACTIVITY 1: FAMILY EVENT POSTERS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers
- Poster board or drawing paper, markers and pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare a sheet with pertinent information about the Family Events, such as date, time, location, and food to be provided.
- Consult the religious educator and any other member of the congregation who can help you decide where to display the Family Event posters.

Description of Activity

If you plan to host a Family Event during which some project photography will occur, have participants make appealing posters to advertise the event. Provide markers, paper, and a sheet with pertinent information (day, time, what to bring, and so on) to guide poster creation.

While working on the poster, review the photo-documentary project; mention ideas about families that participants generated in previous sessions. Invite participants to think about all of the families they know in the congregation. How do the families vary in size, members, structure, and so on? Use newsprint to record ideas.

Display the posters where the entire congregation can easily see them.

Including All Participants

Remember to display some posters at a lower level so that shorter people and people in wheelchairs can see them more easily.

ACTIVITY 2: DRAWING OUR FAMILIES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Materials for drawing, including paper, pencils, pastels, crayons, markers
- CD player and background music (optional)

Description of Activity

Introduce this activity by saying, "A step in exploring families in our congregation is for us to think about our own families. Today we are going to engage in some activities about our own families." Invite participants to create visual descriptions of their families in drawings. Explain that their drawings will not be "objective," but they will reflect the creators' points of view at the moment. Emphasize that participants should not worry about drawing well or accurately.

In their drawings, participants can define their families and include as many people as they wish. Encourage participants to have fun with this exercise—to be fluid, fanciful, and abstract in their drawings, if they choose. If a participant objects, be sensitive to his/her discomfort. Offer the option to draw a fantasy family as an alternative.

Sometimes groups want more direction for this exercise. Use the following prompts as needed:

- Can you show how family members are connected to each other in your drawings?
- Can you capture expression or emotion?
- Will your drawing be realistic or interpretive?
- If beings from another planet were visiting, what would your family drawing tell them about families?

Note: For some groups, the process of drawing families will be quick and perfunctory. Other groups may enjoy a longer process. Provide background music and an array of drawing materials as you see fit for your group.

After a period of time, invite participants to share their drawings and describe their families any way they wish. Sharing can happen in pairs, small groups, or the large group. Consider asking participants their preference, saying, "Shall we share in small groups or as a large group?" If participants share in small groups or in pairs, offer the option to come together afterward for some large group sharing that will focus more on themes rather than on individuals.

Encourage participants to talk about the process of creating the drawing as well as the drawing itself. Be open to all discussion, and be careful not to push individuals to say more than they wish.

Wrap up the activity with a closing discussion. The goal of the activity is for participants to explore their own families as part of a broader process of learning about families in general. Use the following prompts to facilitate discussion, as you choose:

- What was difficult or enjoyable about this activity?
- Remember a time when you used to draw pictures of your family—perhaps when you were younger. How did today's exercise feel different or the same?
- Did the exercise make you think differently about your family?
- What did you learn about families?

ACTIVITY 3: CONVERSATION WITH A GUEST (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Index cards and pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Confirm your arrangements with your guest speaker. Though you or a co-leader might feel comfortable presenting the information in this session, having a guest gives the youth an opportunity to connect with another adult in the congregation.
- If you wish, contact youth via e-mail before the session and ask them to provide questions for the guest.

Description of Activity

Youth will find out more about the families of your particular congregation by hearing from a guest speaker who knows many families. Prepare participants for the arrival of the guest. Provide background about the speaker and the purpose of the speaker's talk. Invite them to generate questions for the guest. What do they want to know about parish families? Hand out index cards and ask participants to write questions that may be posed later. Be prepared with potential questions to offer participants who need more guidance. After a few minutes, collect the index cards.

Welcome the speaker. Offer to assist as needed, and offer the question cards to the speaker. Make sure that participants have time to ask the guest questions.

When the conversation comes to an end, thank the guest speaker together with the participants. If time permits, allow a few minutes for participants to debrief. You might ask:

- What did you learn that was new?
- What surprised you?
- What questions do you have as a result of the presentation?

- What do you want to learn more about?

Remind participants that they too will have the opportunity to learn more about families in the congregation through their own project.

ACTIVITY 4: BUILDING TEAMS (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Remind participants that soon they will be embarking on their own photo-documentation of families. Ask them to consider what might be the best way to collaborate on this project. Would they like to work as a single group? In teams? In pairs?

There are pros and cons to working in small groups. One benefit is that small-group work allows participants more autonomy with a portion of the project. A potential drawback is that teams are dependent upon continuous, steady participation by all members. Discuss what seems realistic and feasible with the youth and develop a strategy.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [You Are Invited](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Use the sample letter in Leader Resource 1, [You Are Invited](#), to create a personalized letter to your congregation's families. Make copies to give to participants.

Description of Activity

- Gather the group in a circle or around a table.
- Distribute the copies of [You Are Invited](#).
- Remind participants to please bring cameras next week
- Ask participants' consent for you to save their drawings and family trees (see Alternate Activity 1, [Uprooting Our Family Tree](#)) for use later. The drawings may be helpful to them when they create their self-representation, [Meet the Creators](#), as part of the final project. If consent is given, collect and save the drawings. Assure participants that you will not share the materials outside the program participant group.
- Option: confirm and/or arrange youth co-leaders for next session.
- Invite participants to reflect on the session:

- What did they enjoy?
- What worked? What did not?

- Family blessing (optional)

Invite participants to join you in composing a closing blessing for the session. Start the blessing with the phrase, "May all families have" Tell the group that you will go around the circle and ask each member to say an ending for the phrase. The blessings must be kind, and they do not have to be serious. Offer this model if it is needed: May all families have as much chocolate as they want, peace, sun during vacation days, happiness, and stress-free holidays. Variation: Have participants recite the cumulative blessing, i.e., so each person not only adds his or her blessing but first repeats all the others that have been said.

FAITH IN ACTION: ADS FOR FAMILIES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Large pieces of drawing paper, poster board
- Markers, pastels, and crayons
- Newsprint
- Lined paper and pens (optional)

Preparation for Activity

- If you plan to display ads on the walls of the hall, request permission from the religious educator, decorating committee, or whoever regulates displays at your congregation.
- If you plan to place ads in the newsletter, congregational e-mail, or Sunday Order of Service, contact the coordinator and find out the guidelines.

Description of Activity

The students will create an advertising campaign to remind the congregation of the importance of families.

Engage participants in a conversation about what they think are important family functions within the congregation. Do the functions include spending family time together? Is open and honest communication important? Would it be helpful to remind families that good habits are developed at home? Simply stating that family members love each other is a warm and appreciated message during a busy, stressful day.

Divide youth into two groups. One group will design and create a poster for the hallway, while the other develops an ad for the congregation's newsletter. Invite participants who enjoy working with pictures to form one group and design a poster that holds a message for all

families. Encourage this group to consider creating a poster that includes a space for interchangeable messages and can be displayed throughout the *Families* program.

Have participants who prefer working with the written word form the second group and create a short ad for the newsletter. It could be as simple as "Families" Invite this group to come up with a choice of phrases with which to complete the sentence. Each month the group could submit a different statement to the newsletter. Some possible examples are:

- Families are people who promise to cherish each other.
- Families need time to play together.
- Families come in large and small sizes. One size does not have to fit all!

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- E-mail or call participants during the week to remind them to please bring their cameras to the next session. Also remind them of the date and logistics of the Family Event. Create a handout if necessary.
- Confirm a guest speaker for Session 4, Alternate Activity 1, Photography as Art, if you have decided to use one.
- Download and print images provided by the UUA Photography Supplement to Families for use in the next session.

TAKING IT HOME

Family life is full of major and minor crises—the ups and downs of health, success and failure in career, marriage, and divorce—and all kinds of characters. It is tied to places and events and histories. With all of these felt details, life etches itself into memory and personality. It's difficult to imagine anything more nourishing to the soul. - Thomas Moore

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We drew pictures of our own families. We heard from a guest speaker who told us about the many diverse families in our congregation. We made decisions about how we will work together as we prepare to start photographing families.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

Unitarian Universalists want their houses of worship to be places where people feel welcome, where it does not matter if they look alike or even if they think alike about everything. Frances David, one of our Unitarian ancestors, said, "We need not think alike to love alike." What are some ways that people in your congregation think alike? In what ways do they do not think alike? Can you name ways that they love alike?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

Does the congregation feel like one big family to you? Why or why not? Who are the members you think of as caregivers or elders? Who are some of the younger children you interact with regularly? Are they like siblings? How so or how not?

A FAMILY RITUAL

Put-Ups. Families and groups of friends can get into habits. Some of the habits are good, like listening to each other. Some habits are not so good, like put-downs. Suggest a new "rule" in your household. For every put-down directed toward you or someone else, come up with two put-ups. If you tell your sister she is stupid, you have to come up with two ways she is great ("because you are my sister" does not count). That goes for yourself too—if you put yourself down by saying something like "I am so lazy," you have to come up with two ways you are great. Make put-ups a habit.

A FAMILY GAME

Feeling Word Charades. Sometimes it's hard to figure out what another person is feeling. In families it is important to be able to communicate feeling words. With your family, brainstorm as many feeling words as you can. Put them on slips of paper. Divide the family into two teams. Team One acts out the word for Team Two, and then the teams switch. Play the game until you have completed a few rounds. The traditional rules for charades apply: no talking, no spelling. Discuss afterward:

- What kinds of feelings were the easiest to guess? The hardest?
- What feelings were the easiest to act out? The hardest?
- What are some reasons why certain feelings are harder to act out than others?
- Think of a time when someone did not understand or know how you felt. What happened? How did you eventually resolve the problem?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: UPROOTING OUR FAMILY TREE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Materials for drawing, including paper, pencils, markers, and the like
- Newsprint and markers
- CD player and background music (optional)

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity by stating its title. Tell participants that this activity focuses on the functions served by a family. Invite participants to brainstorm what they get from and give to families. Record ideas on newsprint. Next, invite participants to include people they love who are not necessarily designated "family members," but whom they would consider "part of the family," as they think about family functions. Have participants think about who helps them with their basic needs. This might reveal that there are many organizations, such as schools, churches, and the like, that are also integral to their day-to-day functioning and contribute to their care and keeping. If the group struggles with the idea of including friends and others in the category of family, then you might make two lists. As always, encourage participants to volunteer to help record and/or lead the discussion with you.

Tell participants that in this activity they are invited to re-imagine a family tree, thinking first about function. As in the first part of the activity, think broadly about who is in a family. Spend a few minutes talking about traditional family trees. Many participants will have past experience either making or talking about family trees. Ask participants some questions to uncover what they know about family trees. Traditional family trees show a family's ancestry. (In this exercise participants will draw family trees showing the people who are actively in their lives right now.)

Use the following prompts if they are helpful. List ideas on newsprint. Invite a participant to be a scribe.

- What is a traditional family tree?
- Who will make a quick sketch of a family tree? (on newsprint)
- Have you ever made a family tree?
- What kind of information is missing from a family tree?

Invite participants to reinvent a family tree. You might explain, "Family trees usually identify who is in the

family—they often show ancestors. They are not, traditionally, about the functions of the family. In this activity, we are going to think first about who is actively involved in your life right now, who helps and supports you and not so much about biological relations. We are going to make family trees that reflect who serves the functions of a family for you right now. There may be ancestors who are actively important to you on a daily basis, but there may not be. This may or may not include some or all of your relatives. This may include friends. It may include teachers. It may or may not include people that are close to you—sometimes we get a lot of care from people in organizations such as schools or churches." If the group seems to understand the project, then proceed to the next step. It is all right if participants approach the project with their own ideas about how to create the tree.

Some groups may wish to go through an example of this new kind of family tree together. In that case, work together on an example. Ask participants to choose four or five functions of their family, broadly construed, which are most important to them today, at this moment. Offer the following ideas as needed: love, guidance about life issues, shelter, help in making decisions about social issues, help in making life choices, fun, money, and so on. The functions of the family that participants choose are the four or five branches of the tree. Draw them on newsprint if necessary. Explain that the next step is to envision who serves those functions; that is how they will figure out who belongs on the branches. Questions such as, "Can I put one person on more than one branch?" can be decided as a group or left for individual decision-making.

Urge participants to enliven their family trees by adding details about the listed family members. For example, one person may be good at talking through problems about schoolwork, while another is good at helping with social issues. Invite participants to think of different contexts.

After participants complete the family trees, engage them in discussion. Since family trees contain many details, it is easiest for participants to share first in small groups or pairs and then with the whole group. If a participant does not create a family tree, simply allow him/her to listen. Respect participants' ability to engage and withdraw as needed.

After preliminary sharing, gather participants together for reflection. Use the following prompts as needed:

- What was challenging about creating this kind of family tree?
- What did this kind of family tree capture that traditional family trees leave out?

- What did this kind of family tree leave out that traditional family trees usually include?
- Do you think that the people you include in your family tree will vary over time?
- What defines a family?
- Can a family be defined by the functions it serves?
- What other features and characteristics define a family?
- Can faith—Unitarian Universalism—help define a family?
- Think about what you know about Unitarian Universalism and what you know about the functions of a family. Are there common guiding ideas or principles?

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 3: LEADER RESOURCE: YOU ARE INVITED!

This sample letter is included so you can tailor it for your particular program. Cut and paste the text, personalize for your program, and make copies.

Dear Families,

The *(insert name of your group here)* group is engaged in a religious education program that is all about exploring the diverse forms, functions, and meanings of families. As part of this program, called *Families*, the youth are preparing a photo-documentary project that will feature families in our congregation. They are taking photographs and interviewing families. Later they will show the photographs to the families and ask for their perspectives on them. The photo-documentary project will end with a final project event, which will be a representation of families in our congregation.

We warmly invite you to participate in this program. On *(date)* at *(time)* the youth and their leaders will host a Family Event *(insert title of event here)*. During the event we will share food and conversation about families. At

that time youth will also photograph families and interview them about their lives together. Families are welcome to bring whomever they consider part of their family *(if you are allowing or excluding pets, mention that here in parentheses)*. Families may bring things from home that remind them of family members who are important to them, but are unable to be present at the Family Event.

On *(date)* at *(time)* the youth and their leaders will host a second Family Event *(insert title of event here)*. At this event, you will be able to view the prints of your family photograph(s) and record your comments for inclusion in the photo-documentary project.

These should be fun events! We hope you can make it. One of the youth in the program will call you in the next few days to talk with you about the Family Events and answer any questions you may have. Thanks in advance for your help with this project. We look forward to seeing you at the first Family Event.

In faith,

Leaders and Youth of *(insert group name and/or congregation name)*

WORKSHOP 4: FAMILY PHOTOS: THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Photography, fortunately, to me has not only been a profession but also a contact between people—to understand human nature and record, if possible, the best in each individual. - [Nickolas Muray](http://www.quotationpage.com/quotes/Nickolas_Murray/) (at www.quotationpage.com/quotes/Nickolas_Murray/)

This session explores the art of photography. It addresses the elements of effective photographs and the process of creating them. Participants also practice "framing" photographs. In addition, the group plans the first Family Event for families who will be photographed by participants for the project. The first Family Event should be scheduled to take place between this and the next session.

Photography and Youth

This session encourages participants to look beyond the utilitarian and recording functions of photography, such as for drivers' licenses and travel respectively, to understand the power the photographer has to be creative, expressive, and artistic.

Consider, for instance, a photograph in which a person is the subject and a train is the background. Let us say that in one example the photo was taken at a distance; it shows a tiny human figure in a tourist-style pose, in front of a train that is dead center and stretches from right to left. In another example, imagine the photographer moving closer to the subject in order to capture expression and mood, and photographing the scene from an angle in which the train forms a diagonal line in perspective. Each of these photos creates a different mood, tells a different story, and serves a different purpose.

Youth may have their own ideas about what constitutes art, and these ideas may differ greatly from those of their adult leaders. Participants will have an opportunity to explore how photographs can be utilitarian, tell a story, or arouse emotions. They will discuss the importance of content and composition.

Tips for Youth Photography

The process of photography is an intimate interaction. Support participants as they learn how to make their photographs personal and artistic. They will be balancing the challenges of photography with the

challenges of interacting with families. Make the following suggestions:

- Invite families to dress in ways that express their personality and/or interests.
- Use props that are relevant to the family's life together. Props help create a mood for the photograph. Explain to youth that the results of prop use can surprise even seasoned photographers. Offer the following example: Consider a photo of a small child. You decide ahead of time that you want to create a happy mood, so you select balloons and a stuffed bear for props. If the child smiles, laughs, or is even complacent, you may succeed in your objective. If the child cries or looks pensive, the mood of your photo will be different from your expectation. You may end up creating a poignant but unintentional product.
- Be prepared to converse with subjects while shooting. Conversation will relax them, providing more animation and expression. It also allows participants to get to know the families better.

A Closer Look at Camera Types

Although you and the group have already made decisions about the types of cameras you will use in the photo-documentary project, keep in mind that different types of cameras pose different possibilities and challenges. There are even differences between cameras within individual types. For example, some digital cameras have a long delay between pressing the shutter button and actually recording the image. These photographs can appear more posed and less spontaneous.

The type of camera, film, and lighting equipment you use will partially determine the quality of the final photographic images. The degree of photographic experience that leaders and participants have will influence the complexity of the equipment you will use. Simple equipment can be quite satisfactory when it is used correctly. Lighting equipment should be simple and compatible with the camera(s) you use. Either become familiar with each type of camera you plan to use or have access to the camera manuals. Be prepared to demonstrate operating techniques for each type of camera.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Increase their ability to understand multiple visual perspectives
- Deepen spirituality through engagement with others and through their work with an artistic medium
- Enjoy the process of creating art

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about the critical elements of a photograph
- Engage in image design
- Examine ideas about photography and art

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Photography as Interaction	10
Activity 2: Photography as Art	20

Activity 3: Framing the Photograph	10
Activity 4: Family Event Preview	5
Activity 5: Consent and Photography	5
Faith in Action: Absent Loved Ones — Long Term	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Photography as Art with Guest Speaker	25
Alternate Activity 2: Photography as Interaction/Role-Plays	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Photographs show a slice of time, but it is not a limitless slice. They serve to remind us of moments while at the same time affecting our memory of that moment. We may notice smiles or frowns in a snapshot that we were unaware of in the moment. Take some time to reflect on your own experience with family pictures. Are you the one organizing the picture? How do you feel about having your photo taken? Are photos a burden to be endured at family gatherings or do you enjoy looking through the albums with everyone? We carry our own feelings into our teaching. How do your feelings about photography and its place in your life carry into your work with the group?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- A digital or instant processing camera and film

Description of Activity

Invite participants to experiment with photography. Encourage them to photograph each other in different groups and configurations. This is practice for composing and photographing family photos at the Family Event. There should be an informal rotation of participants photographing and being photographed; if not, gently help participants include each other.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Invite participants to gather in a circle and lead the chalice lighting with these words or others.

Creative flame,
Welcome and inspire us.
Let us see the beauty around us,
Capture it,
And know it more deeply.

ACTIVITY 1: PHOTOGRAPHY AS INTERACTION (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster board
- Markers
- Masking tape

Description of Activity

Invite participants to create two collaborative posters with the topics "How NOT to make people at ease when photographing them" and "How to BEST make people at ease when photographing them." Encourage humor (especially in the first poster) and/or diagrams. Provide colored markers, and encourage words, cartooning, and so on. Ask participants to think about photography sessions that have worked — or not worked — well for them. Give the group five minutes to work on the posters.

Review the posters together and ask the following questions:

- What additional ideas do participants have about making people comfortable when photographing them?
- Are there common themes emerging from the two lists?
- How will this information be useful as we photograph families?
- Why does this matter to us as Unitarian Universalists?

Close this activity by sharing the words of photographer Gigi Kaeser. She says, "When people pose for family pictures, they usually feel self-conscious and they try to look good. They often smile unconvincingly or look serious. When I succeed as a photographer, I have interrupted these reactions."

