

**AMAZING GRACE:
EXPLORING RIGHT AND WRONG**

A Tapestry of Faith Program for Children

6th Grade



BY RICHARD KIMBALL

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Polly Peterson wrote additional stories for the program. Jessica York was the developmental editor. Judith Frediani guided the development throughout the process, and Vicki Rowland copyedited the manuscript. We extend our thanks to the following sources for permission to use material:

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Tapestry of Faith Core Team

The following UUA staff brought Tapestry to fruition:

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THE PROGRAM

*It is by no means necessary that I should live,
but it is by all means necessary that I should act
rightly.*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

The song "Amazing Grace" on the one hand, and sixth graders on the other. The first: a traditional hymn, its language rich with the verbiage of sin and salvation, its melody echoed over many lands in a poignant mix of brass, voice, and bagpipe, its message sometimes haunting, sometimes hopeful. The second: youth—pre-teens and young teens at the brink of new maturity, new powers, new insight, new opportunity to experience all the joys and all the sorrows of an increasingly independent life. A potent combination.

The program, Amazing Grace, and sixth graders: the one, a package of sixteen hour-long sessions packed with action, information, and challenge; the other, a group of young minds and hearts seeking, learning, feeling, growing, and yearning—a promising combination.

Amazing Grace intends to help sixth graders understand right and wrong and act on their new understanding. Its purpose is to equip them for moving safely and productively through the middle- and high school years, when they will be continually tugged toward both ends of the ethics continuum. Through their involvement in Amazing Grace, youth will come to recognize and depend on their Unitarian Universalist identity and resources as essential to their movement toward understanding, independence, and fulfillment of personal promise.

This curriculum is part of and in the spirit of the multi-faceted Tapestry of Faith program being created by the Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Amazing Grace works toward the goals established for all Tapestry programs by focusing on ethical development with a rich philosophical base and with certain, age-appropriate applicability.

The curriculum uses stories, activities, discussion, and more to help youth address such questions as: Why do bad things happen? What is the role of God, gods, and goddesses? Who am I? Is evil or goodness within us? Is it something we choose? What are my own ideas? How can I follow my own ideas and not somebody else's? Is "you decide for yourself" really the ultimate UU answer to these questions?

Amazing Grace offers sixth graders old wisdom in fresh form, and new understanding in active, challenging

exercises. It invites them toward an adolescence enriched by self-knowledge and a deepening ethical sense. It is meant to be fun and engaging for youth and leaders alike. However, its enjoyment is always purposeful, and its messages are always meaningful.

Our children and youth wish to do right. In an article by Craig A. Lambert ("The Horror and the Beauty," from *Harvard* magazine [November/December 2007]), Harvard Professor Maria Tatar, when asked to explain the popularity of the Harry Potter books, said, "The sorcery of the books involves more than wizardry and magic, for the child has the chance to right wrongs." This curriculum will give our sixth graders more such chances.

We hope that throughout this program, youth will...

- Feel affirmed and supported in their decisions to act upon what they believe is the right thing to do
- Understand what the popular culture, Unitarian Universalism, other religions, and other sources say about right and wrong
- Recognize the virtues they and their families and their faith community have cultured, and why
- Grapple with the use of their moral compass to decide between right and wrong through discussions of actual and hypothetical situations.

This program is a significant tool for helping young people along the path toward becoming empathic and responsible adults.

The written program, however, is just part of the process. Closing the final gap is up to you, the leader. If we achieve the goal together, then together we give much to the lives of our youth and much to our hurting world.

GOALS

This program includes goals shared with all Tapestry of Faith programs:

- Ethical development
- Spiritual development
- Unitarian Universalist identity
- Faith development

It also includes goals specific to Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong:

- Exploring right and wrong
- Understanding concepts connected to ethics, such as morality, virtue, sin, salvation, heaven, hell, redemption, forgiveness, guilt, and integrity
- Experiencing spirituality
- Appreciating Unitarian Universalist approaches to faith, morality, and social justice
- Expressing and living faith through action

Specific to the four session blocks:

Sessions 1 through 4, which focus on faith development:

- Exploring temptation, curiosity, conscience, and the Golden Rule

Sessions 5 through 8, which focus on Unitarian Universalist identity:

- Exploring Unitarian Universalist ideas about virtue and sin, right and wrong; accepting consequences; punishment; salvation; calling; and social justice

Sessions 9 through 12, which focus on spiritual development:

- Exploring spirituality, internal conflict, forgiveness, meditation, situational ethics, conscience, and soul

Sessions 13 through 16, which focus on ethical development:

- Exploring character, universal love, social action, and values

LEADERS

Special training is not required to lead Amazing Grace. The curriculum is a complete program with more activities and ideas than most groups will be able to use, and with complete and practical suggestions for presenting them. Any lay or professional religious education leaders with the required time and energy may readily present it. Amazing Grace has a format that makes materials accessible and leadership easy, but supplies still must be gathered, arrangements must be made, and plans must be internalized. We fully recommend co-leadership, with at least two committed adults heading up the program and sharing both burden and joy. In many Unitarian Universalist congregations, that will be a given anyway, because those congregations require that at least two adults be present in all programs involving children and youth.