ACTIVITY 2: PHOTOGRAPHY AS ART (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Driver's license photo
- Portrait photograph
- An assortment of photographs of people
- UUA Photography Supplements to Families; [Balance](#) (included in this document) , [Framing](#) (included in this document) , [Light](#) (included in this document) , [Point of View](#) (included in this document) (optional)
- Computer, with or without Internet access (optional)

Preparation for Activity

- Gather an assortment of photographs of people. Make sure to include photographs of groups and people who are diverse in ethnicity, ability, and other ways.
- Review the UUA Photography Supplement to Families. If you have Internet access, show the photos in class, testing your equipment beforehand. If you have access to a computer, but not the Internet, consider burning the supplement to a disc and bringing the disc to the session. If you do not have access to either, print out the photographs you need to illustrate your talk beforehand.
- Write the following questions on newsprint (optional):

- What attracts you to certain photographs?
- Does the content attract you most?
- Does the composition attract you most?
- What elements make a photograph artistic? Invite participants to consider shape, line, texture, pattern, size, and use of space as elements of composition.
- List the following photography terms on newsprint: Framing, Balance, Point of View, Light.

Description of Activity

This activity focuses on differences between snapshot and artistic photography. In addition, it reviews methods of composition that make a photograph more artistic. This activity has a wealth of useful information, but it could be viewed as a lecture. Having a guest speaker present this material (see Alternate Activity 1) is one way to make the presentation more interesting. Using as many visuals as possible and allowing questions and comments from participants is another way.

Explain to participants that today you will consider the art of photography. You might ask, "Is photography art?" Encourage participants to consider why and why not.

Show the group a photo on a driver's license and an artistic portrait photograph of that person and/or others. Ask them to look at the driver's license and the portrait and answer these questions:

Are these two photographs different? In what ways?

- What was the photographer trying to do in each case?
- How do they each make you feel?
- Which is more artistic—expressive, creative? In what way(s)?

Gather participants in pairs or small groups, and distribute photographs that you have collected. Ask participants to separate the photographs that they find merely useful from those, which appeal to them emotionally. Ask them to consider the following, which you might have pre-listed on newsprint.

- What attracts you to certain photographs?
- Does the content attract you most?
- Does the form attract you most?
- What elements make a photograph artistic? Invite them consider shape, line, texture,

pattern, size, and use of space as elements of composition.

Gather again as a large group and share reflections. To facilitate this you might ask, "What makes a photograph appealing?" Tell participants that you're going to review some elements of photography. Invite participants to share their experiences and welcome them into a conversation.

List the following elements on newsprint and include as many notes as you think will be helpful. Review the definitions that you have listed. Relate each definition to the photographs provided in the UUA Photography Supplement to Families. Circulate the photographs as you talk. (Alternatively, show photographs as a PowerPoint presentation.)

Framing

Framing involves the use of natural or contrived structures to form a "frame" along all or part of the border of the image area. The archway of a building or a low hanging tree branch may provide a natural frame. One might create a contrived frame by setting up an arch of wicker or bent wood like those that photographers use in wedding and prom pictures. Show the photographs illustrating framing that are provided in the UUA Photography Supplement to Families.

Balance

Many photographers try to create balance in photographs by planning shots using thirds of the available space. A profile subject, positioned in the left two-thirds of the frame, facing slightly toward the right side of the photograph, can be balanced by the open space of the right one-third of the frame. The viewer then sees the open space as the subject's field of vision. In the photograph, the space becomes tangible. Placing a single or group subject in the top two-thirds of the photo area, and using a meaningful prop in the foreground can also achieve balance. The concept of thirds in planning the photograph can be helpful to the novice photographer. Show the photographs illustrating balance that are provided in the UUA Photography Supplement to Families.

Point of View

Moving around the subject while looking through the viewfinder of the camera, the photographer determines the most appealing and effective perspective. Special effects can be obtained from shooting either below (creating an illusion of expanded size/strength of the subject) or above (causing the subject to diminish or appear childlike or remote). The photographer may need to move closer to capture detail or move back to avoid cutting off the subject's feet.

Shooting a photo from the wrong angle or point of view can create the impression that the subject has an object sticking out of his/her head! It is tempting to position the subject in front of a beautiful tree or flowering bush, but if the angle is such that it does not create depth perception, the subject may appear to be a human flowerpot. By moving slightly to the right or left, the photographer may be able to give the photo the depth that separates the subject from the background. The point of view chosen by the photographer influences both the aesthetics and mood of the photograph. Show the photographs illustrating point of view that are provided by the UUA Photography Supplement to Families.

Light

Lighting also influences the quality and feel of photographs. Some cameras have a built-in flash and allow for little photographer control of light. Flash may be necessary for indoor shots and is useful for filling in shadow areas on a sunny day outdoors, but be aware that flash can produce a flat image and may not be as appealing as the use of available direct or diffused—ambient—light.

When using direct lighting, either natural or from flash, the photographer must determine the most appealing angle at which to have the direct light strike the subject. Sidelight will highlight one side of the photo over the other; backlight may be used to make the subject glow, as it can put a halo around the darker subject. It is easy to lose the detail of your subject to darkness. Front light will illuminate the subject more evenly, but may cause shadow areas in which detail is lost. Show the photographs illustrating light that are provided by the UUA Photography Supplement to Families.

ACTIVITY 3: FRAMING THE PHOTOGRAPH (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Cardboard to make viewfinders (alternatively, use cameras)

Preparation for Activity

- Cut the cardboard into pairs of 7 x 3 1/2-inch Ls to use as viewfinders. The perpendicular arms of each L should be approximately 2 inches wide. Cut a pair for each expected participant, plus extras.

Description of Activity

Distribute viewfinders to participants. To use them, have participants arrange their Ls so they create a rectangular opening in the center, like a window. Invite participants to practice using the viewfinders to frame a photograph.

Demonstrate the possibility of changing the size of the opening in order to reduce or expand the image area of the photograph.

Cardboard viewfinders are more freeing than cameras. You may start the group by looking through the viewfinders at the same subject together, perhaps a fellow participant. Ask a volunteer to stay in one place while others walk around, looking through the viewfinders and experimenting with different viewing angles. Alternatively, you may invite participants to experiment with various subjects and viewing angles on their own.

Gather the group together and engage them briefly in discussion. Invite them to reflect on different viewing angles and the effects. Ask participants to be aware of how the scene within the frame differs with each perspective. Encourage participants to think about framing, balance, lines, shapes, and light and shadow areas. Invite discussion of these differences, including what they find most appealing. Ask what works and what does not work.

Allow participants more time to experiment freely. Then gather again as a group and share reflections. What did they find most striking? What did they learn that will be useful to family photography? Collect the viewfinders.

ACTIVITY 4: FAMILY EVENT PREVIEW (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Take a few moments to talk with participants about the Family Event, photographing families, and other logistics. Go over the flow of activities, starting with arrival time for participants to set up. If you have made a schedule of families who are planning to be photographed, share it with the group. Confirm or designate photography teams, if participants have chosen to work in teams. Encourage youth to sit with families when they eat during the Family Event. Remind youth to take notes on family information or stories. Ask if there are any questions before closing discussion.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

- Gather together in a circle.
- Pragmatics:
 - Confirm and/or arrange youth co-leaders for the next session (optional).
 - For Activity 3, Write-Backs, in Session 5, ask participants to bring a photograph of their family.

- Remind participants of logistics for the upcoming Family Event.
- Invite participants to share what worked and what didn't work during this session.
- As a group, compose a spontaneous closing benediction. To do this, have each participant add to a list of blessings for the coming week. One starts by saying, "May the week ahead be full of ____." For example, "May the week ahead be full of awesome food, enough time to sleep, time to hang out with friends, or good skiing." Ask participants to take turns, either simply adding their input or repeating the full benediction before adding to it.

FAITH IN ACTION: ABSENT LOVED ONES — LONG TERM

Materials for Activity

- Varies (see Preparation and Description below)

Preparation for Activity

- For such a complex activity, you will want to solicit help from others in your congregation and/or community. Finding another congregation that is involved in programs pertaining to the penal system would work best. This could be a good place to do interfaith work, so consider congregations of other faiths too. If you have a prison near you, their officials could be a source of suggestions and assistance. You would need to contact prison officials for proper authorization. You might develop the idea of what the *Families* participants want to do and then have the entire group present the idea to the Social Action Committee and solicit its help. Any activity that you eventually become involved with will need a great deal of supervision. Safety and privacy issues need to be addressed.
- Another option is to invite a guest speaker to talk about families that have members in prison: the difficulties they face, how they cope, and what we can do to help. Ask the speaker if she/he knows a helpful activity that youth can do during the session.

Description of Activity

There are few difficulties families can experience that are as devastating as having a member imprisoned. It is especially hard when the imprisoned member is a mother, father, or primary caregiver. Providing opportunities to build connections for families that are hurting in such a way could be a rewarding long-term

project that would involve both *Families* participants and others in the congregation and community.

The exact nature of such a project could take many shapes. For instance, families whose mothers are imprisoned could be the focus. In this scenario, the project might be to host holiday celebrations (perhaps ones that are already part of your congregational calendar) and invite families. For example, you might invite families with absent mothers to a small party the week before Mothers Day, at which they can make cards and small gifts for their mothers. At such a party families could make picture frames, without glass, from foam or wooden sticks. The *Families* participants could then use an instant processing camera to take photos of the children and put the photos in the frames for children to present to their mothers.

Work with others in your congregation or community to design a project that actively engages the program participants and gives them an opportunity to interact with the prisoners' families in a safe way.

If you lack support for such a project, instead consider inviting a guest speaker who could talk to participants about the experiences of families having a head of household in prison. Ask the guest speaker if there is a way the youth could help and, if so, to offer a suggestion during the talk.

After the discussion or event, consider using the following questions to help process the experience:

- How might having a mother, father, or caregiver in prison affect the life of a family?
- In what ways might families cope with this difficulty? How can we help?
- In 2003, the Unitarian Universalist Association voted to choose Prison Reform as a Study/Action Issue. Why do you think prison reform is an issue about which many UUs care?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Remind participants, via phone calls or e-mails, to bring a photograph of their family for the next session.
- Confirm all details of the Family Event that follows this session. Include food, paper goods, and photography arrangements.
- Copy Handout 1, Consent Form, for the Family Event.
- Confirm arrangements for procuring photography equipment.

- Be sure to invite staff to the Family Event.
- Make printing arrangements for Family Event photos, with youth or leaders, for the next session. Gather Family Event prints for the next session.

TAKING IT HOME

Photography, fortunately, to me has not only been a profession but also a contact between people—to understand human nature and record, if possible, the best in each individual. - Nickolas Muray

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We learned about several elements of photography, including how to frame a subject. We planned the first Family Event and reviewed all that is involved, including the need for a consent form for subjects.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

Discuss with family members what makes them feel comfortable when they are being photographed. Do they have horror stories involving photo sessions? Share any memories you may have of family photo sessions.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

Do you have a family member who is far away? Is there someone in your family who has difficulty getting around? Pictures are a wonderful way to connect. At an upcoming family event, such as a birthday party, holiday celebration, graduation, concert, or science fair, take pictures and arrange them in a simple album. Accompany each photo with a word or two describing it. Send or deliver this album to the distant or ill family member.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Some families have many well-organized photo albums; others have boxes of pictures in a drawer or closet. If the photos are digital, those "boxes" may be on the computer. Some families have many photos; others have just a few. At dinner tonight have a conversation about your family and its pictures. Maybe you can set aside one night a week to work together on the family album.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Does your family do family portraits on an annual or regular basis? This might be the year to do one. Research photographers who shoot family portraits, or practice photographing your family as a precursor to or extra practice for your photo shoot of other church families.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: PHOTOGRAPHY AS ART WITH GUEST SPEAKER (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Driver's license photo
- Portrait photograph
- An assortment of photographs
- UUA Photography Supplements to Families; [Balance](#) (included in this document) , [Framing](#) (included in this document) , [Light](#) (included in this document) , [Point of View](#) (included in this document) (optional)
- Computer (optional)

Preparation for Activity

- Gather an assortment of photographs of people. Be sure to include photographs of groups and people who reflect a diversity of ethnicity, ability, and other characteristics.
- Review the UUA Photography Supplement to Families. If you have access to a computer with which to show the CD in class, test your equipment beforehand. If not, print out the photographs you need to illustrate your talk beforehand.
- List the following photography terms on newsprint: Framing, Balance, Point of View, Light.

Description of Activity

Invite a guest photographer to attend the session. Before the presentation, review the overall project with the photographer. If they can be useful, provide the photographer with the photographs shown in the UUA Photography Supplement to Families. Ask the photographer to engage participants in learning about different aspects of creating and viewing photographs. Allow time for questions after the guest presentation.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: PHOTOGRAPHY AS INTERACTION ROLE-PLAYS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- The posters from Activity 1, Photography as Interaction

Description of Activity

Invite youth to create role-plays based on the posters they created in Activity 1. Aim for a balance between

role-plays that present things **to do** and those that present things **not to do**. Allow five to seven minutes for

planning and rehearsing before viewing the role-plays.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: BALANCE

Photography Credit: Tony Rinaldo Photography

Balance is created by an arrangement of elements (including space) that is visually satisfying. Symmetrical and asymmetrical designs can work. Sometimes a lack of balance is easier to notice.

Some photographers use “a rule of thirds” to create balance in a photograph. Visualize the frame as thirds of the space



This photograph is an example: the youth is positioned in the left third of the vertical space.



The subject in the right two-thirds of the frame is balanced by the space on the left.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: BALANCE PART 2



The viewer's eye moves easily from the track shoes in the foreground into the photo, creating a sense of balance. Meaningful props in a photo help tell a story. The emphasis on the track shoes suggests this youth is a runner.



What makes this photograph feel balanced?



In this photograph, the left third of space is “light” in feel, while the right is darker and heavier. The youth is in the center offset by the light and heavy sides.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: BALANCE PART 3



The balance of people or elements in a photo can create different feelings. The angle and placement of the members of this family make the youth look more dominant than her parents.



How does this arrangement achieve or not achieve balance? What does this arrangement of family members say about the family?



Although balanced, this arrangement of family members may or may not communicate what the family would like the viewer to know about them. What messages are in this image of the family?

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: CONSENT FORM

Youth enrolled in our congregation's lifespan faith development program are participating in a program called *Families*. The program looks at families through the lens of our UU Principles and aims to broaden and deepen respect, appreciation, and care for different kinds of families.

As part of the program, youth are creating a collaborative visual representation of many families from our congregation. They will photograph families and interview them. After the photographs and text are prepared, the youth will show them to the families and ask for their input. Ultimately, the photographs and text will be used in a display or presented to the congregation.

We would be grateful for your participation in this project. Please read the information below and sign if you are willing to participate.

Thank you.

☐ I agree to participate in the youth photo-documentary project.

☐ I agree to be photographed and interviewed.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time.

☐ I understand that I can approve photographs and/or text before they are displayed or presented.

☐ I understand that all materials will become the property of the congregation sponsoring the program and that those materials will not be used outside the congregation.

(Although only the signature of an adult is required, all family members who are able to sign are invited to do so.)

Signature _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Date _____

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: FRAMING

Photography Credit: Tony Rinaldo Photography

These materials are designed to support Session Four of Families. All photographs are the property of the Unitarian Universalist Association and may only be used in conjunction with the Families Program.

Photography Supplement

Framing

Photography is the property of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Framing refers to the composition of the whole photograph—what is included (the foreground, background, and space in between) within its borders and what is left out.

Natural elements or devices to draw the viewer's eye to a focal point can be part of framing.



Can you identify both types of framing in the top photograph?



In the middle picture framing accentuates the youth's pose and the angle, or point of view, of the photograph. The archway of the building provides a frame for the youth.



Not all intended framing works, as in the bottom picture.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: FRAMING PART 2



The greenery and shadows in the background frame the family and increase the sense of forward motion in this photograph.



Here framing works. It is visually appealing and communicates a feeling of fun.



In this photograph the participants look constrained by the setting, not framed.

**FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4:
HANDOUT: FRAMING PART 3**



The diagonal and vertical white lines in this photograph frame the family. Is the framing effective?

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: LIGHT



Lighting influences the quality and feel of photographs. Lighting affects how the viewer's eye moves toward or away from different elements of the photograph. How does lighting work in this picture?



Consider where the light is coming from. Is there enough light? Is there too much light? Outdoor lighting in this photo produces low contrast in details.



Light reflecting from shiny objects can provide interesting—or challenging—elements.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4:
HANDOUT: LIGHT PAGE 2



Sidelights can create artistic effects that may or may not be desirable.



Lighting influences the quality and feel of photographs. How would you compare the quality of these two photos?

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: LIGHT PAGE 3



Backlight makes these subjects appear to “glow.” Stronger backlight could cause loss of detail in their faces and require a flash to bring out facial features.



Shadows create different values and interesting effects.



Contrasting values of light and shadows result in a moody quality in this photograph.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: POINT OF VIEW



Moving around the subject while looking through the viewfinder of the camera, the photographer determines the most appealing and effective perspective. Here the photographer is shooting from the side, creating an interesting perspective.



Shooting a photograph from below can create a sense of motion or expanded size or strength of the subject.



Shooting from below—an interesting point of view.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT: POINT OF VIEW 2



Background elements elaborate this “looking up” perspective.



The point of view chosen by the photographer influences the aesthetics and mood of the photograph. Both point of view and framing are at work in this photograph.



Moving around the subject, the photographer is able to capture different details.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4:
HANDOUT: POINT OF VIEW PAGE 3



How does this photograph feel different and/or the same as the previous one?



Sometimes a “straight-on” point of view can create an effective photograph.



Shooting a photograph from the wrong angle can create the impression that the subject has an object sticking out of his/her head.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 4:
HANDOUT: POINT OF VIEW PAGE 4



The same and different from the previous photograph...



The photographer shot this from slightly above. The point of view influences the quality and feel of the photograph.



WORKSHOP 5: METHODS OF GATHERING NARRATIVES AND TEXTS

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

... the story of a man who saw three fellows laying bricks at a new building: He approached the first and asked, "What are you doing?" Clearly irritated, the first man responded, "What the heck do you think I'm doing? I'm laying these darn bricks!" He then walked over to the second bricklayer and asked the same question. The second fellow responded, "Oh, I'm making a living." He approached the third bricklayer with the same question, "What are you doing?" The third looked up, smiled and said, "I'm building a cathedral." At the end of the day, who feels better about how he's spent his last eight hours? - [Joan Borysenko](http://www.quoteland.com/author.asp?AUTHOR_ID=228) (at www.quoteland.com/author.asp?AUTHOR_ID=228)

In this session, participants learn about ways of gathering information and narratives from others. They explore the value of learning from our stories and the ethics of representing them.

This is the first session after the first Family Event. You will need prints of the family photographs to use in the session. By this session, you should have decided if you will host a Family Event 2 or if youth will need to contact the families they photographed individually. Either way, the second contact with families will be used to gather narrative in the form of an interview and/or a "write-back." Both of these methods are explained in the activities of this session. Second contact with the families gives youth more time to establish a relationship with them. For this reason, we strongly suggest that you host Family Event 2 at your congregation. It will make the second meeting easier for all involved and provide the greatest amount of safety and control over the experience.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Value each individual's unique perspective as an interpreter of our world and as a teller of our stories

- Develop the ethics of care and responsibility through the intimate and ethical process of representing others in photography and narrative
- Focus literally and figuratively on the faces and narratives of congregation members
- Grow and deepen their naturally compassionate souls
- Learn how the fundamentals of photography—that we see the world through our individual lens and from unique angles—translate to our way of interpreting the world more generally
- Experience the roles of photographer/artist and storyteller—visual and/or text—within a faith community

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Appreciate photography as an interpretive medium
- Explore the role of author in storytelling
- Learn about closed- and open-ended inquiry
- Practice recording life information, including stories
- Appreciate the ability to translate experience into simple poetry
- Appreciate more deeply that families can only be understood from the interpreter's perspective; there is no objective perspective

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Do Photos Tell a Story?	10
Activity 2: Learning through Inquiry	20
Activity 3: Write-Backs	20
Faith in Action: Families Far and Near	60
Closing	5

Alternate Activity 1: Family Story Round Robin 15

Alternate Activity 2: Family Poems 10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Our lives are shaped by the interactions we have with one another and the stories we tell about those interactions. Like the bricklayers in the opening quote, we frame our world with the stories we tell about it.

There is the story of the taxi driver who always tries to cheer his riders. He believed that he could improve the world one rider at a time. He had faith that if he were kind and smiled, his rider would go on and have a better day, perhaps cheering others as well. What shape will your interactions take for this lesson? What shape of interactions do you wish the group to take? What will be the stories you tell one another of this time together?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Evaluating Photographs](#) (included in this document)
- Photographs from the first round of Family Event photographs

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy Handout 1, Evaluating Photographs, for all participants

Description of Activity

Greet participants as they enter and invite them to look at the Family Event photographs. Distribute Handout 1, Evaluating Photographs. Encourage participants to select photos they feel are especially strong to evaluate.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Invite participants to gather in a circle. Light the chalice. If a youth leader was not appointed earlier, ask for volunteers. Choose chalice lighting words or use those offered below:

With hope in our hearts,
Curiosity in our minds,
Care in our hands,
And energy in our souls,
We gather together,
In faith.

ACTIVITY 1: DO PHOTOS TELL A STORY? (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Photographs from the first round of Family Event photographs
- Copies of Handout 1, [Evaluating Photographs](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy Handout 1, Evaluating Photographs, for all participants

Description of Activity

Engage participants in a discussion of the Family Event photographs. If they reviewed and critiqued photos during the Welcome activity, discuss the images in

terms of what works and what does not. If participants have not yet reviewed and critiqued the photos, share the photos and distribute Handout 1, Evaluating Photographs. Use the following prompts as needed:

- How should we evaluate the photos?
- Did these evaluation sheets help?
- What makes some photographs better than others?
- What do we see and not see in a photo?
- How is a photo similar to and different from a story? (If it does not come up, you may want to remind participants that both photographers and storytellers are interpreting and representing something to others.)

ACTIVITY 2: LEARNING THROUGH INQUIRY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pens or pencils

Description of Activity

Remind participants that the photo-documentary project involves narrative in addition to photographs. One way to generate narrative is by interviewing families. During the second Family Event (or independently, if a second Family Event is not possible), youth will have the opportunity to interview the families they photographed. When interviewing families, it is best to use as many open-ended questions as possible. Use the following prompts and list ideas on newsprint.

- What are some examples of closed-ended questions? Some examples might include:
 - Who is in your family?
 - Where do you live and how long have you lived there?
 - How long have you been part of this congregation?
 - How often is your family together for meals?
- What are some examples of open-ended questions? These might include:
 - Tell me a story about your family.
 - What are a few of your family traditions?

- What things do you like most about your family?
- What is hard about being part of your family?
- What can you not tell about your family from this photograph?
- If you could choose a slogan for your family, what would it be?
- What is the difference between the answers to closed-ended questions versus the answers to open-ended questions?

Now invite participants to work in pairs to try out different types of questions. Provide paper and pens. Remind youth that the person who is doing the inquiry needs to take notes. This is a challenge of recording narratives, and it is critical. After five minutes (or sooner, if you observe participants winding down), have the pairs switch roles.

Gather the group together. Ask them to reflect on the following questions: What prompts yielded the best information? What challenges arose during this process? How can this experience inform our work?

While recording ideas on newsprint, help participants decide on six good questions that they might use when they interview families. Encourage them to draw on their experiences in this exercise. After the group has generated the questions, suggest that all participants copy the questions so they have them during interviews.

Including All Participants

If your group includes youth who are extremely shy or who have difficulty in social interactions, suggest using the list of questions as a survey. The survey questions could be preprinted and handed to families to fill out. If participants are comfortable doing so, they can review the answers with the families upon return of the survey.

ACTIVITY 3: WRITE-BACKS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper and writing implements, including newsprint and markers
- Participants' family photographs
- Extra photographs of families for participants who forget to bring one from home

Description of Activity

Besides—or in addition to—interviewing families, tell participants that they may ask the families they photographed to "write back" about the photographs.

Write-backs are another source of narrative information. They provide an open-ended prompt as well as an opportunity for the photographed families to offer their perspective on the images. The technique insures that their evaluation is included and respected.

Invite the group to generate prompts for write-backs. Record them on newsprint. Encourage them to think of open-ended questions. Some examples include:

- What do you like about this photo?
- What does this photo show about your family? What does not it show?
- If you could add something to this photograph, what might it be? Why would you add it?

Invite families to have fun with the write-back. They can compose a poem or a song. The write-back can be a narrative paragraph or be composed of statements by different family members.

Inform participants that they will get an opportunity to practice what you have discussed. Ask participants to analyze the family photographs they brought from home and write their own write-backs. If participants forgot to bring a photograph, they can use a photograph you provide — and their imagination. Allow five minutes for writing. If time permits, invite participants to share their write-backs with the group.

Discuss with youth how to arrange write-backs with the families they have photographed. One method is to invite families to return for Family Event 2 for a write-back and/or interview. Another method is for youth to make direct contact with families. In either case, youth can choose to (1) interview the family about the photographs and write the information, (2) invite the family members who were photographed to write their reaction themselves on special paper that can be used as part of the final project display, or (3) do some combination of the two approaches. Decide on a plan with youth. Different participants may have different plans.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

- Gather the group together in a circle.
- Pragmatics:
 - Ask if someone would prepare a chalice lighting response for next time.
 - Remind participants to bring cameras for the next session.

- Confirm and/or arrange youth co-leaders for next session. (optional)
- Invite participants to share their reflections on what worked during the activity and what would have worked better. Depending on the group, you can do this exercise either as a round robin or more fluidly.
- Offer a closing benediction. A simple blessing is offered below, but any blessing or closing sentiment is appropriate.
As Unitarian Universalists, we respect and honor each other and our families.
Blessed be.

FAITH IN ACTION: FAMILIES FAR AND NEAR (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Index cards and pens
- Snacks (optional)

Preparation for Activity

- Contact a local college that has an international school or an organization that works with recent immigrants, and ask for individuals who might be willing to be interviewed about their travels to the United States. You will need someone who is either proficient in speaking English or can be accompanied by an interpreter.
- If the above source is not an option, contact the minister or religious educator to find out who may be a first-generation American in your congregation.
- For either option, at least two weeks ahead of time, arrange a time and place for the individual to meet with the youth. If the individual can come to the session, that would be ideal.

Description of Activity

Share with participants that families are not always the people with whom you live. Sometimes family members are far away. Invite participants to reflect on the experiences of immigrants. Inform them that they will have the opportunity to interview someone who immigrated to the United States — whether permanently or for short-term educational purposes. Give them any information they will need about the interviewee. Inform youth before the meeting if the person has an accent or does not speak English. If needed, talk about ways to be hospitable to the interviewee so the experience will be pleasant for all involved.

Help youth generate questions they would like to ask. Write the questions on index cards and give one card to every youth who wants to ask a question.

Possible questions include:

- Where were you born?
- In what other countries have you lived?
- What would you like us to know about your family?
- What was your journey to the United States like?
- Did you bring family members with you?
- If you have family in another country, how do you stay in touch?
- What are some of your favorite memories of time spent with your family in your birth country?

If the interviewee is attending the session, invite the individual in and introduce him/her to the group. If you are meeting at another location, remind youth to bring their questions. Consider creating a back-up copy of the questions to have on hand in case any youth lose their cards.

Including All Participants

Be aware of any participant who is an immigrant or the child of a recent immigrant and how this activity might affect that youth. If you are not certain about a youth's status, ask your religious educator or the participant's family. If you are unsure of how this activity might affect such a participant, skip the activity.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Alert congregation staff that youth will be working/photographing/sketching all around the church during the next session.
- Start the process of following up on youths' plans for family write-backs.

TAKING IT HOME

... the story of a man who saw three fellows laying bricks at a new building: He approached the first and asked, "What are you doing?" Clearly irritated, the first man responded, "What the heck do you think I'm doing? I'm laying these darn bricks!" He then walked over to the second bricklayer and asked the same question.

The second fellow responded, "Oh, I'm making a living."

He approached the third bricklayer with the same question, "What are you doing?"

The third looked up, smiled and said, "I'm building a cathedral."

At the end of the day, who feels better about how he's spent his last eight hours? - [Joan Borysenko](http://www.quoteland.com/author.asp?AUTHOR_ID=228) (at www.quoteland.com/author.asp?AUTHOR_ID=228)

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We started analyzing the pictures we took of families at the first Family Event and discussed what will happen at Family Event 2. We practiced interviewing and experienced what it is like to create a write-back about a photo.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

Ask family members if they have any suggestions for good interviewing techniques. Practice your interviews on family and friends.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

Offer the question, If you could choose a slogan for your family, what would it be?

A FAMILY RITUAL

Ask each member of your family to tell you a favorite family story. Consider asking for the stories at dinner or when you are riding in the car. The stories can be from the present, the storytellers' younger years, or the family's long-ago history. One fun family project is to record family stories and preserve them. You can make recordings on computer and put them on CD. They make wonderful gifts.

A FAMILY GAME

We are often too busy in our days to take time to tell one another stories. Start a family story jar. During the week, collect ideas from everyone about a story they would like to hear. For instance, you can start with these:

- What was it like at dinnertime in your house when you were growing up?
- What was your favorite family vacation?
- What is the funniest thing you can remember from your elementary school years?
- Tell a story about a particularly good snowy day adventure or, if you do not live where there is snow, tell about a great storm.

- Tell about the first time you made cookies or a cake or dinner for a friend.

Designate a night of the week to pick a topic from the story jar and share stories. Serve cocoa and popcorn!

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Create a family book—a story that records a celebration, family vacation, or one day in the life of your family. Sit down with your family and decide what event you would like to record. Make a storyboard using a basic outline and pictures that you want to draw or photograph. Write the story together and illustrate it. You can do it on the computer if you like. You can use a blank book or photo album and include several stories. You can produce individual pages, then take them to a copy center that can bind them. Such a book will make a great keepsake to share with future generations or to look back on in years to come.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: FAMILY STORY ROUND ROBIN (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copier paper
- Pencils or pens
- Large jar or container

Preparation for Activity

- Cut white copier paper into small pieces (enough to yield two or three pieces per participant)

Description of Activity

In this activity, the group creates a story. Each person adds one sentence to develop a story about a family. Ask participants, "Have you ever had a group of people tell you a story? What was that like?" Participants may recall hearing stories that were peppered with interjections from many people. Often one person assumes the role of main storyteller and keeps track of story details and sequence. If participants cannot recall experiences of being told a story in such a way, encourage them to imagine a group of teammates telling the story of the winning game. One player is the main storyteller, while others intersperse additional information, facts, or subjective evaluations. The result is a fuller story. Stories of family events are often told using this style.

Explain to participants that they are going to create a story together. The goal is to develop a cohesive story, yet the task is tricky because they need to incorporate details that are randomly assigned to them. Participants will each write details of family stories on slips of paper.

The group will then use these details to create a family story. Follow these steps.

- Invite participants to think of their own family stories.
- Distribute small pieces of paper and have participants choose two details from one or more family stories. Tell them to write one detail on each slip of paper and then fold the slips in half.
- Collect the slips in the jar.
- Explain that you will collectively create one story using some of the details in the jar.
- First, help participants decide on an overall theme for the family story. If participants cannot think of a theme, suggest one (e.g., "Family Vacation" or "An Average Friday Night" or "A New Family Member").
- Once the group chooses a theme, explain that youth will go around the circle and each person will pick a slip of paper from the jar. Participants will fold the details they pick into the collective family story.
- After participants have picked from the jar, invite them to create the story. One easy method is to simply go around the circle. Another method is "popcorn" style, in which individuals chime in when they feel their piece of the story fits.
- During a turn, the speaker adds approximately one long sentence representing his/her detail to the story.
- Facilitate the process as necessary. Sometimes groups need constructive observations, such as, "Sounds like we have a lot of background information and characters, but no real action." Keep the pace lively.
- Repeat the story round robin again if the group seems interested.

When the story is complete, invite participants to reflect on the process. What did this exercise teach them about storytelling? How is group storytelling the same as or different from an individual's storytelling?

This activity highlights that each contributor draws on his/her own vision and/or experience to add to the story. When a group has shared an experience and tells that story as a group, a central narrative emerges, although each person's subjective experience flavors the story. In this exercise, the central narrative is created like putting together a puzzle. Family stories told in groups can emerge either way.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: FAMILY POEMS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper and writing implements, including markers

Preparation for Activity

- Print the family senses poem, listed under Description of Activity, on newsprint.

Description of Activity

Note: Participants can repeat this exercise with the families they are profiling in the photo-documentary project. In a field test of this program, participants reported enjoying writing these family poems with/for the families they were interviewing.

You might start this activity by saying, "Sometimes poetry is used to express the essence of something with very few words. We are going to try out one style of writing family poems." You may decide to use this form when talking to the families you photograph. It is so simple that families may be able to compose them on the spot.

Provide an example of a sensory poem that uses a six-line format: color, sound, feel, look, taste, and smell. Read the following example you printed on newsprint:

My family is RED like love.

It SOUNDS like laughter and noise.

It FEELS like a big fleece blanket.

It LOOKS like six people.

It TASTES like German chocolate.

It SMELLS like applesauce.

By Rev. Pat Hoertdoerfer

Provide paper, pencils, and time for participants to compose poems. They may write about their own family or another. They may also consider writing about the same family from the perspective of different members. For example, one participant might write from the perspective of the family dog, while another might write from the perspective of a child. Encourage participants to be creative. If the family car wrote a poem about your family, what would it say?

Invite participants to share their poems.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 5: HANDOUT: EVALUATING PHOTOGRAPHS

Use the following questions to evaluate the photographs you took of the families.

- Does this photograph seem to "capture" its subjects?
- What do you like about the photograph?
- Overall lighting: Does the lighting add or detract from the photograph?
- Focus: Is it clear?
- Composition and framing: Are the subjects placed in the composition so that the viewer attends to them?
- Artistry: What are the appealing elements of the photograph?

WORKSHOP 6: CLAIMING A POINT OF VIEW

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth . – [Simone de Beauvoir](https://thinkexist.com/quotes/simone_de_beauvoir/) (at thinkexist.com/quotes/simone_de_beauvoir/)

In this session, participants explore their own interpretive lens. Using photography and sketching, participants interpret and record their faith community from their unique perspective. Implications for work on the photo-documentary project are explored. In the process participants consider visual point of view and ponder the notion of objective representation.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Value each individual's perspective as an interpreter of our world and as a teller of our stories
- Develop the ethics of care and responsibility through the intimate and ethical process of representing others in photography and narrative
- Deepen spirituality through engagement with others and through their work with artistic media
- Engage joyfully in the creation of art
- Learn more fully that there is no "objective" point of view
- Learn how the fundamentals of photography translate to our way of living and interpreting the world more generally
- Experience the roles of photographer/artist and storyteller—visual and/or text—within a faith community

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Appreciate the subjective, interpretive nature of representation
- Reflect on their own relationships with their congregation
- Practice capturing visual representations with photographs and sketching
- Appreciate more deeply the interpretive and subjective nature of photography
- Explore links between point of view and Unitarian Universalist faith

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Project Check-In	10
Activity 2: Claiming a Point of View	35
Faith in Action: Youth Speak	30
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Who Is a Family? Discussion of Media	40

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

The issue of perspective is a powerful one for Unitarian Universalists. It is often hard for us to put ourselves in the shoes of someone else. We think that as liberals we are able to see many viewpoints. That may be true, but there are certain points of view we struggle with: racist, fundamentalist, black-and-white thinking, to name a few. Maybe we should not be able to see the world from all angles. We each contribute our own point of view to the collective. Not one of us has the final or most perfect viewpoint. We can in fact learn a great deal from listening to others' points of view. Be open. Be on the lookout for viewpoints that you find most challenging. What makes them challenging? What can you learn?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- UUA Photography Supplements to Families; [Balance](#) (included in this document) , [Framing](#) (included in this document) , [Light](#) (included in this document) , [Point of View](#) (included in this document) (optional)
- Paper and pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Print images shot from different camera angles from the UUA Photography Supplement to Families

Description of Activity

Encourage participants to check in with each other and engage in informal discussion of photo-documentary progress.

Display images from the UUA Photography Supplement to Families that illustrate various camera angles. Invite participants to look at the images and reflect on how the different angles create different feelings and perspectives. Provide paper on which participants can record their thoughts.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle and welcome them.

If a youth was assigned to lead the chalice lighting then simply defer to that person. If not, choose chalice lighting words or try composing them together. Again, invite volunteers to lead the chalice lighting.

To create chalice lighting words, give the group a prompt and then invite each participant to use the prompt in turn. For example, the leader of the chalice lighting might say, "We honor our families as we light this chalice." Then she/he could invite others to say, "I honor ___, who is part of my family." A group could also create a chalice lighting by sharing hopes or wishes. For example, the leader of the chalice lighting might say, "We come with many hopes as we gather together." Then she/he could invite others to share a hope. The leader might close by saying, "We bring these hopes to our time together."

ACTIVITY 1: PROJECT CHECK (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Allow as much time as you need to check in with individuals and/or groups about their projects. This is especially important if youth are conducting the second meeting with families individually. Be sure to talk about logistics, areas in which they need support, and how they are feeling about the projects. Getting a realistic picture of the status of family photographs and write-backs now will assure that all participants are put on track for completion of the project together. When facilitating, be sure to problem-solve as a group. Link participants to each other for help and support. Make sure that participants are confident about how to proceed with gathering write-backs and strategizing as a group as needed.

ACTIVITY 2: CLAIMING A POINT OF VIEW (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Cameras (preferably digital cameras)
- Sketch paper and pencils (these can be in addition to cameras or as an alternative to cameras)
- Clipboards (optional; for sketching)
- Newsprint or poster listing the UU Principles

Preparation for Activity

- List the UU Principles on newsprint or locate a poster that lists them.
- Make sure there are adequate materials (cameras and sketching materials) for all participants.

Description of Activity

Start with a brief discussion of the concept of point of view. Introduce the activity by inviting participants to talk about point of view, using the following prompts as necessary:

- What does "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" mean to you?
- Have you ever had an experience in which you realized that you truly "saw" something differently from someone else?

- What does the phrase "point of view" mean to you?

Invite participants to share experiences of having differing points of view with someone. Consider invoking the tale of the non-sighted people who touched different parts of the elephant and then labeled the elephant based only on the attribute they touched. If the group seems interested in the discussion topic ask, "Is it possible to have an objective point of view?" Invite them to share examples.

Tell participants that this activity is called, "Claiming a Point of View." Participants will use photography and/or make sketches to capture their UU congregation or building from their point of view. They will need to think deeply about how they feel in different places around the congregation. Invite participants to work either on their own or with a partner. Outline the following steps for participants and stop to generate ideas or examples as needed.

- First, develop a list of all the places around the building that are important. Be sure to include places that evoke certain emotions and places that may be symbolic. Younger participants may benefit from jumpstarting their thinking with examples or idea generators. Ask them to think about places in the building that feel:

-

- Relaxed or informal
- Fun
- Mysterious
- Beautiful
- Sacred
- Ordinary
- Formal
- Spiritual

- Point out that places may feel one way to one person and another, different way to someone else; each person has his/her own point of view.
- Next, invite participants to go to [provide a certain number that is appropriate for the group here] of those places and photograph and/or sketch them as best they can. (If time is short, suggest that participants choose one place that best represents what the congregation means to them or where they feel most at home, and to photograph and/or sketch only that one place.) Encourage participants to try both forms of representation — photography and sketching. If

they are representing several places, remind them to record the place and the meaning it holds for them. For example they might sketch a place and label it, "Spiritual place for me." They might label another place, "Where I feel least at home" or "The most relaxing place in our congregation." If choosing more than one place, suggest they aim for a mix of places that evoke different feelings for them (i.e., their favorite place to hang out with friends could be one sketch and their favorite place to be alone could be another). Offer safety reminders, time constraints, and any other limiting parameters as needed.