Experience leading youth programs is, of course, a plus. Anybody lacking that and hoping to acquire some by

leading Amazing Grace is well advised to team up with somebody who has headed similar programs before. Experience may be the best teacher, but we all have to start somewhere. One place to do that is in the how-to literature, and most directors of religious education will be able to help new leaders find appropriate printed and Internet resources.

If you are starting up on your own and looking for a co-leader, what characteristics should you seek? Being able to plan tight and present loose (see Leader Guidelines) is important. Comfort working with youth is essential. Experience with the Internet is helpful. Compatibility between you and other leaders is significant. A comfort level and familiarity with religious language is important. A sense of humor can add a lot. The list could go on, but much of it is obvious. Most of all, look for somebody with enthusiasm and commitment plus the time and energy required for the job.

PARTICIPANTS

Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong is designed for sixth graders. Think: the end of childhood and the beginning of youth. Think of youngsters looking back with a sense that it is time to move on, and ahead with a mixture of wonder, hope, awe, and trepidation. Think of the brink of puberty and adolescence.

In her book *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005), Tracey L. Hurd discusses characteristics of young adolescents. These 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 others' 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

Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong offers ways to support the young/older adolescent:

- Promote 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 that enable 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

INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

Unitarian Universalism is an inclusive religion and Amazing Grace is an inclusive curriculum. No one should be excluded from the program or its activities by real or perceived physical or other limitations.

Inclusiveness sometimes requires adaptation, and specific suggestions for adapting activities are made as appropriate under the heading Including All Participants. By changing things as suggested or using alternate

activities, you can help ensure that every session is inclusive of youth with a range of physical and cognitive abilities and learning styles, food allergies, and other sensitivities or limitations.

As you plan your Amazing Grace 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. Session 4, Faith in Action: A Taste of Ethics, involves food. Make sure all your youth can eat the food you plan to use, or change the food.

The program 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 your group, or if you have extra time. As you begin to recognize different learning styles among participants, let this information guide your selection of activities for each session.

In the [Religious Education Teachers section of the UUA website](http://www.uua.org/re/teachers/index.shtml) (at <http://www.uua.org/re/teachers/index.shtml>), find descriptions of a helpful resource book, Sally Patton's [Welcoming Children with Special Needs](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=756). (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=756)

FAMILIES

Families are the primary influences on the faith development of their children and youth. As a program leader, you take on a special role: supporting families in your faith community as they guide their children through Unitarian Universalist faith development. By involving parents in the Amazing Grace program, you can deepen the spiritual experience of both youth and their larger families.

Involving families in the faith development of youth can be a more delicate process than involving families in the faith development of younger children. As youth attain and protect the increasing independence that appropriately comes with growth, they will insist on the freedom to develop and hold their own ideas and to pursue their own spiritual practices. Both religious education leaders and parents should respect and nurture increasing maturity and the independence it earns, even as they continue to offer solid guidance and careful oversight. Help parents to see that having youth who remain on spiritual paths through adolescence is usually cause for celebration, even if the paths sometimes lead where the parents themselves do not wish to go. The test is not whether youth agree with their

families, but whether the youths' lives are positive and safe.

Each session offers Taking It Home resources that include conversation topics and other ways to extend the session at home. These include family games, a ritual, discovery projects, and journaling. In such activities, some sixth graders will be as open and sharing with their families as they were in earlier years. Others may already be moving into new views of self and fresh expressions of independence, and so be less receptive to familial exchange. As a youth leader, you may help parents and youth bridge the gap, and you may find yourself playing a useful role as a trusted and helpful adult whom youth can turn to as they look beyond their families for models and guidance. Help parents see that while sixth graders are still too young for great independence, most have already started along the way that will inevitably produce much more. Encourage parents to respect increasing youth privacy needs when doing so is safe and appropriate, while always remaining open and available for those times when their youth step back over the line for a moment of renewed family closeness and support.

Every Taking It Home section includes Mystery and Me. Written directly to youth, Mystery and Me asks them to explore their own deep thoughts and suggests they record those thoughts in journals. Help parents understand that journaling is inherently a private activity. Even if youth skip the journaling, the questions of Mystery and Me can give them something to reflect upon. If the youth do follow through, their parents may well see that experience reflected by thoughtful approaches to life in general and ethics in particular. Whether or not this is the case, treating Mystery and Me, or any part of Taking It Home, as a homework assignment requiring parental supervision will not be useful.