- When they have completed gathering images/representations, have them return to the group. Leave at least ten minutes for whole group sharing.

When all participants have returned, gather in a circle and invite them to share their sketches, their point of view about different places in the congregation, and stories about their process. Allow time for participants to listen to each other. Use newsprint to record ideas as you see fit. If the conversation wanes, insert the following questions as prompts:

- What might other members of your family have included or not included differently?
- Do you think your perspective and the places/things you chose to photograph would be different if you were a different race, ethnicity, or gender?
- Do you think your perspective would be different if you had a different body?
- Do you see any patterns in the places participants chose to capture?
- What links does this exercise have to Unitarian Universalism? To faith? (Refer to the list of UU Principles as you see fit.)
- What does this activity have to do with our photo-documentary project?

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

- Gather participants in a circle.
- Pragmatics:
 - Ask participants to please print and bring some images of their point of view "walk" for next time. Perhaps they can make the prints during this session.

- Obtain youths' permission to save the sketches. Make sure each sketch has the artist's name on the back. Assure youth that the sketches may be used only with their permission in the "Meet the Creators" portion of the final display.
- Confirm and/or arrange youth co-leaders for next session (optional).
- Invite participants to share one word that describes an aspect of the congregation. Have a volunteer list the words on newsprint. Ask if anyone would be willing to take the list and create a chalice-lighting opening for the next session. If no one volunteers, simply move on. Invite the youth who is recording the words to read . . . them aloud, starting with the opening, "Our congregation is . . ."
- Invite participants to reflect on what went well during this session and what did not.
- Close with a blessing or a simple word of thanks to participants. Alternatively, read this passage from *The Unitarian Universalist PocketGuide*, by Kay Montgomery:

I invented Unitarian Universalism. All by myself. I know numerous other people who have done this as well. . . . I stumbled on a passage in a book that described Unitarian Universalism. I was astonished: This thing that I had invented actually existed—a richer version than mine, a version with religious, intellectual, and cultural traditions I couldn't have imagined, but still, identifiably mine. And then there was the experience so many of us have had—of coming home. Of showing up in this congregation and finding comfort and challenge and people who insisted I grow . . .

FAITH IN ACTION: YOUTH SPEAK (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A list of the committees/groups within the congregation, including their meeting dates, times, and places
- Newsprint and markers
- Art materials, video cameras, or digital cameras (optional)

Preparation for Activity

If you are able to offer participants a choice of how to present their point of view, make sure you have a choice of materials such as whatever is needed to create a PowerPoint presentation, video, or a booklet.

Description of Activity

The youth have a valuable perspective to offer the congregation's leaders. What is the congregation like from the youths' perspective? What is their experience from the time they walk in each Sunday until they leave? What is their experience from the time they were infants until they are graduated seniors? Which programs are welcoming and life affirming and which could use some work?

Present participants with a list of the committees and/or groups within your congregation. Review the list and ask the following questions about each item: What positive experiences have you had with this group? What experiences have you had that were not as successful?

Ask the group to pick one committee with which they would like to create a youth-oriented experience. If it has several ideas, record them on newsprint and reach a consensus. The experience could involve just youth or it could be multigenerational and include adults and/or younger children. Envision what this experience would be like, and devise a means to present your idea to the committee. Here are a few examples.

- Create a humorous play about the joy of cleaning and present it to the Grounds or Building Maintenance Committee.
- Create a map of your meetinghouse or building, with small sketches or symbols denoting opportunities for fun and fellowship (such as potlucks, Easter Egg Hunts, and the like) that the youth would like to help host. Give this to the Social Committee.
- Ask youth to write a paragraph about the most meaningful social justice activity they have experienced and create a booklet to give to the Social Justice Committee.
- Design a PowerPoint presentation or video that communicates the youth perspective on what Unitarian Universalism means and present it to the Membership Committee.

This activity should not be viewed as an opportunity to gripe about lack of programming geared toward youth, but as an opportunity for youth to offer their ideas and services to the wider congregational community.

Including All Participants

Your group may have new members who have not had the chance to experience much programming in your congregation. Feel free to keep the conversation more broadly focused on congregational life in general and not just on your congregation. Youth with experience in different congregations and other denominations might offer refreshing new programming suggestions.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Either print or remind youth to print the images from Claiming a Point of View for next time.

TAKING IT HOME

Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth.

- Simone de Beauvoir

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We talked about points of view and how that translates into photographing families. We identified places in our meetinghouse that feel special to us. We also had a photo-documentary project check-in, which is when we can bring up questions, concerns, and any obstacles we have encountered.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

Ask family members if they can recall a time when their point of view of an experience varied widely from someone else's. What do they think caused the variance?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

PBS has a film project called [Point of View](http://www.pbs.org/pov/) (at www.pbs.org/pov/) (P.O.V.). Its mission is to give voice to people, passions, and perspectives. Go to the website to see what interesting short web films are there. Check out the TV listings and local listing of viewings of the P.O.V. films. Invite your family to watch the web ones or sit down together and watch one of the TV broadcasts. They are powerful films about challenging topics. *Scaredy Cat*, for instance, is a fifteen-minute web short that was written and directed by a man who was beaten up on the street. What elements of his experience changed his point of view? What details in the film changed yours?

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Telling a story from a different point of view is a fairly common technique in the arts. The next time you are watching a movie think about the point of view. What if it were written from the perspective of the leading man or the dog?

On your next trip to the library, see how many versions of *The Three Little Pigs* there are. Are any told from the wolf's point of view? Or look up anything by James Finn Garner, who writes "politically correct" stories. What perspective does he write from? Share some stories with your family and see what they think.

WORKSHOP 7: FAMILIES FUNCTION: FAMILIES WORK

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*Action springs not from thought, but
from a readiness for responsibility.*
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

In this session, participants explore families and work. Participants will uncover the work of being a family member and learn more deeply about the interdependent lives of families.

Activities in this session include questions for reflection that provide an opportunity for participants to reflect upon the ways culture manifests itself in families. You will need to be sensitive to how these discussions are handled. Watch for answers that might indicate stereotyping, including gender stereotyping. Your response to any such remarks should not be defensive or accusatory, but should lovingly guide participants to broaden their perspective. If you believe such discussions might not be handled by the group in a mature way, if you are uncomfortable leading such discussions, or if your group has only or two members of an ethnic minority who you fear might be put on the spot, simply omit any references to ethnic or racial identities.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Broaden and deepen their understandings and definitions of families, including the roles and functions of families
- Explore the meaning of healthy families in a diversity of forms
- Understand multiple perspectives
- Understand and appreciate the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions of family
- Grow and deepen their naturally compassionate souls
- Gain an understanding of the roots of UU perspectives on the family and the relationship to the UU Principles

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about the work of being in a family
- Place themselves "in the shoes" of other families
- Understand new commonalities and diversities between families
- Grow their sensitivity and understanding of family functioning
- Deepen their understanding of the role of race, gender, ethnicity, and class in the functioning of families

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: The Work of Being a Family	30
Activity 2: Family Diversity	15
Faith in Action: Honoring the Work of Families — Long Term	
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Telling a Story through Art	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Your work is facilitating this group. You have accepted the responsibility and you are acting. Thank you. Give yourself a pat on the back for this work you do for your community. Our culture does not place enough value on guiding the young. Sometimes, as a result, we don't feel the value of the work ourselves. We forget how important it is to support and care for the youngest in our communities. Take a moment and remember those adults in your life who nurtured you along the way. These are significant people. You are a significant person.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Poster board for creating Point-of-View displays
- Tape and/or glue for Point-of-View displays
- Youths' sketches from the previous session
- Poster board or large paper for poster creation
- Markers

Description of Activity

Point-of-View Follow-Up

Provide poster board on which participants can mount their images and sketches from the Point-of-View activity in the last session. These posters may be used as part of the photo-documentary project. During Session 10, the group will have a chance to make such a decision.

Create Family Event Posters

If more families are needed for the project, you can recruit them for Family Event 2. Invite participants to create lovely, colorful, catchy posters to advertise Family Event 2 and the accompanying photo-documentation project. Provide participants with adequate poster making supplies and the information they will list on the posters.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Chalice Lighting

Gather in a circle. Light the chalice, using words that the youth listed at the end of the last session to describe the congregation or other words. Unless a youth volunteered at the end of last session, invite a participant to lead or assist with chalice lighting.

Check-In

Check in with participants about their photo-documentary work and reflections they may have about the opening activities.

If you choose, start with an overview of the session. You might say, "Today we are going to explore the work of being in a family. We will start by thinking of what a family needs to do in order to function. Next you will form small groups and work together on scenarios of

different families to figure out "the work" of being a family member. Then we will do an activity; we will either write job descriptions for each family member or create posters that advertise them. Then, we will come together as a large group again."

ACTIVITY 1: THE WORK OF BEING A FAMILY (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- If available, newsprint used in the first two sessions when the group was defining a family
- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pencils
- Poster board, markers, and other art supplies (optional)
- CD player and CD (optional)

Description of Activity

This activity engages participants in thinking about the work that needs to be done to keep a family functioning. It does so through a number of family members' perspectives. Since youth may not have considered the work aspect of family life deeply, several steps that will help them do so are offered in the exercise.

Engage participants in a discussion about the work that is involved in being part of a family. If you have them available post the ideas the group generated about what constitutes a family, during Sessions 1 and 2. You can start the discussion by saying, "Let's review some of the ideas about what we said makes a family. (Review ideas.) Now let's discuss what a family does in order to function." You might start discussion by inviting participants to brainstorm answers to the following questions:

- What do we need from families?
- What things do families "have" to do?
- What do family members provide for each other?
- What kind of work is involved in being part of a family?
- Is the work the same or different for each family member?

List, on newsprint, the ideas that the group generates. Encourage participants to think of physical, emotional, psychological, and practical needs. Some groups may brainstorm endlessly; others may simply be satisfied

with a broad start. When the group is ready to move on, then do so.

Say to the group, "Like any important relationship, being a member of a family takes a lot of work. Though it is true that we are all born into a family without much effort on our part, you still have to work: work at keeping a family healthy physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Would anyone take the job of being a family member if it was described in detail on paper?" Tell participants they will explore this idea by either (1) creating posters advertising the "job" of each family member or (2) writing job descriptions for each family member.

For either option, explore first with participants the question, "What is a job description?" If it does come up in your conversation, mention that job descriptions contain certain information that the applicant needs; the hours, compensation (salary and benefits), what duties are involved, experience and qualifications needed, who the position reports to, and whether the advertised position supervises others. The group might think of other information useful to include in a job description. If it will be helpful, write these ideas on newsprint for participants to reference during the activity.

There are a few options as to how to structure this activity.

- Option 1: Ask participants to design a poster or write a job description that advertises for their job in the family.
- Option 2: Ask participants to design a poster or write a job description that advertises any job of any family member. It does not have to be their job or any job in their family.
- Option 3: Create stations for poster making and ad writing that are job specific. You could have a station for a parent, one for a child, one for an infant, one for a youth, one for a grandparent, and/or one for the family cat. Participants could work on the posters or written ads in groups.
- Option 4: Combine any of the above options, if time permits.

If not working in groups, you might decide to play background music. If working in groups and groups spread out into other rooms, make sure you tell them when they are due back. Give five-minute and two-minute warnings.

When their writing is complete, gather groups together and discuss the exercise. What did the youth learn? Was the assignment difficult? Do the participants think people would select family member "jobs"? Invite groups

or individuals to share their work. Engage the entire group in discussion about similarities and differences between families. Have the youth consider the roles of race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation: how might any of those attributes affect a family's functioning? Encourage participants to talk freely and openly—their ability to do so is an important step toward talking comfortably about lived and shared diversity.

ACTIVITY 2: FAMILY DIVERSITY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Family Facts and Figures](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy Handout 1, Family Facts and Figures, for all participants

Description of Activity

This activity will help participants recognize the diverse forms families can take by sharing some current facts or statistics about families. Distribute Handout 1, Family Facts and Figures. Review the sheet with participants and discuss the family structural diversity it reflects. Ask if any of the statistics surprise them. Make sure the group moves beyond stereotypes of families; this is important. If participants make any generalizations, be sure to offer enough information to counteract them.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Reading or poem for closing reflection. One possible source is [Poetry 180](#) (at www.loc.gov/poetry/180/).

Description of Activity

- Gather participants in a circle.
- If snack has not already been provided, participants might enjoy sharing a snack at the close of the session (optional).
- Pragmatics:
 - Gather information and advice from participants about the choice of activities for the next session. Explain that the next session focuses on food and families. Participants will engage in food-related activities (you may wish to describe them) and perhaps have a "Family Feast." Gather ideas and come to consensus with youth. If the group chooses to have a feast, invite

volunteers to lead it. Ask all participants to bring one of their family's favorite dishes for the feast. Find out if any members have any food allergies or dietary restrictions, and emphasize the importance of this information. Let them know whether a microwave will be available to reheat food. Arrange who will provide dishware, cutlery, cups, and napkins. Consider having all participants bring a place setting from home. Organize a team of volunteers to wash the dishes.

- Arrange and/or confirm youth co-leaders for the next session (optional).
- Invite participants to share one thing they learned from the session about families.
- Close with a blessing, poem, or reading. Either select your own or use the benediction provided below.

Cheered by our community, blessed by our covenant, uplifted in mind, and renewed in spirit, go forth with courage and in peace to meet the days to come. Amen. - Burton D. Carley

FAITH IN ACTION: HONORING THE WORK OF FAMILIES —LONG TERM

Materials for Activity

- Varies by ritual as designed by the group

Preparation for Activity

Read Description of Activity, below. Before presenting the idea to your program group, discuss the possibility with your religious educator, minister, worship leaders, worship committee, and anyone else with a vested interest in worship. You will need to get their approval. Explain that you need someone with worship experience in the planning stages of the activity. Consider inviting one of these individuals to the session during which your program group will discuss and plan the ritual. If the congregational staff and leaders accept your proposal, agree upon a date to introduce the ritual. Only then should you present the idea to your program group.

Description of Activity

What is a ritual? A special event that identifies and sets aside time that is sacred. A chance to acknowledge the ordinary in an extraordinary way. What could be more ordinary—yet more deserving of extraordinary recognition—than our families? Consider the possibility of extending the work of *Families* participants into a worship service.

Ask the youth if they would be interested in creating, for the congregation, a simple ceremony that honors the work of families. Review what you have learned about family work. Who gets the most recognition in our culture? The people who work in homes? The people who clean, the people who take care of the garbage, the people who prepare the food? Probably not. How can we honor those people? Perhaps with a ritual.

What can you do to honor the work of families? As you and your group ponder the possibilities, be sure to take into account the size of your congregation and time constraints. Will the minister or worship leader accompany the ritual with a sermon about the work of families? In a small congregation you could place a pile of stones next to a bowl of water and, much like the flower ceremony, have individual family members come up and drop a stone into the water in honor of a particular family job: "I vacuum." "I do the shopping." "I clean the dishes." In a larger congregation you could have one person name, one at a time, some of the jobs family members do—such as help with homework, feed the pet, do yard work, pay the bills, and so on—and ask people to stand, raise their hand, or otherwise indicate when one of their jobs is named. After everyone has indicated, read a blessing.

Work with the youth to design the ritual. If you plan to use a blessing, write one together. If you need to gather materials, decide who will get what. Recruit youth to help present the ritual and set aside a time to rehearse it before the service. Since the work of families is work that all members do, consider doing the ritual at a time when the youngest people are in the service so they can participate as well.

Including All Participants

It is important for the worship leaders and congregation to understand the broad definition of family that the program participants have established. Singles in the congregation and people who are not blood relations, but are nonetheless considered members of a family, need to feel included in the ceremony. Do not assume that all will, but have the intention to honor families of all shapes and sizes in your ritual.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Follow up with youth feast leaders if the group chose to have a feast.
- Confirm arrangements for the upcoming Family Event. Recruit more families as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

*Action springs not from thought, but
from a readiness for responsibility.*
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We talked about the work that is involved in being part of a family. We wrote job descriptions for each family member.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

Now that you have had a chance to learn a bit about the work of families, how does it apply to the work in your household? Make a list of the jobs in your household and who does them. Include things like make the money and do the homework. Don't forget things like driving family members to activities and school. Is there some way you could lend a hand? Is this a topic for a family meeting or dinnertime or a car ride conversation?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

Do any of the family jobs have the element of ritual? For example, does someone always wear the same clothes while doing a job or always perform the job at the same time of day? Is there anything spiritual about the work that keeps families functioning? What would "ritualizing" a job, in order to highlight the spiritual work of supporting our families, look like? Taking such a step could be fun!

A FAMILY GAME

Check out [FlyLady.net](http://www.flylady.net) (at www.flylady.net). FlyLady has a free online and e-mail system for organizing your home. She sends e-mails to remind you of the daily chores of the house. Each week she has special areas of the house to concentrate on. She reminds you to take care of yourself and not to try to be perfect. Subscribe for a month. What happens when you use her system to help with the housework? What is her point of view? What are her biases?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: TELLING A STORY THROUGH ART (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Drawing paper, pencils, markers, pastels, and/or crayons

Description of Activity

In this activity, participants use graphic representation to create a story about a family and work. Participants may use serial illustrations, like a comic strip, or one large drawing. Introduce the activity by telling participants: "We have been talking about viewing families through

the jobs they accomplish. Many of the jobs are recurring jobs that people do alone; one person takes out the trash, one person goes to school, and so on. In this activity, you will tell a story through your drawings about a family that works together on one job. The story may have whatever focus you choose. It can illustrate what family members do to create a Thanksgiving Day meal. Who peels the potatoes? Who vacuums? Who keeps the cats away from the turkey? Who watches the football games? You may reflect on your own family, another family, or a fantasy family. Your stories may be poignant or funny. Be creative!"

If participants need more ideas, suggest large jobs that a family could do together, such as:

- Spring cleaning or preparing for a visit from grandparents
- Holding a garage sale
- Yard work
- Moving day
- Decorating for the holidays
- Back-to-school preparation
- Bringing home a new baby
- Bringing home a new pet

Often youth enjoy working on the floor or in other relaxing spaces. Provide background music if you wish.

When they have completed their work, gather participants in a circle or around a table. Invite each to show and talk about what she/he represented and to describe the family that inspired his/her work. Encourage informal sharing and questioning. Close the discussion by sharing reflections on the use of drawing media to represent families. How is this exercise similar to and different from photographing families?

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 7: HANDOUT: FAMILY FACTS AND FIGURES

These statistics were gathered by [Groundspark](#).

Millions of children are raised by single or divorced parents, grandparents, guardians, parents of different religions or races, gay or lesbian parents, or adoptive parents.

What do American families look like today?