Invite families into your sessions. Adult or older teen volunteers can be very helpful when you implement arts-and-crafts activities and when you divide youth into small groups. Parents who bring musicianship, storytelling, or artistic skills into your sessions will help foster participants' sense of connection between their families and their religious education experience. Faith in Action activities offer ideal opportunities to engage parents and other congregants in youth projects.

The leader/parent relationship is very important and must be both welcoming and reassuring. When parents bring their children to experience Unitarian Universalist religious education, they need to feel confidence not only in the safety and enjoyment you will provide, but also in your faith leadership. Strong partnerships can foster parental commitment to providing strong faith

leadership within the family. As a religious education leader, you can support and inspire parents to bring intentionality and excitement to their role in their youths' faith development.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

All sixteen sessions in Amazing Grace follow the same structure. Between an opening and a closing ritual, participants engage in several core activities. Every session revolves thematically around a central story that participants hear and explore in one of the activities.

Every session offers a Faith in Action activity. While these activities are optional and are not included within the sixty minutes session, Faith in Action is an important element of the overall Tapestry of Faith curriculum series. Some Faith in Action activities can be completed in one meeting; others are longer-term and require the involvement of congregants or community members outside your group.

Every session offers alternate activities. Depending on your time and interests, you may choose to replace one or more of the session's core activities with an alternate activity, or to add an alternate activity to your session. You may also want to use the alternate activities outside of the program for gatherings such as family retreats, intergenerational dinners, or other events involving youth.

As you design your program, decide whether the group needs extra meetings to incorporate additional activities or to complete a long-term Faith in Action project. Long-term Faith in Action projects usually involve meetings outside your regular meeting time and/or are at another location. Before you commit to an extended program, make sure you obtain the support of both your congregational leadership and the children's families.

The sixteen sessions are organized in four sequential groups, with each group giving special but not exclusive attention to one of the four basic Tapestry of Faith strands. Sessions 1 through 4 focus on faith development, sessions 5 through 8 on Unitarian Universalist identity, sessions 9 through 12 on spiritual development, and sessions 13 through 16 on ethical development.

Notes about individual session segments follow:

Quote

A quote introduces the subject of each session. Quotes are provided for the leaders; however, a few sessions may suggest sharing the quote with participants.

Co-leaders may wish to discuss the quote as part of preparation for a session. This can help you each feel grounded in the ideas and activities you will present, and can help leaders "get on the same page." The quotes are also included in Taking It Home sections.

Introduction

The Introduction gives an overview of the session's concepts, explains and offers suggestions about various activities, and describes the session's thematic connection to other sessions in the program.

Goals

The Goals section provides general outcomes for the session. Reviewing the goals will help you connect the session's content and methodologies with the four strands of the Tapestry of Faith religious education programs. As you plan a session, consider your youth, the time and space you have available, and your own strengths and interests as a leader to determine the most important and achievable goals for the session and the activities that will best serve those goals.

Learning Objectives

The Learning Objectives section describes specific participant outcomes that session activities facilitate. They describe what a participant will learn, become, or be able to do as a result of the activity. Think of learning objectives as the building blocks you use to achieve the larger "big-picture" goals of Amazing Grace.

Session-at-a-Glance

This table lists session activities in a suggested order, and provides an estimated time for completing each to conduct a 60-minute session. The table includes all core activities from the Opening through Closing, shows Faith in Action activities, and lists alternate activities. Note that you will need to adjust or extend your schedule to fit in either Faith in Action or alternate activities.

Session-at-a-Glance is merely a guide to use in your own planning. Keep in mind that many variables inform the time required for an activity. A large-group discussion takes more time than small-group discussions. Small teams can do some activities more rapidly than large teams, but they may then require more time to share with others what they have done. Remember to consider the time you will need to move participants around from one space to another. If an activity involves cleanup, designate a portion of time to allow for it.

The time estimates for various activities include only the work the group will do when you meet. Leader planning and preparation are not included. For some activities, especially Faith in Action activities, you may need to

make special arrangements to involve participant families, other congregants, and members of the wider community.

Spiritual Preparation

Each session offers a spiritual exercise that leaders may use to prepare themselves. Taking time in the days before the session to reflect on its content and in the moments before the session to center yourself will support and free you in your work with youth. The process will guide you to call forth your own life experiences, beliefs, and spiritually. It can help you enjoy and provide the best possible learning experience at each and every session. Take advantage of these exercises as a way to grow spiritually as a leader of youth.