Single Parents

- Single parents account for 32 percent of family households with children under 18. (1)
- More than two million fathers are the primary caregivers of children under 18, a 62 percent increase since 1990. (2)
- One in two children will live in a single-parent family at some point in their childhood. (3)
- One in three children is born to unmarried parents. (3)
- Between 1978 and 1996, the number of babies born to unmarried women per year quadrupled from five hundred thousand to more than two million. (4)
- The number of single mothers increased from three million to ten million between 1970 and 2000. (1)

Divorced Parents

- Nearly half of all marriages end in divorce. (1)
- More than one million children each year have parents who separate or divorce. (5)
- More than half of Americans today have been, are, or will be in one or more stepfamily situations. (6)

Guardians/Foster Care

- One child in every twenty-five lives with neither parent. (3)
- An estimated eight hundred thousand children were in foster care during 2005, with another one hundred fifteen thousand waiting to get in the system. About one hundred twenty thousand

of these children were waiting for permanent adoptive families. (3)

- The number of children in foster care who are being cared for by members of their extended family—grandparents, aunts, uncles—continues to increase. In 1993 (the last year that national statistics are available), kinship providers cared for about one-third of the foster children in New York, 40 percent of foster children in California, and nearly half of foster children in Illinois. (7)
- In 1999, adoptions were finalized for more than seventeen thousand foster children; another eighteen thousand children were living in foster homes, waiting for adoptions to be completed, and about twenty thousand foster children were legally available for adoption but had not yet been placed in their new homes. (7)
- The 2000 U.S. Census found that 2.4 million grandparents are the primary caregivers for the children in their families. (1)

Adoption

- According to national estimates, one million children in the United States live with adoptive parents, and from 2 percent to 4 percent of American families include an adopted child. (9)
- More than one hundred thousand children are adopted each year. (9)
- From 1992 to 1999, the number of children adopted from abroad more than doubled from 6,720 to 16,396. (10)
- Of all adopted children, 23.7 percent are of a different race or ethnicity than their adoptive parents. (11)
- In 1996, more than 5.2 million children lived with one biological parent and either a stepparent or adoptive parent, up from 4.5 million in 1991. (8)

Mixed-Race Families

- Interracial families are an ever-growing part of our national landscape. The 2000 Census showed that 2.8 million children under age 18 and nearly seven million Americans of all ages identify as more than one race. (1)
- There are more than 4.5 million married and unmarried couples in the United States who are mixed racially or ethnically. (1)

Gay-and-Lesbian-Headed/Unmarried Partner Households

- Between six million and ten million children of bisexual, lesbian, and gay parents currently live in the United States. (12)
- The number of unmarried partner households has increased by 72 percent in the last decade from three million in 1990 to more than five million in 2000. These figures include both same-sex and different-sex couples. (1)
- One-third of lesbian households and one-fifth of gay male households have children. (1)
- The Census Bureau reports that New York has 46,490 same-sex households, Ohio has 18,937 same-sex households, and Missouri has 9,428 same-sex households. (13)
- During the past decade, the number of same-sex households “grew significantly” in ten states for which figures have been released: more than 700 percent in Delaware and Nevada; more than 400 percent in Vermont, Indiana, Louisiana, and Nebraska; and more than 200 percent in Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Montana. (14)

WORKSHOP 8: FAMILIES FUNCTION: FAMILIES EAT

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Eating together is important family time; it validates the importance in family and offers good socialization, which is very important. - [Gale Mills](https://www.thinkexist.com/quotes/gale_mills/) (at [thinkexist.com/quotes/gale_mills/](https://www.thinkexist.com/quotes/gale_mills/))

In this session, participants explore food and families. The meaning of food in the lives of families, with inherent joys and tensions, is realized through discussion, drama, and art.

Food can be a very sensitive subject in the lives of families. This can be particularly true when youth have strong preferences that conflict with the adults. Additionally, eating is often contentious for youth with eating disorders. Be sensitive to participants' cues; respect their willingness to talk or to simply listen.

An alternate activity in this session involves writing poetry. Leader Resource 1, Writing Poetry with Youth, has useful information on working with youth and poetry.

Some questions for reflection in this session provide an opportunity for participants to reflect upon the ways culture manifest itself in families. You will need to be sensitive to how these discussions are handled. Watch for answers that might indicate stereotyping, including gender stereotyping. Your response to any such remarks should not be defensive or accusatory, but should lovingly guide participants to broaden their perspective. If you believe such discussions might not be handled by the group in a mature way or if you are uncomfortable leading such discussions simply omit an references to ethnic or racial identities.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Broaden and deepen their understandings and definitions of families, including the roles and function of families
- Explore the meaning of healthy families in a diversity of forms
- Build and foster the ability to understand multiple perspectives
- Understand and appreciate the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions of family

- Grow and deepen their naturally compassionate souls

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore the meaning and role of food in families
- Explore differences and similarities between families
- Create representations of families through different artistic media
- Learn more deeply about how looking at families through only one-lens— food—affects what we can learn about families and the representation of them

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Foods Continuum Game	10
Activity 2: Food and Family: A Discussion	10
Activity 3: Food Skits	15
Activity 4: Food Feast	15
Faith in Action: Weight Discrimination	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: : The Poetry of Food and Family	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Many of us have a love/hate relationship with food. We eat more than we should or we do not eat enough. We make food choices that are not healthy. We become victims of cultural messages about food. It is so easy to pass on to younger people the negative messages about food and our bodies. Food is comfort. Food is belonging. Food is what we need to survive. Food is an art form. Food is political. Surely you can think of more. For just a moment reflect on the food you have chosen

to eat over the last twenty-four hours. Was it food that treated your body well? As you take your next breath, send it down to your stomach. Become aware of the

place in your body where the food goes. How might you bless yourself with the next food choices you make?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Pictures of food clipped from magazines, grocery store circulars, and the like
- Poster board or paper
- Markers
- Glue sticks

Preparation for Activity

- Collect images of food from popular magazines and grocery store circulars.
- Set out images of food, markers, and glue sticks.
- Make a sign for the activity area that says, "If this food was on my table it would say... " OR "If this food could talk it would say... ."

Description of Activity

If This Food Could Talk!

Point out the images of food. Invite participants to glue the images onto the poster board or paper and write what the food would "say" if it could talk.

Check-in

Check in with each other about progress on the photo-documentary project, including progress on write-backs.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches
- Mac Hammond's "Thanksgiving," poem #119 from [Poetry 180](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/) (at www.loc.gov/poetry/180/), or another humorous poem about food

Description of Activity

Chalice Lighting

Gather participants in a circle. Light the chalice, and say the words provided below, youths' words, or others of your choice. As always, invite participants to lead the chalice lighting.

"We gather together,
Nourished by each other,
Nourished by love, good food, and
honesty."

Reflection

Invite participants to reflect on the opening activity. Display the food with captions, if it seems appropriate. Read the humorous poem chosen earlier.

ACTIVITY 1: FOODS CONTINUUM GAME (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This game invites participants to have fun while thinking about food. Delineate a continuum space in the room. Read the prompts, designating one side of the continuum space for one choice and the opposite side for the other. Have participants respond to the questions by placing themselves in the appropriate area on the continuum. Allow time for participants to choose and quickly settle in a spot. You may wish to ask, "Would anyone care to explain their choice?" or capitalize on spontaneous discussion. It is also fine to simply do the game quickly, without discussion.

Here are some prompts and you may wish to make your own:

- Are you more like hamburger or tofu?
- Are you more like butter or margarine?
- Are you more like milkshake or coffee?
- Nuts or no nuts?
- Are you more like McDonalds or Pancake House?
- Are you more like a picnic or breakfast in bed?
- Snacks or meals?
- Are you more like apple or mango?
- Salt or sugar?

ACTIVITY 2: FOOD AND FAMILY: A DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Tell participants that your focus today will primarily be about families and food. You might start by asking some discussion-generating questions. Use the following prompts as you see fit.

- What do you like to eat?
- What do other members of your family like to eat?
- Is food a peaceful or rocky subject for your family?

- Do you like to eat pretty much the same way your family does, or not?
- When you think of food and your family, what images come to mind?
- When does your family eat together?
- Who cooks in your family?
- Who chooses the food in the kitchen?
- Describe a happy, funny, or tough food event in your family life.
- Does your family have any rituals or traditions associated with food?
- What are some family issues around food?
- What are some food issues for your age group?
- What does food tell you about families?

ACTIVITY 3: FOOD SKITS (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- If you plan to do use youth leaders, recruit them in advance of the session.

Description of Activity

This activity can be ably led by youth.

In this activity participants enter into the life of a family by "acting out" a food-related story or issue. Participants will develop skits that embody the family's life and dramatize a food related event. Tell participants, "You will work in small groups or pairs to create a skit that is about a family and food. You will create a family and then envision a scene in which the family has to deal with a food issue. A family's food choices are often influenced by cultural and economic factors, so you may want to consider that when you create your skit. Your skits should be short; no more than three minutes."

Have the youth form small groups or pairs. The amount of time you can allocate for this activity will determine the number of groups (and, therefore, the number of skits) you can allow. Encourage groups to envision a family and discuss the different kinds of foods the family members might eat. In their discussion, have them include issues or even conflicts the family members might have about certain foods.

- For more mature youth, you may wish to offer skit topics like vegetarianism, diets, body image, or eating for health.

- For junior high youth, providing fanciful titles like "Food Fiasco," "Mealtime Mutiny," or "A Super Supper" may spark their skit-building work.

Encourage participants to work together to portray a family that is realistic. Remind youth that families come in many diverse forms. If they end up creating stereotypes, they can work together to go beyond them. Participants may choose to break stereotypes in a way that is humorous or not. Encourage participants to draw on the previous discussion for ideas. Tell participants, "After you have worked for several minutes, we will gather and present the skits to each other." Monitor groups as they work, and give a two-minute warning when preparation time is nearly up.

Gather participants and invite groups to share their skits. You may wish to invite one or two youth to be the facilitators of this portion of the session. Help youth leaders encourage discussion after the skits. Encourage youth to comment about similarities and differences between skits and interpretations. Engage youth in deconstructing any stereotypes or prejudices that might emerge in their work. Use the following prompts as you see fit:

- What kinds of struggles do families have around food?
- What factors influence a family's diet?
- Does culture play a role in a family's decisions concerning food?
- Why is food important in family life?
- When is food an area of conflict?
- When is food an expression of love or care?

ACTIVITY 4: FOOD FEAST (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Table set-up for the feast, including flatware, plates, napkins, and cups
- Food and drink (pre-arranged and prepared)

Preparation for Activity

- Contact leaders and participants and ask them to bring foods that are part of their family life. Sending a reminder note or e-mail during the week is helpful as well. Invite participants to bring a place setting from home to contribute to the table—any variety is fine. This will make the table look like the mish-mash of family members that it is!
- Arrange the space to accommodate the feast.

Description of Activity

There are several ways to create a family food feast. The simplest is to ask participants in advance to make and bring in a favorite family food to share during the session. Note: Please review health forms for allergies and ask participants to respect dietary constraints of the group.

As you gather for the "meal," share a blessing. Ask participants if they ever say a blessing or grace before eating. Invite participants to share such blessings with the group. If participants do not share, you might offer these words of blessing:

"We give thanks for being together and for the food we are about to share."

When participants have started to share and eat food, facilitate discussion. Ask participants if there is a story behind the food they brought to the feast. Short stories are fine. Invite participants to consider the role of food in religion: Is it part of our UU heritage? If so, how? This sharing, done around the table while eating, can be interesting and fun. Ask participants, "Do you think the way you eat is influenced by your race or ethnicity? Gender? Religion? Region of the country where you live?" Explore these topics as you continue to eat. At the close of the feast, clean up together.

If there are concerns about time, consider starting the feast before Activity 2, Food and Family: A Discussion. Keep the discussion concerning grace, but instead of sharing stories about food, use the time as indicated in Activity 2. This will give you a total of twenty-five minutes to feast and clean up before moving on to Activity 3, Food Skits.

Including All Participants

This activity includes prompts that ask youth to consider differences of race, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Be alert to stereotyping and prepared to gently question and explore presumptions. Be particularly aware of youth in your group who belong to historically marginalized or oppressed groups. Do not let them become the unwilling focus of discussion.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

- Gather participants in a closing circle.
- Pragmatics:
 - Remind participants of any logistics for the upcoming Family Event 2.
 - Arrange and/or confirm youth co-leaders for next session (optional).

- Invite participants to comment on what did and did not go well during the session. Initiate a round-robin style of sharing if it seems best.
- Invite participants to share their poems, if they have written them (see Alternate Activity 1).

FAITH IN ACTION: WEIGHT DISCRIMINATION (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Guest speaker (optional)
- Handout 1, [An Interview with Hanne Blank](#) (included in this document) (optional)

Preparation for Activity

- Consider inviting a guest to speak on weight discrimination. A couple of national organizations that may be able to help you locate a speaker include the [National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance](#) (at www.naafa.org/) (which has a Kids Project) and the [Council on Size and Weight Discrimination, Inc.](#) (at www.cswd.org/)
- Photocopy Handout 1, An Interview with Hanne Blank, for all participants

Description of Activity

We have a cultural obsession with being a certain size. People who are larger than average are often discriminated against in employment, adoption, and simple things like purchasing airline tickets. At a time and place where most people would consider it inappropriate to make racial jokes or gay jokes, it is still acceptable in almost all arenas of society to make fat jokes.

Consider inviting a guest to speak about the issues of body size. See the Preparation section for possible Web sources of guest speakers. The websites, along with [Love Your Body](#) (at loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org/index.html), also have useful information.

If you are unable to invite a guest speaker, use Handout 1, An Interview with Hanne Blank, as a starting point for a discussion on weight discrimination. Invite youth to either take turns reading it aloud or read it silently. After reading, use the following questions to start a conversation:

- In what ways do you witness weight discrimination?
- Does discrimination work both ways; are very thin people discriminated against? If yes, are

they discriminated against to the same extent as fat people?

- Some people feel it is OK to discriminate against fat people because they caused their own fatness (which is not always true). Some people feel that since too much body fat can be unhealthy, picking on fat people will deter others from getting fat. What do you think? What would our UU Principles and values say about these attitudes? (If it does not come up in discussion, you should say that because fat people are told that they caused their fatness, they sometimes believe they deserve teasing because of the "wrong" they have done. This can cause fat people to suffer much greater shame than a person discriminated against because of their ethnicity or gender.)
- Is advocating against weight discrimination the same as promoting an unhealthy lifestyle? Why or why not?
- How is weight discrimination linked to other oppressions?
- Hanne says that she has been encouraged to be an advocate by her family. Are members of your family advocates for a cause? How is this expressed?
- What are some things you can pledge to do to help prevent weight discrimination? Are there ways you can do this within your family? What about at school, within your congregation, or other groups to which you belong? Make a poster with the pledges and display it. Ask if anyone is willing to work on a short article for the congregational newsletter on the group's discussion, and include the pledges.

A third option is to celebrate Love Your Body, if your session falls close to this date. You will find the date and ways to acknowledge the day at [Love Your Body](http://loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org/index.html) (at loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org/index.html).

Participants might want to advertise the day with posters displayed around the congregation, host a film series or talk, or present a five-minute piece at a worship service, during which they state facts and statistics concerning weight discrimination and ways to counter this form of oppression.

Including All Participants

You may have youth in your group who are dealing with weight issues. Remember that fat people are not the only ones who have food and weight issues. Monitor the discussion for participants who might be experiencing intense feelings. If you see this happening, consider

wrapping up the activity by reminding youth that your congregation has people who are available to talk with them at times when they need an empathetic ear. Name the people, such as the minister, religious educator, or youth chaplain, who serve this function.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Confirm arrangements for Family Event 2, which will take place before the next session.
- Copy Handout 6, Consent Form, for Family Event photography.
- Send e-mail reminders to youth about write-backs and photography responsibilities for Family Event 2.
- Invite church staff to Family Event 2.
- Make printing arrangements for photographs that will be taken at Family Event II. Make sure the prints are ready for next session.

TAKING IT HOME

[Eating together is important family time; it validates the importance in family and offers good socialization, which is very important.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/eating-together-is-important-family-time-it-validates-the-importance-in-family-and-offers-good-socialization-which-is-very-important-at-thinkexist.com/quotation/eating-together-is-important-family-time-it/780710.html) (at thinkexist.com/quotation/eating-together-is-important-family-time-it/780710.html) - [Gale Mills](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/gale_mills/) (at thinkexist.com/quotes/gale_mills/)

DURING TODAY'S SESSION...

We looked at family life through a single lens: that of food. We explored this topic with a continuum game, skits, and discussion. Then we enjoyed a delicious feast. Yum!

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT...

Does your family participate in any ritual that involves eating? It could be a holiday meal at home, a family reunion cookout, or the congregational canvass dinner. Is there significance to these events beyond eating? If so, how does eating connect to this significance?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY...

Are you a healthy eater? What do you snack on? What is available in your house for snacking? Have a conversation with your family about healthy snacks that you all like. Put one new healthy snack on the family menu each week.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Once a week, offer to be the one to put the family meal on the table. What does it take to accomplish this task? Try to have a balanced meal. Plan it ahead. Who will shop for the ingredients? How will you time it so that it all goes on the table at the same time? Keep the meal simple the first few times. Invite your siblings or other family members (those who do not usually cook) to participate in the meal preparation.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: THE POETRY OF FOOD AND FAMILY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Background for Writing Poetry with Youth](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Writing Poetry: Some Methods](#) (included in this document)
- Jane Kenyon's "Biscuit," poem #55, or Robert Hershon's "Sentimental Moment or Why Did the Baguette Cross the Road," poem #70, available from Billy Collins's [Poetry 180](#) (at www.loc.gov/poetry/180/) collection
- Lined paper
- Pens/pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy Handout 2, Writing Poetry: Some Methods, for all participants
- Print out poems from the [Poetry 180](#) (at www.loc.gov/poetry/180/) website.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to write their own poems about families and food. Begin by reading a poem about food, perhaps one of the suggested poems from Poetry 180. Ask participants to reflect on the poem.

Distribute pencils, paper, and copies of Handout 2 to participants. Encourage them to review the handout or simply to begin writing freely. Provide support and encouragement.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 8:

HANDOUT: INTERVIEW WITH HANNE BLANK

Excerpt from an interview conducted and published by [Advocates for Youth](#) (permission pending)

June 22, 2001, 10:30 a.m.

Hanne: Well, not only have I been a musician, historian, and writer, I've always been a fat person. I grew up fat, which meant that I grew up with all of the baggage and all of the myths about fat people. I was also very interested in sex, as many people are, when I was a teenager, and I started to learn about it when I was quite young. My dad gave me some opportunities to read about sexuality at an age when most of the kids that I knew didn't know much about sex education. When I was about 15 or 16 years old, I started to do some peer outreach type things and also just a lot of sort of on-the-streets, grassroots, in my school outreach to students, answering questions.

I started really doing that kind of stuff, and it's always been a part of my life. There's never been a large chunk of my life when I haven't really been doing some sort of sexuality advocacy work. The fat stuff really comes into that, because a lot of people's fears, worries, and concerns about their sex lives are really not about sex. They're really about concerns people have about themselves, like "Am I good enough?" or "Am I thin enough?" So all of that body image stuff is really part and parcel of doing sexuality-related work.

I was able to speak out about these issues at such a young age, partly because my father was an anthropologist and my mother teaches middle school. So it was the combination of parents who were both very outspoken; they're both educators and not really abashed about speaking to people about whatever it happens to be. That's very much part of what my family does.

H: No. I think that most people who grow up fat—like people of color who are growing up in a white-dominant culture and people who are disabled who grow up in an ableist culture—you grow up and you do internalize a lot of those messages. It does take time and work to get to a point when you can feel at peace with your body, you can feel good about who you are, what you look like, and what your body can and can't do.

I don't think that there's any secret way to escape the negative messages, unfortunately. Our culture's just too pervasive. And even for me it's still very pervasive. Most

days are fine for me—most of the time I feel like life is cool and I do what I want and people can either take me or leave me. But every so often something will happen that's just really devastating. Last summer I was in a small town in western Massachusetts with my partner, who is half-Chinese. This Jeep full of boys drove past us, and they were all yelling and screaming and they threw bottles at us. We looked at each other, just stunned, and we had actually no idea whether they were doing this because I [am] fat or because my lover is part Chinese. We were really quite upset for a couple hours, and would have been no matter which one it was.

H: Yeah, it really is. There is a lot of sort of generalized xenophobia, or fear of people who are different in our culture. This means that anyone who isn't exactly like you becomes a problem a lot of the time. Unfortunately, that really does exist and it means that anyone who is physically different and visibly different ends up being a target. That goes if you are visibly queer or if you're engaging in some sort of behavior that makes you visibly queer. It also goes if you're transgender, if you're fat, if you're a person of color, if you're disabled in some way, or even if your body is just different. There are a lot of ways that people can have different bodies that aren't necessarily disabilities.

H: Well, there are some very simple things that you can do. First, be nice to fat people. It is very simple. Just to intentionally be nice to other fat people creates a little ripple effect. It could be as little as letting someone make a left turn in front of me, or whatever it happens to be. It means that, for a change, that fat person who I let turn left in front of me just got treated preferentially. Or they got treated well, instead of having someone honk at them, mutter fat slurs, and cut them off, which is what happens altogether too often. Little things like that can make a big difference.