Session Plan

The Session Plan presents every session element in detail and in the sequence shown by the Session-at-a-Glance table. It also includes Faith in Action, Leader Reflection and Planning, Taking It Home, Alternate Activities, and Resources.

If you are reading Amazing Grace online, you can move as you wish among a session's elements: Opening, Closing, Faith in Action, Activity 4, Resources, etc. Each element occupies its own web page. You can click on "Print This Page" at any time. However, if you click on "Download Entire Program" or "Download Workshop" 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.

A description and discussion of various Session Plan elements follow:

Opening: The Opening is a time for centering, both for individuals and the group. Both the Opening and Closing are ritual elements and should not be skipped. Ritual is important for group cohesion and identification. Including rituals in our lives is important to children, youth, and adults. The Opening is a signal to the group that they are entering a special time and prepares the group for the shared experience. The Opening in every session includes several regular parts:

- **Conundrum Corner:** This is a spot in the room with a sign that says "Conundrum Corner" and possibly another sign containing just a question mark. You will place a "mystery item," as suggested in the materials list, in this corner before each session. Youth will grow accustomed to entering your meeting space, looking at the Conundrum Corner as they arrive

for each session, and trying to guess how the mystery item it contains relates to the session. The item is explained later in the session during a given activity, often the story and discussion activity. Using the Conundrum Corner helps each youth to engage immediately with Amazing Grace as they arrive for each session.

- **Theme Music:** The curriculum suggests using the song "Amazing Grace" as theme music during the opening for early sessions and optionally for later sessions. This practice is another way to help youth connect immediately with your program as they enter the room. Many different recordings of the song are available, and some of the best are listed under Resources, below. Vary the versions you use each week. In the event that youth seem to tire of the song after several sessions, try a very different version, use some other music, or simply take a break for a few sessions. "Amazing Grace" is a wonderful song with a message closely related to this curriculum. Play it often, but not to the point of overuse.
- **Chalice Lighting:** Light or have a youth light the chalice each week while the group joins in the opening words you have posted. This ritual is important; it helps youth to settle into their time together. Follow it with a brief moment of silence to encourage further centering. If you have youth light the chalice, establish a regular rotation schedule so each youth gets a chance and so your opening is not spoiled by minor disagreements over whose turn it is. If open flames are not allowed in your meetinghouse or make you uncomfortable, use a battery-operated tea light commonly found in craft stores.
- **Sharing:** Each session suggests a question or topic for youth to discuss very briefly. Keep the talk short and focused, or you will find your hour leaking away before you really get going. Occasionally the suggested topic grows out of the Faith in Action segment of a previous session. If your group has not done that session, you will need to suggest a different topic.
- **Session Introduction:** Use a minute or two to let youth know what is coming next. Though many elements of the Opening are repeated in every session, unique elements may be incorporated to address specific session needs. Always read the Opening and Closing of every session,

including materials lists and preparation suggestions.

Activities: Up to six core activities are suggested for each session. For each activity, you will find a materials list, preparation suggestions, a full description, and ideas for adaptations that may be required to meet youth special needs. All activities are self-explanatory, but two regular activities deserve special mention here:

- **Story and Discussion:** This is the activity in which leaders present the central story in every session. This activity includes discussion ideas that help convey the basic message of the session.
- **Ethics Play:** This experience involves youth in role-plays based on age-appropriate, contemporary ethics challenges. It is in every session as either a core or an alternate activity. How often you use it will depend on how well your youth handle it and on other time constraints. Try it early in your presentation of Amazing Grace, and include it in as many sessions after that as you can. It will help youth find practical applications for the ideas they are discussing, and it will be rewarding and fun. It might sound a bit complicated when you first read about it in Session 1, but once you grasp the essentials, it will be easy to do. Session 15, Saving the World includes an alternate activity in which participants design their own questions for the last round of Ethics Play in Session 16, Look at Me, World. All the materials you will need for the entire sixteen sessions of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong, are included as Leader Resources in Session 1. Since you will be reusing these materials, consider laminating the Leader Resources or keeping them in a specially marked folder or binder.

The sequence of activities has been carefully planned. You certainly may make any changes and adjustments you like, but, in general, you should look through the full session before deciding on adjustments.

The activities for each session also provide a reasonable mix of both quiet and active time, and involve a variety of skills and learning styles. Try to keep this balance in mind as you adjust the session to meet your own group's needs.

Faith in Action: Many activities in this curriculum are designed to help youth apply spiritual and religious ideas to real situations in their own lives. Ethics Play is an example. The Faith in Action ideas also suggest specific and practical ways for youth to realize and apply their

faith for the betterment of the world and their own communities.

Each session of Amazing Grace has a Faith in Action segment. Like the core activities, Faith in Action activities include lists of required supplies and preparations and suggest adaptations to meet the needs of youth with diverse abilities. These activities are not included in the core of the sixty-minute sessions, but your group may easily do them on a regular basis if you meet for more than an hour at a time. You may also substitute them for other activities, or use them outside the course, perhaps as the basis of youth group projects. You may also choose to replace them or supplement them with a long-term Faith in Action project.

The short-term Faith in Action ideas for each session offer an activity tied to the theme of that session. For a long-term Faith in Action project, the group would conceive and execute a plan to express the general theme of the full Amazing Grace program: Doing right and overcoming wrong. The possibilities for such a project are endless. Glancing through the Faith in Action segments of the sessions will offer some ideas. Your group could focus on the ethics of eating, as suggested in Session 4; on saving animals, as suggested in Session 7; on changing onerous rules, as suggested in Session 11; or on environmental action, as suggested in Session 13.

If you want your group to commit to a long-term Faith in Action project in connection with Amazing Grace, consider beginning with a brainstorming session within or close to Session 1.

However you adjust this Amazing Grace curriculum, try to include some form of Faith in Action. As the saying insists, actions do often speak louder than words, for both actor and observer.

Closing: Both the Opening and Closing are ritual elements and should not be skipped. Ritual is important for group cohesion and identification. Including rituals in our lives is important to children, youth, and adults. The Closing is a signal to the group that they are leaving their special time together. Each session's closing segment suggests summarizing the day's activities, extinguishing the chalice while the group speaks ritual closing words, offering Taking It Home suggestions as appropriate, and making any announcements needed to help facilitate future sessions. Though many elements of the Closing are repeated in every session, unique elements may be incorporated to address specific session needs. Always read the Opening and Closing of every session, including materials lists and preparation suggestions.

Leader Reflection and Planning: Many religious education leaders find it is helpful, at the end of their curriculum sessions, to spend a few minutes reviewing what they have done and planning what they will do next. This segment of each session suggests a few discussion ideas.

Taking It Home: The Taking It Home segment provides activities and suggestions for involving families in the ideas and projects of Amazing Grace. They include rituals; games; ideas for extending, exploring, and discussing session topics; and a Mystery and Me piece for independent youth reflection. In Tapestry of Faith programs for younger children, Taking It Home activities are reasonably addressed to parents. In programs for older youth, they are logically addressed to youth. In this program for sixth graders - the oldest of children and the youngest of youth - they might best be read and considered by both parents and youth. Consider suggesting this approach to families as you correspond with them about Amazing Grace.

Alternate Activities: The format for alternate activities is similar to that of core activities. Consider using the alternates instead of or in addition to the core activities, or possibly outside your regular session time. Some alternate activities are intentionally more active than most core activities. Consider them for high-energy youth or, again, for youth group programs.

Resources: Each session's Resources section contains the stories, handouts, and any other resources you will need to lead every element of the session.

Under Stories, we have included the full text of the session's central story and any other stories that you will need for that session's activities.

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

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

Under Find Out More, we list book and video titles, website URLs, and other selected resources to further explore the session topics.

MATERIALS

Certain materials will come in handy for the duration of the program. This includes the Leader Resources for Ethics Play, which are included with Session 1.

Other materials you will need are recordings of the theme song, "Amazing Grace," and background music. During extended times when participants are working independently, background music may be useful for keeping youth focused on their work. Many different kinds of music would work for this purpose. Bring in some of your favorite CDs or invite youth to bring in theirs, with the stipulation that it must be appropriate for the group. Below are a few suggestions for both categories of music:

The following CDs include versions of "Amazing Grace":

Amazing Grace: Bagpipes & Drums of Scotland. Delta CD, 1999.

Baez, Joan. *Greatest Hits*. A&M CD, 1996.

Collins, Judy. *Amazing Grace*. Delta CD, 2003.

DiFranco, Ani. *Amazing Grace*. Polygram Records, 1997.

Empire Brass. *King's Court and Celtic Fair*. Telarc CD, 1996.

Neville, Aaron. *Believe*. Chordant Records, 2003.

Background music for creative activities and crafts:

August, Scott. *New Fire*. Cedar Mesa Music CD, 2005.

Baraka. Milan Records CD, 2005.

Berlanga, Cesar. *Music for Relaxation*. The Relaxation Company.

Penguin Cafe Orchestra. *A Brief History*. EMI International CD, 2002.

Winter, Paul. *Greatest Hits*. Living Music CD, 1998.