A second thing that can make a big difference is something that most people don't think about - don't discuss weight and food issues in public. People constantly obsessing about the calorie count, or how fat it's going to make them, or how they shouldn't eat certain foods, is all sort of the body obsession of our culture, [and] we are trained to accept that that kind of obsessiveness is normal. This kind of talk can really be hurtful, not just to fat people, but to a lot of people who have trouble with body image issues and people with eating disorder issues as well. There are a lot of thin people who have very similar issues around food as fat people do. You don't know who they are and it's really not a visible thing. You really don't know when you're going to make a comment that could trigger some recovering bulimic to go and throw up whatever she just ate. It's that kind of insidious subtle damage that you

could do just by running your mouth about something that really isn't all that important. I encourage people not to have that kind of negative discussion about food and calories and weight in public.

Similarly, a third thing that a lot of people do is [make] comments about how people look in their clothes. People will say things like, "I can't believe she's wearing that dress, it makes her butt look so fat." I have a T- shirt that says, "DO I LOOK FAT IN THIS?" Of course, I look fat in no matter what I wear, because I am fat. The point of the T- shirt is, Why Ask? And why make a point of it? Why does that matter? Of course, the reason why it really matters is that people use it as a superiority thing, and it can be really hurtful. If I can say so-and-so's butt looks fat in that dress, then it makes me feel better because my butt obviously doesn't look fat.

There really is a big hierarchy of [body] size. Another thing you can do actually to combat size oppression is to treat people of all sizes the same. I think that a lot of people and fat activists find that there is sort of a cut-off, an upper limit where they stop thinking of fat people as "normal." It's like it's OK to be fat unless you're bigger than such and such size or weight. It's like saying it's OK to be black unless you're darker than such and such color. It really makes a lot of difference in your own mind if you just remember that people are people and their size really doesn't change that. Getting over your own internalized fatphobia is a big deal, and it's very hard work.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 8:

HANDOUT: WRITING POETRY: SOME METHODS

Method One: Writing a Tercet

In a tercet, every other line rhymes. A tercet is a form of poetry that has three-line stanzas in which the first and third lines rhyme. The second line is a blank, unrhymed line. Most poets string multiple tercets together to form a poem.

Here's an example by poet Percy Shelley, excerpted from the poem, *Ode to the West Wind*:

The winged seed, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thin azure sister of Spring shall blow.

Method Two: Writing a Cinquain

A cinquain is a poem made from a five-line formula. The cinquain is similar to a Japanese haiku. US poet Adelaide Crapsey invented it in the early 1900s. It is composed of five lines. Each line has a certain number of words or syllables and an assigned "subject." Here's the formula:

Line One:Subject NameOne word or two syllables

Line Two:DescriptionTwo words or four syllables

Line Three:ActionThree words or six syllables

Line Four:DescriptionFour words or eight syllables

Line Five:SummationOne word or two syllables

Here is a cinquain from Adelaide Crapsey, in which she used syllables as the count:

Listen . . .

With faint dry sound,

Like steps of passing ghosts,

The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the tree,

And fall.

Here is a cinquain in which the poet used words as the count:

Ocean

Stormy blue

Crashing, pulling, foaming

A primitive beach companion

Today

Method Three: Found Poetry: A Poem Created from Existing Text

Found poetry is created by reworking existing material, like newspaper text, directions handbooks, plans, and so on. To create this kind of poetry, the poet takes a section of a text and reparses it so that it reads as poetry. The process of parsing, breaking text into small meaning chunks, allows the poet to create different emphasis. Poet Annie Dillard wrote a book of found poetry. One of the wonderful aspects of found poetry is that it helps us see the inherent poetry of everyday texts.

The following is a piece of found poetry that the writer created from the text on a deodorant label.

"Non-stop"

Non-stop

Protection for your

Non-stop

Life contains time-released odor and sweat

Fighters that work

Non-stop

To keep you

Fresher and drier than ever

Before.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 8: LEADER RESOURCE: WRITING POETRY WITH YOUTH

Anything goes into poetry. There are rules, but you don't need to know them; even if you know them, you can break them.

Poet Janet Wong, 2002

Why write poetry with youth? In many congregations, poetry is incorporated into services and ceremonies. When youth write poetry as part of a lifespan faith program, they demystify, understand, and own this important medium of congregational life. Poetry can be a wonderful means of self-expression. By trying poetry writing within the safe confines of a religious program, youth may find an avenue of self-expression. Writing poetry can be fun!

There are many ways to write poetry. In the Families program, poetry writing is one activity amidst many. The background information and tips below are therefore catered to "short-term" work with poetry. Make poetry writing accessible, fun, and spontaneous. Before working with participants, you may wish to review some background about poetry. Sections on types of poems and their building blocks are offered for review. Some poetry-writing tips follow those sections.

Youth react in a variety of ways to the prospect of writing poetry. The tips offered below aim to meet that variety. In Handout 10, Writing Poetry: Some Methods, we provide "recipes" to enable the reluctant poet and some guidelines to further support the inspired poet. Facilitators of this section may wish to pick and choose which tips or recipes they provide for the group. To that end, the recipes for several types of poems are offered on separate pages so they can be copied individually.

Types of Poems

There are many different types of poetry, and each varies in purpose. Five types are outlined below:

- Lyric poetry expresses imagination and emotion; it is the "stuff" of much contemporary poetry.
- Narrative poetry tells a story, with a scene, character(s), and sequence of events.
- Prose poetry gives a snapshot of an idea or image.
- Found poetry is everyday text reparsed into poetry.
- Dramatic poetry is written for performance, often in multiple voices.

Building Blocks of Poems

There are five aspects to most poetry: focus, words, poetic language, rhythm, and form. Each is described below. For some writers, the shift from standard writing to poetry writing is made possible by thinking about these five building blocks.

- Focus. Most poems have a central image, emotion, irony, understanding, or focus. Coming up with a focus can happen through writing a bunch of words or trying to imagine a scene.
- Words. Choosing words and arranging words is at the heart of much poetry writing. When thinking about word choice, remember that no two words are exactly the same. A huge ice cream cone is bigger than a large one; a disheveled office may seem more interesting than a sloppy one. Different words have different connotations: sacred is different from special.
- Poetic language. There are three familiar features of poetic language: sensory images, sound devices, and comparisons.
 - Sensory images. Many poets use the senses of sound, sight, smell, touch, and taste in creating poems.
 - Sound devices. Repeated sounds, or alliteration, are often used in children's poetry (e.g., mini muffin, Mickey Mouse). The repetition of vowel sounds, called assonance, is also used: How now brown cow? In addition, poets sometimes repeat a phrase to create a refrain.
 - Comparisons. Linking two things together, poets can create new visual images. When a comparison uses the word like, as, or seems, it is a simile (e.g., quiet as a mouse).
- Rhythm. The patterns and beat created by words, punctuation, and spacing create the rhythm of poetry. Young children's nursery rhymes are created with repeated parallel rhythms. Sometimes rhythm is created through pause or through the repetition. There are no rules for creating rhythm in the freewriting of poetry; it is simply another aspect of poetry to keep in mind.
- Form. There are many different forms of poems. The form of a poem influences the content and vice versa. Formula poems can be helpful in

creating a "safe" avenue of entering into poetry writing. Free-writing can be more creative.

Poetry Writing Tips: Engaging Youth

In an article by David Fischer, "On the Road to Poetry" (*Scholastic Scope*, April 2002), the author quotes poet Janet Wong as saying, "Poetry is perfect for me because I'm busy. Writing a poem can be fast work. I usually try to write a first draft in five minutes. I take five minutes for a second draft and five minutes for a third and I've got something good."

Few of us might think of poetry as quick and freeing, but perhaps it's a good starting point for youth.

- To help youth get started writing poems, first choose an approach. Will you encourage one type of poem? Will you advocate for youth to focus on one topic for their poems? Decide any parameters and priorities, and copy the materials from Handout 10, Writing Poetry: Some Methods, accordingly.
- Do you need inspiration to start youth's poetry writing? Think about the session plan and use

these tips from Linda Batt (*Writer*, August 2002, p. 20). As sources of inspiration she lists:

- Conversations—real or imagined
- Questions
- Lessons—a poem can describe "how to"
- A riddle
- A memory
- Contrasting stanzas, each from a different point of view (e.g., heavy metal from the mom's point of view and then from the fifteen-year-old son's point of view)
- Humor
- A photograph—describe through poetry a photograph, real or imagined
- Ordinary details of life

Remember that, in this session, the process of writing poetry is more important than the product. Have fun!

WORKSHOP 9: FAMILIES FUNCTION: FAMILIES FEEL

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

American families have always shown remarkable resiliency, or flexible adjustment to natural, economic, and social challenges. Their strengths resemble the elasticity of a spider web, a gull's skillful flow with the wind, the regenerating power of perennial grasses, the cooperation of an ant colony, and the persistence of a stream carving canyon rocks. These are not the strengths of fixed monuments but living organisms. This resilience is not measured by wealth, muscle, or efficiency but by creativity, unity, and hope. Cultivating these family strengths is critical to a thriving human community.

- Ben Silliman, Family Life Specialist
with the University of Wyoming's
Cooperative Extension Service

In this session, participants focus on family function and feelings. The role of emotions, context, time, and constraints are explored as participants come to new understandings about family function.

This session provides an opportunity for participants to reflect upon the ways culture manifests itself in families. You will need to be sensitive to how these discussions are handled. Watch for answers that might indicate stereotyping. Your response to any such remarks should not be defensive or accusatory, but should lovingly guide participants to broaden their perspective. If you believe such discussions might not be handled by the group in a mature way, if you are uncomfortable leading such discussions, or if your group has only one or two members of an ethnic minority who you fear might feel put on the spot, simply omit any references to ethnic or racial identities.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Broaden and deepen their understandings and definitions of families, including the roles and functions of families

- Explore the meaning of healthy families in a diversity of forms
- Value each individual's perspective as an interpreter of our world and as a teller of our stories
- Understand that conflict can sometimes be a part of family life
- Understand and appreciate the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions of family
- Grow and deepen their naturally compassionate souls

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore families as functioning units
- Consider the emotional life of families and of the individuals that comprise families
- Explore how life events shape families
- Learn about communication in families through drama and discussion
- Share ideas about healthy family functioning

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	3
Activity 1: How Am I Feeling Today?	7
Activity 2: Families, Emotions, and Change	20
Activity 3: Family Role-Play	25
Faith in Action: That Warm, Fuzzy Feeling	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: What Makes a Family Function Well?	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Some of us find it easy to express our feelings and others find it a challenge. Sometimes we make stereotypical expectations into reality; we assume the girls in a group will express their feelings with words and the boys will express their feelings with their bodies or not at all. We are acculturated to have these expectations, and they become self-fulfilling. As facilitators, it is up to us to set the tone and to be accepting of feelings and the way they are expressed.

Take a moment to review your time with the group. Have any members expressed feelings that were difficult for you to handle? Have any members expressed feelings in ways that made you uncomfortable? Did you express your own feelings of discomfort in response? How do we communicate our own feelings while respecting the rights of others? This is truly a UU challenge: to be accepting of one another and our feelings, while offering a safe place for all. How can you both manifest such acceptance and maintain limits within the sessions?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Printed photographs from Family Event 2

Preparation for Activity

- Print photographs or arrange for participants to do so

Description of Activity

Share Family Event 2 photographs. If photographs were taken of new families at the event, youth can review them and choose the ones they will use in the project.

OPENING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle. Invite participants to lead the chalice lighting. They can light the chalice and read either the words provided here or others of their choice.

We light this flame
With thanks for the blessings of families,
Friends,
And this community.

ACTIVITY 1: HOW AM I FEELING TODAY? (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Sheets of 8 X 11 paper
- Markers
- Masking tape

Preparation for Activity

- Make a list of emotions. Include at least the same number of emotions as participants you could possibly have in attendance.
- Create signs. In large letters, write one emotion on each sheet of paper.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to play the "How Am I Feeling Today?" game. Explain that each player will have a sign taped to his/her back that has an emotion or a feeling written on it. Each player's goal is to guess the emotion on his/her sign. Have players walk around and ask other players yes or no questions that will provide hints to the emotion on his/her back. They may not simply ask, "Am I _____ (sad, anxious, etc.)?" until they hit upon their

emotion. Limit the number of questions they may ask any one player. When they have guessed their emotion, players can remove their sign and sit down.

Including All Participants

Keep the emotion words fairly simple. If the word is difficult to read, some youth might not be able to answer questions about it. Be aware of participants that might have mobility or visual issues.

ACTIVITY 2: FAMILIES, EMOTIONS, AND CHANGE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers

Description of Activity

Tell participants that you will be focusing on families and emotions. Start the discussion with the following prompt: What are some emotions you feel in a family? List answers on newsprint.

Ask the group to brainstorm events that change families in many ways, and list them in a single column on another sheet of newsprint. Expect and accept answers like birth, death, moving, marriage, and divorce. Youth may also offer material changes such as needing a new car. Encourage the group to include events reflecting the increasing maturity and independence of children, such as leaving home for work or college. Soon you will evaluate the list with the group and determine whether each change is positive or negative.

Next to the list of changes, draw three narrow columns with headings +, -, and +/- respectively. Now ask the group to designate which of the events on the list are positive, negative, or either. Read each item and, once you have consensus, place a checkmark next to the item in the appropriate column. Do not be too quick to make your marks. With discussion, the group may see that the answers are not always easy. Refer to the list of emotions you created earlier. Many major events can be positive or negative, depending on circumstances. In the case of an elderly person who has been suffering, for example, his/her death can be seen as positive and necessary, difficult as it may also be. Encourage participants to think about how these changes may be perceived and felt differently for different members of a family.

Next, invite participants to consider family changes in the context of particular types of family. Remind participants that each family operates with its own set of

strengths and constraints. Read aloud one of the family vignettes listed below (or have a volunteer do so). Which of the changes listed on newsprint has the family undergone? Does the designation (-, +, or +/-) that the group assigned earlier still apply? Might different family members described in the vignette feel differently about the changes?

The goal of this process is to gain a deeper understanding of the diversity of family experiences. Close the activity by reflecting with participants about the common and diverse challenges that families face.

Vignette A

I'm Maya. I'm fourteen and I live with my foster family: Joe and Kevin and Kevin's daughter, Hannah, who is seven. I've lived with them for almost three years. First it was just Joe and Kevin and me, and then Kevin's ex-wife let him take custody of Hannah. It's been okay. No one in the family resembles each other: I am Irish American, Hannah is Latina, Joe is African American and Kevin is Asian American. I guess you could say we're pretty multicultural all together.

Before I came to live with this family, I stayed with different cousins for most of my life. Then my mom and I moved to this area, and there were no relatives, so I ended up in foster care. My mom has depression, and it's hard for her to get her medication. When she couldn't leave me with her family she just left me on my own, and then I ended up in foster care. That was pretty rough. She's still trying to get herself together; I see her around twice a year.

Sometimes I wish I could just have Joe and Kevin and Hannah as my family. Kevin works at home, writing, so he's always around. He helped me get into the right classes at school, so I don't feel so dumb. He even likes a lot of my music.

Vignette B

My name is Jay. I'm seventeen years old and live with my dad, mom, and two sisters—Julia (twelve) and Marjorie (fifteen). My dad works at a chemical plant and my mom works for a restaurant equipment company.

For the past four years I've had lots of fears and I couldn't cope with being in the regular school. I was afraid to go outside. I was afraid to go to sleep because I thought I might die in the night. I was afraid of getting some terrible disease, so I washed and washed my hands. My parents took me to a psychiatrist who told them it was just a stage I was going through.

My behavior made life difficult for my family. My sisters were angry because I needed so much attention. Kids my age were afraid of me because I seemed strange. I

was lonely and miserable, but I couldn't stop my thoughts. I went to another doctor who said I have OCD—obsessive-compulsive disorder. I'm not crazy; I have a brain disorder that makes me have the same thoughts and keep doing the same things over and over. When my sisters understood what was going on with me, they were great. With medication and therapy things got better. I fit in at an alternative high school and began making friends. I did well there and transferred back to the regular high school. I still have to practice behavior modification to control some of my behaviors, but I'll graduate soon and I have been accepted at college.

Including All Participants

The multicultural family in Vignette A gives participants the opportunity to explore the benefits and/or downsides of living in a family where members belong to different ethnic groups. Be alert to stereotyping and prepared to gently question and explore presumptions. Be particularly aware of youth in your group who belong to historically marginalized or oppressed ethnic groups. Do not let them become the unwilling focus of discussion.

ACTIVITY 3: FAMILY ROLE-PLAY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Family Scenarios](#) (included in this document)
- Family support services brochures

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy Handout 1, Family Scenarios. Make enough copies for each small group and leaders to have one.
- Gather brochures about family support services, both within and outside the faith community.

Description of Activity

Tell participants that in this activity they will explore how families function together. Explain that most families experience times when they function well together and times when they do not. Relationships always change, as do the external factors that shape them. The term *family dynamics* refers to the way family members communicate and deal with each other. When challenges and problems arise, family dynamics can be strained.

Invite the group to participate in a role-play exercise. Tell them that the role-plays show families meeting challenges well and not so well. Have participants form different-size groups to represent different families. Assign each group one role-play from Handout 1. Offer these instructions:

"You will now meet in your small groups and plan role-plays that you will later present to the entire group. First, read the scenario. You may want to spend a few minutes discussing how that scenario might play out in your own family. Then decide upon the family roles you will portray. Remember that families have all sorts of members, so vary your family structure. For example, you can choose to be a family that has two households because of divorced parents. You could choose to be a lesbian couple with adopted children. You could choose to be a family living with a single parent, grandparent, or aunt. The family could have stepchildren or foster children. You could be a family of immigrants, live in the city or the country, or be rich or poor. Someone in your family might be hearing impaired. Someone might be sick. You can be any age you want, as long as the age fits the role you play in the family.

"Now prepare two role-plays that demonstrate different ways the family you were assigned might cope with the problem. In the first one you could demonstrate the way you think the family would most likely react. Or you could demonstrate, with humor, a disastrous family response. In the second role-play, be sure to show how your assigned family might handle the same situation very well. If you feel you need more information than what is provided in the handout, add what you think is necessary to your sketches. When solving problems, a family sometimes draws on resources outside itself. At the end of each role-play, each of you will freeze in a pose that represents how the family member you are playing feels about what the family has done." Give each group a scenario.

Give groups several minutes to plan and rehearse. Then invite groups to do their skits. Ask participants to share reflections about what they considered when planning their role-plays. Invite all participants to offer suggestions about what a family might do to improve things when it is not functioning well. Ask participants, "How did economic and cultural factors influence family function in these scenarios?"

Close the discussion by considering the resources that are available to support families. Ask participants, "When they are going through difficult times, where can families get assistance?" List youths' responses on newsprint and add others. Use the following prompts as you see fit:

- What are some strategies that can help families solve problems? List answers on newsprint. Offer suggestions such as family meetings, talking it out, and the like.
- Are there congregational resources that can provide support for families?

- What resources have you heard about in our community?

Have brochures about types of available assistance for youth to consider. Circulate copies of brochures from your congregation and from other sources of support.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

- Gather participants together in a circle.
- Pragmatics:
 - Ask for a volunteer to write some chalice lighting words for next time.
 - For the next session, ask participants to bring objects that help express who they are and their identities as student, soccer player, cook, and the like.
 - Arrange and/or confirm youth co-leaders for next session (optional).
- Invite participants to reflect on the session: What worked? What did not?
- Close with a benediction. If your congregation has one that youth know, use that. If not, share a simple blessing such as:

May the spirit of life and love hold you and keep you until we meet again.

FAITH IN ACTION: THAT WARM, FUZZY FEELING (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Contact numbers for local shelters, hospitals, or nursing homes
- Fleece, three yards per blanket
- Scissors

Preparation for Activity

- See if the local hospital or nursing home would appreciate some warm and fuzzy fleece blankets.
- Go to this website <http://users.pld.com/rbriggs/blanket.htm> for pictures and directions on [how to make fleece blankets](http://users.pld.com/rbriggs/blanket.htm) (at users.pld.com/rbriggs/blanket.htm). Print out the directions.
- Either have each participant bring the fleece she/he needs or ask the congregation to donate either fleece or the funds to purchase fleece.

Description of Activity

Making these blankets is very easy (see directions), and they are a fast and fun way to bring warmth and bright colors to help brighten someone's day.

Engage the youth in a conversation about the things that bring them warmth and comfort when they are feeling sad or alone. Warm, cuddly blankets or stuffed toys often come into the conversation. Introduce the idea of the blankets. As is true of most social action projects, if the youth are invested in making these blankets, the project will go well. After the activity, ask the following questions to elicit reflections:

- What went well? What was difficult?
- Who did we help and how?
- What did we learn?
- What might we do differently next time?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Contact youth or groups of youth and check in about the status of the photo-documentary contribution.
- Remind youth to bring cameras and personal identity objects.
- Gather artifacts participants have created during the program for use during the next session.

TAKING IT HOME

American families have always shown remarkable resiliency, or flexible adjustment to natural, economic, and social challenges. Their strengths resemble the elasticity of a spider web, a gull's skillful flow with the wind, the regenerating power of perennial grasses, the cooperation of an ant colony, and the persistence of a stream carving canyon rocks. These are not the strengths of fixed monuments but living organisms. This resilience is not measured by wealth, muscle, or efficiency but by creativity, unity, and hope. Cultivating these family strengths is critical to a thriving human community.

Ben Silliman, Family Life Specialist with the University of Wyoming's Cooperative Extension Service

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We talked about the different feelings involved in family life. We also listed some of the changes many families go through and acted out scenarios showing how families could deal with changes successfully and unsuccessfully. We brought home resources for families dealing with stressful times.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

Is there one person in your family with whom you find it easy to talk about unpleasant emotions? If there is someone like that in your family, think of a special way to thank him/her. You could show your appreciation with a card you create yourself, a hug, or perhaps a specially prepared snack. Let the family member know how much you value his/her listening and non-judgmental ear and hope you can be that type of person for someone else.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

Develop a signal system. Here is an example: Louisa May Alcott was a moody child. Her family dealt with it by using a pillow signal system. If the orange pillow on the couch was up, it was OK to approach Louisa. If the pillow was down it meant give her some space.

It is important for families to communicate their feelings and needs; sometimes that is hard. Help your family develop a nonverbal system for those moments when you are busy or it is hard to talk. Try a "stoplight" system for each person. You can buy all kinds of blank magnet sheets at any office supply or craft store. Make a stoplight for each person and write each person's name on a small magnet. Place these on the fridge. Red means the person needs to be left alone, green means she/he is approachable, and yellow means ask before you approach. Or perhaps you could develop a more complicated system that includes what you need. You could make a magnetic chart for the fridge that lists a whole bunch of feeling words and some needs like "I need a hug" or "I need space" or "Ask me how my day went."

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Some of us are book smart and some of us have a lot of common sense. Some of us can easily memorize things we hear and others find it easy to understand how others feel. Multiple intelligences exist. The ability to understand and express emotions is one kind of intelligence. The better we are able to have "intelligence" about emotions, the more likely we will have happy, healthy relationships. Kate Cannon, a trainer and writer on the subject, lists seven simple ways to increase your emotional intelligence. Share these with your family and friends:

- Take time every day to appreciate what is right in the world and in your life. At dinner, have everyone share one thing that went well for him/her that day.
- Increase your feeling word vocabulary. Start a feeling wall on which to write down all the feeling words you can think of. Add to the wall when you hear a new word.
- Be your own best friend. Think of the advice you give a dear friend in a difficult time—and take that advice yourself!
- Listen with your heart; create connections.
- Talk back to yourself in a positive way.
- Tune in to your body. Notice where and when you feel different feelings.
- Smile more.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Mission statements are used by groups of people to help them work together. They help remind people of what they have in common, how they want to treat each other, and what goals they share. Your church has a mission statement. See if you can find it. It probably says something about why you get together as a community. Families can have mission statements too. Start by asking each family member to answer the questions below. You might consider doing this exercise as part of a family meeting. Younger family members can dictate their answers.

- Describe your family's strengths.
- What is most important to you about your family?
- What are your collective goals? Describe what your family will be like in five years; ten years; fifteen years.
- When do you feel most connected to one another?
- How would you like to be treated?
- What do you value?

When you have completed the questions, use your collective responses to formulate a series of declarations that will become your mission statement.

For instance, if you said your family is smart and someone else said your family is healthy, and those qualities are important to your family, your mission statement could read, The Coca family is smart and we like to stay healthy.

Next, write your mission statement and post it in a location where your entire family can see it often. Revisit your mission statement several times a year and make changes to reflect new values, hopes, and dreams.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WHAT MAKES A FAMILY FUNCTION WELL? (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Brochures from local family support services, both within and outside the faith community

Description of Activity

The terms *functional* and *dysfunctional* are prevalent in popular culture. Invite participants to think about those terms as they apply to family function. Ask them to list, with you or a volunteer in the role of scribe, what makes a family functional: a family that functions well? What makes a family work? Often the things that *do not* make a family work arise through such a discussion; those factors could be listed as well. If such factors do not enter the conversation, you may invite youth to consider the things that make it difficult for a family to function well or to be happy. Close the discussion by asking participants to brainstorm a list of the "top five" attributes of a functional, healthy family.

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 9:

HANDOUT: FAMILY SCENARIOS

Assign a family member role to each member of your group, and plan two role-plays. The first role-play can demonstrate the way you think the family would most likely react. Or it can demonstrate, with humor, a disastrous family response. The second role-play should demonstrate how the family could meet the challenge well. At the end of each role-play, have each person freeze into a pose that represents how that family member feels.

The Job Offer

Imagine that the members of your group all belong to the same family. An adult member of that family has been offered a new job a thousand miles away. The adult is delighted at the idea of moving and thinks that other family members should feel the same way. Others are not so sure.

The New Dog

Imagine that the members of your group all belong to the same family. A young member of the family has

brought home a stray dog and wants to keep it. Others are not so sure.

The Relative

Imagine that the members of your group all belong to the same family. An elderly relative has become ill and wants to move in with you to avoid going to a nursing home. Everybody in the family likes this relative, but the change will not be easy. What will happen? What are some factors that make the situation vary from family to family?

The Keys

Imagine that the members of your group all belong to the same family. The family has one car, and one member of the family has just lost the keys so nobody can go anywhere. The keys are under the couch in the living room, but nobody knows that yet. What will happen?

The Fight

Imagine that the members of your group all belong to the same family. The family has one television set. Two members of the family have spent weeks looking forward to different shows that are scheduled at the same time. What will happen?

WORKSHOP 10: PHOTOS AND STORIES: REPRESENTING OURSELVES

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

[Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/be_who_you_are_and_say_what_you_feel_because_those_who_mind_don't_matter_and_those_who_matter_don't_mind_(at_thinkexist.com/quotation/be_who_you_are_and_say_what_you_feel_because/341011.html)) (at thinkexist.com/quotation/be_who_you_are_and_say_what_you_feel_because/341011.html) - [Dr. Seuss](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/dr._seuss/) (at thinkexist.com/quotes/dr._seuss/)

In this session, participants start to integrate their project work. They focus on creating a representation of themselves that will accompany the final collective display. In addition, participants create family prayers. Through these activities, participants start to synthesize their experiences.

An alternate activity in this session invites you to start working on assembling the photo-documentary project. If you believe the group needs more than one session to assemble the project and scheduling additional sessions or time outside of the sessions is prohibitive, use this alternative activity instead of the regular activities. Prepare by reading Session 11 ahead of time so you know the steps involved.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Value each individual's perspective as an interpreter of our world and as a teller of our stories
- Build and foster the ability to understand multiple perspectives
- Develop the ethics of care and responsibility through the intimate and ethical process of representing others
- Engage in the shared ministry of focusing—literally and figuratively—on the faces and narratives of congregation members
- Grow and deepen their naturally compassionate souls
- Engage joyfully in the creation of art
- Learn more fully that there is no "objective" point of view

- Learn how the fundamentals of photography translate to our way of living and interpreting the world more generally
- Engage as leaders of a project that serves the greater congregation and affirms more deeply their place in interdependent, multigenerational, congregational life
- Collaborate with peers
- Experience the roles of photographer/artist and storyteller—visual and/or text—within a faith community

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Reflect on the process of representing others and how this relates to our Unitarian Universalist values
- Create self-representations
- Photograph peers
- Learn about the elements of a prayer
- Create a prayer

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Project Check-In	10
Activity 2: Meet the Creators	40
Faith in Action: Identity in a Changing World — Long Term	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Writing Family Prayers	10
Alternate Activity 2: Work on the Photo-Documentary Project	

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Who are you? An active question for those in the youth age bracket, it is also one we are finding affects all of us. Are you in the career you imagined? Are you in the relationship you imagined? Who are you? How do you identify yourself? Are you your work? Are you your role in your family? Are you the facts you have accumulated? Are you your accomplishments or talents? What is the essential part of you? One of the benefits of daily

meditation practice or any spiritual practice like journaling is a chance to see into your Essential Self; that part of you that is steady and watches the other parts of you do their thing. Like any kind of practice or exercise, the Essential Self becomes stronger and more present the more often we make room for it. How would bringing your Essential Self to the group change the group? Take a moment, breathe, and reflect on the question, who are you?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Photography books about families

Description of Activity

Invite participants to browse photography books.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle and welcome them. If someone volunteered last session to write words for this session's chalice lighting, ask him/her to offer them as the chalice is lighted. If no one volunteered, invite participants to offer some spontaneous chalice lighting words or a blessing. You might ask, "What are some words we can say as we light the chalice today?"

ACTIVITY 1: PROJECT CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Invite participants to report on their work on the photo-documentary project. The youths' preparation of photographs and write-backs must be completed for the next session, so take as much time as the group needs to check in. Encourage participants to problem-solve together, and offer assistance as needed.

Including All Participants

Participants might need assistance in keeping their material organized. Different participants will exhibit various ways of processing information. Visually inclined youth may find it helpful to create a checklist or spreadsheet that details each family, lists what is needed from each family (photograph(s), write-back, permission slips, and so on), and provides a space to check off each item as the youth obtains it. More extroverted youths might need to discuss their plans with a listener. Try to accommodate the various learning styles of participants.

ACTIVITY 2: MEET THE CREATORS (40 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Personal identity objects

- Digital cameras for class use
- Paper and writing implements
- Participant artifacts, including drawings, family trees, instant photos, and sketches/photos of church from participants' point of view (optional)
- Newsprint and markers

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity and engage participants in discussion. Tell them that as part of their documentary work on families, they are going to document themselves and create an artifact for Meet the Creators, which will be part of the final photo-documentary project. Ask, "How have we already documented or represented ourselves?" They may remember instant photos, drawings of their families, their family trees, and their sketches/photo of church from their point of view. Share their artifacts with them informally. Use the following prompts to generate conversation as you see fit:

- Why is it important to learn about ourselves when we are in the process of learning about others? List participants' ideas on newsprint.
- How have your ideas about representation changed through the work on this project?
- In what ways did the families you interviewed and photographed turn out to be the same as or different from what you expected?
- What ethical issues, if any, did you encounter while creating the representations of the families?
- As Unitarian Universalists, what ethical issues do we face when representing others?

You may say, "Learning ways to represent ourselves helps deepen our understanding of representing others." Invite youth to use photography and their personal identity objects to create a self-representation. Begin by having participants share with the group the objects they brought in and their significance. After everyone who wishes to share has done so, ask participants to write a quick sentence or two about each of their own objects. If participants do not have objects, they can write about three to five objects they would use to represent them.

Next, have participants work in pairs or small groups to photograph each other. Have cameras, paper, and pencils ready for participants to use. Encourage them to try different photo compositions: self, self with objects, objects only. What do these different compositions say?

Afterward, have participants write briefly about the process of being photographed.

Gather as a group. Reflect on the photos and personal identity objects. Use the following prompts as you see fit:

- What was working with personal identity objects like?
- What was challenging about using objects?
- Were there any mishaps or serendipitous moments?
- How was this process different from or similar to the experience of photographing families?

Invite participants to share their writing. Ask them to consider whether they feel comfortable using these photos as part of Meet the Creators and, if not, problem-solve as a group.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

- Gather participants together again.
- Pragmatics:
 - Arrange for participants to print photos for next time.
 - Remind participants that in the next session, the group will put together the photo-documentary display. It is important for everyone to be there and to remember to bring all materials for display!
 - Collect artifacts from previous sessions, if they were distributed.
 - Arrange and/or confirm youth co-leader for next session (optional).
- Invite participants to reflect on what did and did not work during this session.
- Invite participants to share their prayers. If participants are reluctant, ask if they would feel more comfortable having one of the facilitators read the prayers. Do not force participants to share prayers.
- Offer closing words or a benediction as necessary.

FAITH IN ACTION: IDENTITY IN A CHANGING WORLD — LONG TERM

Materials for Activity

- A film or film series about race

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare an annotated list of films about racial identity. Some possible sources include public libraries, your UU district library, neighboring congregations, the [Church of the Larger Fellowship](http://clf.uua.org/) (at clf.uua.org/), [Stir Fry Productions](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/index.html) (at www.stirfryseminars.com/index.html) (which produces, among others, *The Color of Fear*), [California Newsreel](http://www.newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc=CN0149&s=race) (at www.newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc=CN0149&s=race) (which has many great DVDs, but in particular *Race — The Power of an Illusion*), and the [American Friends Service Committee](http://www.afsc.org/) (at www.afsc.org/) (which offers many films on identity issues at nominal cost).
- You and your co-leader, with possible advice from the religious educator or Social Justice Committee, pick a film or film series for the group to view. The film(s) should not run longer than ninety minutes. Order the film(s) and accompanying study guide(s). For instance, *The Color of Fear* has a study/discussion guide that you can download for \$50.
- Set the viewing date(s); schedule one to view the film(s) with the group and two if you want to sponsor a congregational viewing of a film.

Description of Activity

Young people can be a powerful motivator for change. Congregations will often attend activities that the youth sponsor, just because they want to be supportive. This is a wonderful opportunity to talk about racial identity. After they have seen the film themselves, youth can help facilitate a discussion with the whole congregation. You may want to schedule time to see several films. Perhaps this could become an ongoing series on identity and include other issues like gender and sexual orientation. Youth are at a critical stage at this time of life; through sorting out their own identity, they can provide great insight and new ideas to the congregation.

To your group, introduce the idea that, as they develop their own identity, youth are at a critical juncture in their lives. You might ask: "How we choose to name ourselves—black, white, multiracial, or something else—affects our worldview. How do you choose to identify yourself? How does that affect how you experience the world?" Then introduce the movie or movies you plan to

show. For instance, you might say that *The Color of Fear* focuses on eight men who come from different racial backgrounds, who gather to discuss—sometimes in a heated way—their experiences. *Race—The Power of an Illusion* argues that race is an illusion that has deeply affected our culture in negative ways.

Show the film. Process it with the whole group, perhaps by using study guides that accompany the films or starting the discussion with these general questions:

- What did you think of the film?
- In what ways did it cause you to think about race that are different from how you thought before?
- Why do you think the filmmakers wanted to make this film?
- Do you think it is appropriate to view this film in a religious setting? Why or why not?
- How does this film relate to our UU values?

Ask the youth whether they think adults in the congregation would benefit from watching the film(s). Organize a small group of youth to plan and facilitate an evening or weekend afternoon viewing for the congregation. Those who do not want to facilitate can be in charge of the equipment or snacks. Help the facilitators understand that there may be strong feelings in the congregation; questions of identity run deep. If your group is comprised of younger youth, suggest that adult and youth teams lead the discussions. You might ask adults who are not participating in *Families*, but who have facilitation experience with adult groups and/or a strong interest in the subject matter, to help facilitate.

Here is a short list of possible steps required to prepare for a congregational viewing:

- Who will lead? Who will facilitate a congregational discussion after the film?
- If you have lined up adult facilitators who are not participating in *Families*, allow time for them to preview the films.
- Build in plenty of lead-time to advertise the event. Encourage the youth to make posters, send e-mails, put a short piece in the newsletter, and make announcements.
- For each viewing, have a series of discussion questions as well as guidelines for the discussion. [The Color of Fear discussion packet](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/pages/detail/coloroffear_guide_snp.html) (at www.stirfryseminars.com/pages/detail/coloroffear_guide_snp.html) is a wonderful place to start for ideas. StirFry also offers [What Stands Between Us: Flash Cards for Diversity](#)

[Conversations](http://www.stirfryseminars.com/pages/detail/wsbn_sn_p.html) (at www.stirfryseminars.com/pages/detail/wsbn_sn_p.html).

- After the event, be sure to debrief with youth. What went well? What was difficult? What do you wish you had known? How might we do this differently the next time?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Make sure photos that were taken during this session are printed.
- Contact each participant and remind them to please bring all materials for the display to the next session. Be especially mindful of talking with participants who missed today's session, and make sure they have everything they need to prepare their project material. If you created a checklist for this session, e-mail or send a copy by surface mail to participants who were absent.
- Confirm congregation logistics for the display/opening, including advertisement for the event.

TAKING IT HOME

[Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/be_who_you_are_and_say_what_you_feel_because_those_who_mind_don't_matter_and_those_who_matter_don't_mind/341011.html) (at thinkexist.com/quotation/be_who_you_are_and_say_what_you_feel_because/341011.html)
- [Dr. Seuss](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/dr._seuss/) (at thinkexist.com/quotes/dr._seuss/)

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We checked in about our project. The next session is one that should not be missed because we will be putting together the photo-documentary project. We worked on a new part of the project, called Meet the Creators.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

Interview your parents about your given name. Who thought of the name and why? How was your name decided? What does your name mean? Do you share the name with any relatives? What is the history of your name? What is the symbol of your name? Is there an interesting story about your name? What are your parents' feelings about your name? How do they feel about their names?

A FAMILY GAME

Some night when you are all sitting around, create a family acrostic with your last name.

S silly, sloppy, sleepy

M mathematical, merry, musical

I insightful, intelligent, irreverent

T thoughtful, timely, tolerant

H happy, hungry, hopeful

You can also help each other create acrostics with your first names. Have the acrostics framed and displayed somewhere in your home.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Who are we as a family? One of the Take It Home activities in Session 9 was to write a family mission statement. If you did that, the next step might be to look at what the statement means in terms of what your family does. Are you a family that supports one another? Maybe it's time to schedule some family meetings. Are you a family that helps others? Maybe it's time to plan and develop a family service project. Are you a family that wants to spend more time together? Have family members get out their calendars and set a date.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WRITING FAMILY PRAYERS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Five Elements of Prayer (below) on newsprint.

Description of Activity

Introduce this activity by saying, "In this program we've done a lot of different kinds of representations, from photography and sketching to writing and drama. Another kind of representation—a form of writing—is prayer writing. Writing a prayer can be a good way to express feelings, hopes, and emotions. Prayers are actually quite simple to write. They have some predictable elements that make them easy to write, but they require thinking through our hearts instead of our heads. We are going to try this kind of writing now." Invite questions, and be open. Although one manner of writing prayers is suggested here, participants may choose a different format.

Display your newsprint copy of the elements of prayer or read the elements and have a participant list them on

newsprint. Review the elements of a prayer with the group.

Five Elements of Prayer

By the Reverend Gary Smith, who acknowledges—with thanks—Professor Walter Cook.

- Salutation: To whom is the prayer addressed—Spirit of Life, God, Goddess, Love, etc.
- Condition: I'm (or We're) feeling sad, happy, humble, angry, and so on.
- Please give me: Hope, patience, someone to love, and so on.
- Please give us: A peaceful world, help us work together for healing
- Thank you: Gratitude and thanks

Invite participants to write a prayer that is somehow related to the project they have been doing. They may wish to focus on families or photography, emotions, food, point of view—whatever is in their hearts. Tell participants that you hope to include the prayers in the Meet the Creators portion of the final project. Give participants paper, pens/pencils, and quiet space in which to work.