LEADER GUIDELINES

Here are some suggestions that can help ensure a successful Amazing Grace program:

- Engage youth the moment they walk through your door, and help them shed outside concerns so they may focus on your program. To do that, use the suggested ritual openings and closings, including music and the Conundrum Corner.
- Before you begin, spend some time in the company of sixth graders to refresh your memory of this age group.
- Plan tight and present loose. Know how you will fill every minute of your hour together, and how you will move from one activity to the next without leaving large gaps for youth to fill in any way they wish. Have all materials ready and right where they need to be. Be extremely

familiar with the stories and discussion points, ready to present them without stumbling or apology. Having planned carefully, make adjustments as you go. Be flexible. If one activity is a flop, move on to another. If another activity wins great attention and produces great ideas, consider extending it.

- Learn from your group. The better you know the youth, the greater your chances of picking the right activities and the right ways to lead them.
- Be a leader, not a buddy. You are the adult in the room, and your chances of good relations with the kids are best if you do not try to be a friend on their level. Remember that youth appreciate firm control, but not dictatorship. They want to learn and have fun, and they cannot do that in a group that is out of control.
- Offer quiet discipline. Too many side conversations? Use a talking stick or other implement, saying that only the person holding the stick may speak at any one time. Too much energy in the room? Call for a quick stretch break. Too many opinions on what to do when? Remind the group that time is limited and then gently move it forward through your agenda. Posting a written session plan can be helpful in that regard. Too little experience working with youth? Team up with somebody more experienced. Ask for suggestions and assistance from your religious educator and others.
- Be aware that discussions within the group around issues of right and wrong could lead to disclosure by a youth of some wrong they have committed or a wrong done to them. Discuss with your religious educator how you should handle such a situation. Make sure you understand your congregation's guidelines and the laws mandating reporting in your community. *The Safe Congregation Handbook*, edited by Pat Hoertdoerfer and Fredric Muir (Boston: UUA Publications, 2005) also might be helpful.
- Most importantly, leaders need to be comfortable with the language of Amazing Grace. This curriculum offers some traditional religious vocabulary, words and concepts like "salvation," "virtue," and "sin." Some UU adults, especially those not raised UU, struggle with such terms, which remind them of difficult periods in their own religious pasts. However, the experiences of adults are not the same as

the experiences of young people in our congregations. It is good for Unitarian Universalist youth to hear and understand such traditional ideas because they remain essential to the lives of others in the community beyond the congregation. Our youth and adults need to be familiar with religious phrases like "virtue and sin" as well as with more universally accepted phrases like "right and wrong." There is value in religious language that we can claim as people of faith. After all, the Unitarian Universalism of today is not many decades removed from the ancestor churches that engaged in spirited debate about trinitarianism and salvation. By presenting and explaining the traditional words, you are not asking youth to give up their own ideas and understandings. You are helping them to know the larger world. Unitarian Universalists can and do embrace multiple Sources without embracing all the ideas of all the Sources.

IMPLEMENTATION

Every congregation has its own approach to structuring religious education. You can implement Amazing Grace with any model your congregation uses.

As a leader, you will choose the combination of activities for each session. You know best how to shape the program to fit your congregation's religious education model, the culture of your congregation, the youth in the group, and the time and space allocated for each session.

Do not feel limited to the adaptive and alternate ideas included in Amazing Grace. Add your own to the mix. Do what is best for the youth in your program.

You may not have much choice of a space to use for Amazing Grace. If you do, look for a room that is large enough to accommodate your group and its activities comfortably. Ideally, your youth will be able to move actively without overly worrying about damaging fancy congregational furniture. Also ideally, the space will be free enough from other uses so you can leave posters and youth creations on display from session to session.

Some activities ask the group to break into small groups. If your group is already small, adapt the activity for the whole group. Conversely, if you have a large group, consider adapting activities that involve sharing into small group activities to save time.

BEFORE YOU START

As soon as your program is scheduled, prepare a calendar with the dates for each session. The more co-

leaders and parent volunteers a program includes, the more useful a calendar will be.

Look through the entire curriculum to get an idea of how it moves and which parts you wish to use. Watch carefully for activities, especially Faith in Action activities, for which you might want assistance from other adults in your congregation, and make appropriate notes on the calendar so you can schedule them well in advance.

Post your calendar in your shared meeting space, and duplicate it for each adult leader. Also, if possible, make it available electronically to families, youth, and adult participants.

Communications to parents and families can boost the impact of Amazing Grace. Keep everyone informed of what you are doing, by postcard, e-mail, or in person. Establish a regular way to distribute Taking It Home resources on paper or by e-mail.

Be sure to share your enthusiasm for Amazing Grace with your youth as well as with their families. Sixth graders must typically rely on parents for transportation, but their wish to attend your program may be enough to get the whole family into the car.

Name tags are an option in Amazing Grace's materials lists. You should probably use them at least for your first session or two, and again after that if you sense that the group continues to need them.

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.

RESOURCES

You might find these resources useful to have around:

Hurd, Dr. Tracey L. [*Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=706) (Boston: UUA Publications, 2005).

Patton, Sally. [*Welcoming Children with Special Needs*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=756) (Boston: UUA Publications, 2004).

Schwendeman, Jill M. [*When Youth Lead: A Guide to Intergenerational Social Justice Ministry \(Plus 101 Youth Projects\)*](#) (at

www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=757) (Boston: UUA Publications, 2007). A useful resource if the group wishes to explore more options for Faith in Action.

[*Deep Fun*](#) (at

<http://www.uua.org/re/youth/leading/deepfun/index.shtml>) is a compilation of games and community-building activities that you might keep on hand to fill time if sessions run short.

FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

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

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

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

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

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

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

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

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

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Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

SESSION 1: INTRODUCING AMAZING GRACE: EXPLORING RIGHT AND WRONG

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

— John Newton

This session introduces Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong, giving a sense of its nature, a taste of its activities, and an experience of its richly mixed learning and fun. We explore the session's core question—"What are right and wrong, virtue and sin?"—through a series of activities that includes wall-to-wall questions, creation of an artistic Garden of Eden, the story of Adam and Eve, and Ethics Play, a game included in all sessions as either an activity or an alternate activity. This session is the first in a series of four that focuses on faith as it relates to virtue and sin.

If your group is new to you and its members are unfamiliar to each other, you may need to extend the opening to allow for introductions. However, try not to spend too much time sitting and talking before beginning. The activities will engage sixth graders, ensuring they will want to return for future sessions, so get started as soon as you can.

Assess your group as you move through the activities. Is it lively enough so that you will want to use some of the "high-energy" options when possible? Is it thoughtful enough so you can give extra time to discussions or is it a combination that is likely to surprise you with mixed levels of enthusiasm and quiet attention from session to session? Every gathering of sixth graders has its own "grouponality," that is, its own range of maturity, its own special collection of personalities. That is why leading sixth-grade groups is not only challenging, but fun.

This session also introduces the Conundrum Corner, a spot where you will routinely place something puzzling for your youth to decipher when they enter the room. In this case, the object is an apple, symbolizing the story of Adam and Eve. If participants ask about it, say that they will learn the answer later. In the meantime, they are free to guess the apple's purpose. When you set up the Conundrum Corner, consider making it special, perhaps by spreading a decorative cloth over the area.

Remember the general guideline offered in the Introduction to Amazing Grace: plan tight, present loose. In other words, know exactly how you intend to fill every minute of the session, then, with everything ready, relax and go with the mood of the group and the flow of the day.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the spiritual underpinnings of virtue and sin
- Help participants understand the responsibilities of being free moral agents
- Bridge the gap between childhood and early adolescent understanding of morality
- Recognize how our Unitarian Universalist faith influences moral decision-making
- Demonstrate that Amazing Grace will be interesting, useful, and fun.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Become acquainted with Amazing Grace, its leaders, and each other
- Hear the theme song "Amazing Grace"
- Start examining the sources available to help people make ethical decisions
- Reconnect with the story of Adam and Eve, one explanation for the origin of sin
- Construct a pipe-cleaner Garden of Eden
- Play roles in a hypothetical scenario in which ethical decisions are demanded
- Contribute to a democratic process to find future Faith in Action activities.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	10
Activity 1: Wall-to-Wall Questions	10
Activity 2: Story and Discussion – Adam and Eve	7
Activity 3: Temptation Tales	10
Activity 4: Ethics Play	20
Faith in Action: Brainstorming Action	15

Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: High-Energy Rope Pull	10
Alternate Activity 2: Playing God	10
Alternate Activity 3: Adam and Eve Revisited	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Spend a few quiet moments focusing on spirituality as connection with deep self, with others, with universe, with ultimate other, and with mystery. In the days before you present this session, reconnect with your own

spiritual understanding of virtue and sin. Where do your ideas come from? Did you develop them through programs such as the one you now lead? Do you wish you had explored them more thoroughly at a younger age?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet participants.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster/banner decorated with question marks and the words "Conundrum Corner"
- An appealing apple
- Chalice and matches
- Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Set up your meeting area with a "Conundrum Corner" clearly marked. Make it special, perhaps with a decorative cloth.
- Decorate your room appropriately for the themes of Amazing Grace. Consider a poster with the program title.
- Establish activity areas and tables for occasional use.
- Set up chairs in a circle around a small table on which there is a chalice.
- Have your recording of "Amazing Grace" cued and ready to play.
- Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

The opening of each session is a time to focus the group. It will include a chalice lighting and an introduction to the day's theme.

As participants arrive, have the song "Amazing Grace" playing in the background. Consider a bagpipe rendition for this initial use. As participants enter, greet them and ask them to take a look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not tell them anything about what is there. If they ask, say you will be talking about it later. If you think nametags will be useful, ask participants to fill them out and wear them. Invite everybody into your circle.