Including All Participants

If you decide to use this and any other writing done by participants, consider typing and printing the writings from a computer. A co-leader or youth volunteer can do this at home. This will eliminate issues with misspelling and difficult to read handwriting.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: WORK ON THE PHOTO-DOCUMENTARY PROJECT

Materials for Activity

- Materials that are required to begin the Photo-Documentary display (see Session 11, Activity 2, Creating the Photo-Documentary Display)

Preparation for Activity

- If you feel you need more than one session to complete the final project, and scheduling time outside of class is prohibitive, be prepared to begin work on the display during this session.
- Read Session 11, Activity 2, Creating the Photo-Documentary Display. Choose the steps you can accomplish during the time that is available in this session.
- Gather the materials you need to begin work on the display.

Description of Activity

Explain to participants that, because of the time required to assemble the final photo-documentary display, they

will start the process during this session. Present the steps you hope to complete.

WORKSHOP 11: REPRESENTING OTHERS, REPRESENTING OURSELVES: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In the end we are all separate: our stories, no matter how similar, come to a fork and diverge. We are drawn to each other because of our similarities, but it is our differences we must learn to respect.

- Anonymous

In this session, participants work together to prepare their artistic display about families.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Broaden and deepen their understandings and definitions of families, including the roles and functions of families
- Explore the meaning of healthy families in a diversity of forms
- Value each individual's perspective as an interpreter of our world and as a teller of our stories
- Engage joyfully in the creation of art
- Learn more fully that there is no "objective" point of view
- Engage as leaders of a project that serves the greater congregation and affirms more deeply their place in interdependent, multigenerational, congregational life
- Collaborate with peers
- Experience the roles of photographer/artist and storyteller—visual and/or text—within a faith community

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Create the final artistic display about families

- Collaborate with the full group to create the Meet the Creators portion of the display
- Problem-solve about the display
- Decide on how to make the display interactive, welcoming, and accessible
- Gain a sense of cumulative, collective accomplishment

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Overview of Session and Project Check-In	10
Activity 2: Creating the Photo-Documentary Display	40
Faith in Action: Family Reporters	
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

This is the home stretch. Take a deep breath. Now take another. There are many details to attend to, and many things that can potentially go wrong. This is the best time to stop and be thankful. Thankful for this fantastic group of people with whom you have worked for months. Thankful for the supportive community that has brought you this far. Thankful you know how to ask for help. It is not in the easy and quiet times that our strength of spirit is tested; it is in the frantic and busy times that we use all the resources we have. It is here we find our ground if we but take a moment and look for it. Take a breath. Take another. Doing one thing at a time is a tremendously difficult spiritual practice. Let this busy time be an opportunity to practice.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Large paper, oak-tag, or poster board
- Markers

Description of Activity

Create Posters

Create posters and/or a flyer advertising the opening of the *Families* display. Make sure that logistical information, including day, time, and place, is clearly represented. Participants may wish to mail invitations to the families that participated as well.

Informal Sharing

Share presentation materials informally. Since this is the major "pulling-it-all-together" day, participants may be anxious to share the photographs and text they have gathered. This could happen informally as participants enter.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle and welcome them. Invite a participant to lead chalice lighting if one is not already assigned. Light the chalice using participants' words or your own. You might ask participants to share with the group one hope they have concerning the assembly process of the photo-documentary project, and close the sharing with these words: We light this chalice with these hopes and with faith together.

ACTIVITY 1: OVERVIEW OF SESSION AND PROJECT CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Sketch with participants the "work plan" for this session and any logistics that are critical to accomplish during it. Check in with participants about their photo-documentary work. Be sure to attend to any concerns participants' may have as you embark on the work of putting the display together. Remind them of arrangements for the opening and for the final, reflective session that will follow the opening.

ACTIVITY 2: CREATING THE PHOTO-DOCUMENTARY DISPLAY (40 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Prints of photographs taken during the last session
- Materials to support the final display, including photo-mounting materials, tape, glue, colored paper, stand-alone easels as needed, and other materials appropriate to the type of display you are creating and the display space you have available
- Materials from previous sessions that might be used in the display
- Writings produced by participants during the program, including chalice lighting writings, prayers, writing about photography, and notes recorded on newsprint during program sessions

Preparation for Activity

- Check on all details for this session.
- With your co-leader(s), divide up responsibility for supporting youth and for overseeing the opening, including:
 - Recheck all logistics about the display and the opening with congregation liaisons
 - Advertise the opening in congregation venues, including monthly newsletters, mailings to families, and website and/or e-mail communication
 - Follow up with youth who may need assistance, prior to this session, with preparing the materials for the display
 - Prepare materials generated during the sessions that might be useful in the display; this task might include typing poems or prayers written by youth, and the like
 - Ensure that all congregants who are directly involved with the project, in any form, are personally invited to the opening
 - Arrange food for the opening

Description of Activity

Invite participants to first create a plan for the photo-documentary display and then build the display itself.

Plan the Display

There are a couple of ways to start this process. One method is to ask participants to informally arrange around the room all the items—photographs, writing, artifacts, and so on—that they plan to contribute to the larger display. Be sure to include participants' work that you collected during the sessions as well. When the materials are arranged, have the entire group take a few moments to look at the pieces that need to be integrated into the final display. Then gather again as a group to proceed to put the pieces together.

The second method is to first create a full plan of action for building the display, and then share materials. To plan the display, invite participants to consider the following questions. List responses on newsprint as you see fit.

- What do we want people to learn from seeing the display?
- What story do we want to collectively tell through our project?
- How can we make sure the display reflects our values and thinking about families?
- What are our priorities? Is there a sequence in which to display the materials? Will a sequence work?
- How can we make the display accessible to all who view it?
- How can this display engage or involve the congregation? Are there methods through which congregants can "write back" to the display as a whole?
- What does this display have to do with our Unitarian Universalist faith? Can we make that evident in the display?
- How will we, as the creators, represent ourselves? What photos and written work should we display?
- What steps can we take now to prepare the materials for display? Decide the following:
 - Sequence of materials: will we emphasize any particular theme(s)?

- Editing tasks: does any written material need editing before we assemble the display?
- Organization: what are the aesthetic and practical logistics of readying the display?
- Delegating tasks: who will work on what during this session?

Build the Display

Once your group has developed a plan, engage it in creating the display. About ten minutes before the close of the session, gather the group. Reflect on what the youth have accomplished and what still needs to be completed. If necessary, arrange for more time to finish the display. Be sure to actively engage participants in this process. This is their creation and their display. Schedule time to do all the final arrangements of the display. Remind participants about the logistics of advertising, setting up, and attending the opening. Be sure to have a point-person for each detail.

Invite participants to comment on any aspect of the session's work and to ask questions. Arrange additional display set-up time as needed.

Including All Participants

To help keep the auditory and visual learners organized, provide—both verbally and written on newsprint—the steps that are necessary to build the display.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

- Gather participants in a closing circle.
- Pragmatics:
 - Remind participants about additional work times that are scheduled before the opening.
 - Arrange and/or confirm youth co-leaders for the last session (optional).
- Invite participants to reflect on what did and did not go well during the session.
- Close with words of appreciation for work together.

FAITH IN ACTION: FAMILY REPORTERS

Materials for Activity

- Paper and pens or a computer

Preparation for Activity

- Let your newsletter editor know that program participants will be submitting information to share with the congregation. Find out when the deadline is for publication. If your congregation does not have a newsletter, disseminate the information by whatever means your congregation employs to communicate and stay informed (e-mail, Order of Service, and the like).

Description of Activity

One way to help support families is to share their joys and struggles. Does your congregation have a place to announce important happenings that are taking place in its families? Does its newsletter announce birthdays, anniversaries, hospitalizations, deaths, births, award recipients, and other milestones? If not, ask participants to start such a column. Taking turns as reporters, youth could scout out such announcements and write short blurbs for the newsletter.

Forming teams is the best way to share the work. Teams can decide who will ask families if they have any joys or struggles to report, who will write the pieces, and who will be responsible for sending the writing to the newsletter editor. Remember to get permission from families before making any announcements about their lives.

If your congregation already has a feature like this in its newsletter, ask the writer of that feature if the youth can write it for the next few issues.

Including All Participants

When forming teams, be sensitive to youths who are not as comfortable talking to members of the congregation as others. If youths work in teams, those who might be quiet or shy can team up with more gregarious youth. The quieter youth might volunteer to do the writing while other youths interview families.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Follow up on all aspects of the display and opening.
- Make direct contact with all youth participants to confirm their participation in creating the display and organizing the opening.

- Arrange for a youth or congregation member to photograph the opening.
- Hold the *Families* opening event.
- Have opening event photos printed for the last session.
- If you plan a celebration/party for the last session, contact participants during the week about contributing food.

TAKING IT HOME

In the end we are all separate: our stories, no matter how similar, come to a fork and diverge. We are drawn to each other because of our similarities, but it is our differences we must learn to respect. - Anonymous

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We started assembling the photo-documentary display. We made plans to continue our work, and we planned the details for the showing of our project.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

Share with your family what this experience has been like for you. How does it compare to other religious education programs you have participated in? In the next session of *Families*, leaders will ask you to fill out a feedback form. Giving some thought to the experience in the days before that session will assist you in providing constructive feedback.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

Did you form a bond with any of the families that participated in the photo-documentary project? If so, that bond does not have to end here. Your family might enjoy getting to know another family from the congregation better. Invite them over for dinner or to a picnic. Remember to keep safety in mind: make sure some adults from your family are participating in this event. Your parents or caregivers will want to build relationships with your friends too.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Start a tradition of closing out the holidays and birthday celebrations with a night of gratitude. It is important that we thank one another so that we all feel appreciated. Get out the paper and markers, perhaps some glue and magazines with pretty pictures, and make some thank-you notes. As a family, brainstorm who needs to be

thanked and who will make the card. Saying thank you is an important family skill.

A FAMILY GAME

Working together on a big project can be fun. Has your family ever put together a large jigsaw puzzle? Give it a try. Take a favorite family photo to a camera shop, copy shop, or a large drugstore and convert it into a jigsaw puzzle. Plan a night for the entire family to put the puzzle together.

This idea might also make a good gift for friends. Use a photo of you and your friend instead of a family photo.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Your time studying families is coming to an end. How can you make the things you have learned stick? How can you continue to strengthen your family? One idea is to engage in an ongoing family service project. If you dedicate yourselves to a project—as a family—and repeat it year after year, you not only help others, you also become a stronger family. What is important to your

family? How much time do you have to dedicate to a project?

If you look back on the Faith in Action projects you did during this program, is there one that sticks out in your mind; one you would repeat or use as a model for something similar? There are many opportunities to create family service projects in your community; you probably learned about many of them during this project. Come together as a family and discuss your options. If you need more ideas, check out the website [Charity Guide](http://charityguide.org/index.htm) (at charityguide.org/index.htm) which has numerous ideas, and it will help you focus on what is possible.

WORKSHOP 12: REFLECTION AND CELEBRATION

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The riders in a race do not stop short when they reach the goal. There is a little finishing canter before coming to a standstill. There is time to hear the kind voice of friends and to say to one's self: "The work is done." - [Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.](http://www.wisdomquotes.com/000114.html) (at www.wisdomquotes.com/000114.html)

During this session, participants reflect on their work throughout the program and synthesize what they have learned, both as a group and as individuals.

GOALS

Participants will:

- Broaden and deepen their understandings and definitions of families, including the roles and functions of families
- Value each individual's perspective as an interpreter of our world and as a teller of our stories
- Understand and appreciate the emotional, affective, and spiritual dimensions of family
- Develop a personal sense of values, or "working" credo, regarding families
- Understand how the living tradition of the UU faith and its Principles interprets and guides families
- Reflect as leaders of a project that served the greater congregation and affirms more deeply their place in interdependent, multigenerational, congregational life

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Reflect on what they learned about families
- Reflect on the process of working together
- Reflect on the process of creating representations
- Provide feedback about their experience during this program

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Reflecting Upon the Photo-Documentary Opening	15
Activity 2: Reflecting Upon All Our Work Together	20
Activity 3: Celebration!	15
Faith in Action: Making Memories	90
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Reflection is one of the most important skills in life. Perhaps Socrates said it most poignantly when he said that an unexamined life is not worth living. This last session with the group offers a chance to look at all you have accomplished. It might be easy for some to find fault or look at the places where things did not work as you wished; to focus on how much more could have been accomplished; to want more time, more materials, more control, or more organization. It is true that reflection is about finding the places where you can do better, but it is also about deepening. When looking at the places where events went well, remember what you learned and acknowledge the connections that have grown over time. Reflection is a life skill that we can practice and, as with anything else we practice, become better at doing.

It might be helpful for you to spend time reflecting both alone and with your co-leader on the experience of working with youth on *Families*. How has this experience changed your feelings about the families in your congregation? Did your work give you opportunities to reflect upon your own family? Were there any revelations about working with youth that you particularly want to remember? Create a method by which to retain special memories from this project. You might save personal photographs or a journal. Consider sharing

favorite memories with your co-leader or your

congregation's religious educator.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Photographs of photo-documentary opening (optional, but needed later in the session regardless)

Preparation for Activity

- Print photographs taken at the opening.

Description of Activity

Informally display photos. Encourage casual conversation.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and matches
- Newsprint and markers

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle and welcome them. Invite volunteers to offer chalice lighting words. If there are no volunteers, use the words below, which are a variation of the chalice lighting words from the first session of the curriculum.

We light this chalice with thanks that we are here together able to joyfully share the work of our faith together.

ACTIVITY 1: REFLECTING UPON THE PHOTO-DOCUMENTARY OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Photographs of photo-documentary opening

Description of Activity

Invite participants to reflect on the opening of the *Families* display. Share and circulate photographs of the opening. Use the following prompts as you see fit:

- How was the experience for you?
- What were some wonderful "small moments?"
- What surprised you?
- What disappointed you?
- What did you notice about how people were interacting with the display?
- Did you learn anything new by participating in the opening?

- What do you think congregants learned from the display?

ACTIVITY 2: REFLECTING UPON ALL OUR WORK TOGETHER (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers
- Handout 1, [Participant Feedback Form](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils/pens

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy Handout 1, Participant Feedback Form, for all participants

Description of Activity

Tell participants that it is important to sit back and reflect on any meaningful experience. The process of reflection nurtures deeper knowing and understanding. Ask them to let you guide them for a moment through some reflection on the program. Have them sit comfortably and tell them that you will say a few reflections. Then they will have time to talk together.

You might say, "Think back to the beginning of this program and the photo-documentary project. Remember what you thought you knew, what you looked forward to doing, and what you thought you might learn. Now remember all the things we did: the games we played about families; using family vignettes to learn about many families; photographing yourself, your point of view, and families. Think about the photo-documentary project, interacting with families, photographing them and hearing what they thought about those photographs. Think about creating the display, about gathering the write-backs, and about working together. Think of all we've learned about families and about each other."

Invite participants to talk, either in pairs or as a large group, about what they learned during this program. Provide the following prompts as needed:

- What is a family? Who is in a family? What do families do?
- How has this program influenced your ideas of what makes a family?
- What have you learned about point of view?
- What implications does this have for you as a Unitarian Universalist or as a person of faith?

When discussion is completed, distribute the handout. Request that participants fill out the form, and tell them their feedback will provide information for future groups. Allow time for youth to complete the handout.

ACTIVITY 3: CELEBRATION! (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Food and beverages
- CD player and CDs (optional)

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare snack or arrange for participants' families to donate celebration snack. Follow up with a reminder e-mail.

Description of Activity

Gather together and enjoy a celebration snack together. Make sure that all participants are engaged. Share your own positive reflections with the group. Play background music if it feels appropriate.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare a closing reading (optional).

Description of Activity

- Gather participants in a closing circle.
- Pragmatics:
 - Arrange for the return of participants' materials
 - If needed, arrange a time to dismantle the display together
- Invite participants to share one word that expresses how they feel, now, at the completion of the project.
- Close with a benediction, a closing reading, another chalice blessing, or song.

FAITH IN ACTION: MAKING MEMORIES (90 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Photo albums or scrapbooks
- Photo sleeves (optional)
- Pens

Preparation for Activity

- Contact your congregation's religious educator and ask whether this would be a useful activity (see Description of Activity). Invite her/him to assist with the project.
- Decide if you will use photo albums or scrapbooks, and determine how many you will need.
- If using a scrapbook, purchase sleeves for the photographs (optional).

Description of Activity

The photo-documentary project is a testament to the power of photography. Why not give your congregation another photographic gift by creating photo albums or scrapbooks? Many congregations have dozens of photographs, but they might not be attractively arranged in albums. Ask your religious educator if she/he would like help organizing regarding photographs, or ask the congregational historian if he/she needs such help. You could arrange photographs in albums or scrapbooks. A scrapbook allows for written descriptions in addition to presenting the photographs. You may need help from someone who has been in the congregation a long time or someone who knows most of the congregants.

If all the congregations' photographs are in order, ask if the historian has any other recordkeeping the participants can organize. If not, another possibility is inviting the historian to bring congregational photo albums to a session and spend time going through them with the youth. Participants might especially enjoy seeing older photos of their own families or the families that were involved in the project.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

- Close the program:
 - Facilitate the return of participants' materials.
 - Keep family photos display. If the program is repeated, groups can build on each year's participants' work.
 - Check in with families and congregation members about their perspectives on the *Families* project.
- Reflect on your work with the youth. Congratulations and blessings!

TAKING IT HOME

The riders in a race do not stop short when they reach the goal. There is a little finishing canter before coming to a standstill. There is time to hear the kind voice of friends and to say to one's self: "The work is done."

- [Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.](http://www.wisdomquotes.com/000114.html) (at www.wisdomquotes.com/000114.html)

DURING TODAY'S SESSION . . .

We reflected upon our time together and celebrated!

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TALK ABOUT . . .

Throughout the program *Families* there have been opportunities to reflect on what you have done. Reflection time is important. Reflection means reviewing what we have done and where we are. If we take time to reflect we usually learn something. If we take time to reflect, we often find we either are making great strides toward our goals or can change course before we get too far down the wrong road.

It can be hard to find time for reflection in our busy lives. Counteract this challenge by scheduling reflection time as a family. What have you done together over the last several weeks or month? Which of those events was valuable? What do you wish hadn't happened? What new activities or events do you want to add to your family calendar? How can you plan to move forward as a family?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER: TRY . . .

Sometimes we are so busy "doing" that we not only forget to reflect, we do not leave time to celebrate what we have accomplished. What recent accomplishments has your family celebrated? What upcoming milestones can you plan to celebrate?

A FAMILY RITUAL

Does your family have a special relationship with one or more families in your congregation or neighborhood? Invite that family to share with you a new family ritual, Doing Good Together. Pick one day a month that your families can get together and do a good deed for another family. The website [Doing Good Together](http://www.doinggoodtogether.org) (at www.doinggoodtogether.org), <http://www.doinggoodtogether.org>, has many suggestions. Here are a few others:

- Offer joint family babysitting coupons to a family with a new baby.
- Is there a movie or play in town that supports a justice cause your families support? Go see the

movie together, then write a review for your congregational or district newsletter or an editorial for your local newspaper, urging others to see it with their families.

- Organize a drive for Goodwill, The Salvation Army, or another organization that accepts donations of slightly used goods.

After the monthly event, make sure you leave time to reflect together upon the experience and to plan the next month's event. Who knows? Maybe other families will see how much fun your families are having and decide to join you!

FAMILIES: WORKSHOP 12: HANDOUT: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

Please complete and return to a Families leader.

1. What is your overall rating of the program? Circle one.

Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

Comment:

2. What is your overall rating of the photo-documentary project? Circle one.

Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

Comment:

3. What did you like best about the program?

4. What do you think could be improved next time?

5. What do you think about the length each session? Please check one.

____ Too long ____ Just right ____ Too short

Comment:

6. What do you think about the number of sessions? Please check one.

____ Too many ____ Just right ____ Too few

Comment:

7. Did you have enough time to work on the photo-documentary project?

____ Too long ____ Just right ____ Too short

Comment:

8. What are three things you learned during the program?

9. Please rate your facilitators' skills leading the program. Circle one.

Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

Comment:

10. What suggestions for improvement in the way the program is conducted would you offer to the facilitators?