Ask if anyone recognizes the music. After a participant or you identify the music as "Amazing Grace," explain

that it is the theme song for this program and you will discuss it more at later sessions. Stop the music.

Say that before introductions, you would like the group to engage in the day's opening rituals: a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing. Explain that during the silence, youth should sit quietly and gaze at the chalice flame, becoming relaxed and comfortable. This will help them empty their minds of everything they need to think (and perhaps worry) about during the rest of the day so they can focus on their time together.

Light the chalice, speaking these words (ask the group to join you if you have posted them):

May the light of this chalice help us to see the difference between right and wrong.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words. Explain that you will follow this ritual of a chalice lighting with spoken words followed by silence at each session. (You may decide at future sessions to have a youth light the chalice while another youth or the group speaks the opening words. If so, establish a firm way of choosing the lighter and speaker, and keep the process serious. Even sixth graders can sometimes argue about whose turn it is to light the chalice this week.)

If participants do not already know each other, ask them each in turn to state their names and where they live or attend school. You can do more of a check-in if you like, but keep it focused. Introduce the program with words like these:

The name of our program this year is Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong. We will examine right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and sin. Some of these terms might not be familiar to you, but they will become so. If somebody says you are virtuous, you are probably doing something they think is good. If somebody says you are being sinful, you are probably doing something they consider bad. Different people have different ideas about what is good and what is bad, what is virtuous and what is sinful. For example, some religions have dietary restrictions. They may believe it is sinful to eat pork. Other people do not believe that. Can you think of other examples of behaviors some people think is wrong but others do not? Virtue and sin, goodness and evil, bad and good are not always easy to understand. You probably know that already just by living as long as you have. Many other people knew and know

it, too. That is why there are so many different stories about virtue and sin. We will hear and discuss some of these stories. As Unitarian Universalists, we do not rely on just a single source, like the Bible, to answer big questions. We believe we must answer the questions ourselves, but stories from many different sources, such as science and religious texts, can help guide us. That is why the stories we share in Amazing Grace will come from different religions, cultures, and countries.

We will do more than tell stories. We will also have fun with other activities, like crafts, debates, music, movement, plays, and more.

Along the way, we will examine what it means to live your life as a good or virtuous person. That is not always as easy as it sounds, and we will prove that with a game called "Ethics Play." In this game, we will try to figure out virtue and sin not with ancient stories but with challenges based on real-life situations that sixth graders might face today or in the near future.

I'll bet you have been hearing all your life about being good and being bad. Don't worry. The idea of Amazing Grace is not to tell you what to do. It is about helping you decide on your own what you should do. So let's get started.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: WALL-TO-WALL QUESTIONS (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity asks youth to answer simple questions about who judges what is right and wrong.

Prepare a clear space in which participants may easily move around. Explain that you are going to play wall-to-wall questions. You will ask a series of questions, each with only two possible answers; each represented by one of two opposite walls. You want the youth to show their answers by choosing and moving to one of the walls. Say that there are only two choices for each question; standing in the middle is not an option.

Show the youth the two walls where they are to go in response to the questions. Then ask the questions from the following list, stating after each question which wall represents which answer. Give participants a chance to talk about each question and their responses before moving on to the next one.

Questions

Right and wrong are...

- What your parents and families say they are: yes or no
- What God says they are: yes or no
- What your religion says they are: yes or no
- What your peer group says they are: yes or no
- What the law says they are: yes or no
- What you say they are: yes or no

Discussion Questions

Ask as many of the following discussion questions as time allows:

- Was it easy or hard to make up your mind about where to stand?
- Were some choices easier (or harder) than others?
- Are there certain situations where right and wrong are defined for you and you do not have a say?
- Does age or other identities (such as gender, ethnicity, and ability) have an effect on who decides what is wrong or right?

Share with the group that you will be looking at what different sources, such as religion, have to say about right and wrong. In every session, you will also have time to explore and share your feelings about right and wrong. Ask if the youth enjoyed the exercise and inform them that you will be using this game in future sessions. If time permits, you might ask a few questions about the experience, such as:

- When you chose a wall, did you make your own decision?
- Did you look around to see where other people were going first?
- Is it okay to see what other people think before you act?

Including All Participants

If some of your participants have limited mobility, devise a different way for the group to make their choices known. They might indicate their choice with a thumbs up for yes and thumbs down for no. Alternatively, you could provide everyone with two differently colored index cards: blue for yes and yellow for no, for example. Do not assume, however, that a youth using a wheelchair or crutches would not enjoy the movement of this activity as much as any other participant.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY AND DISCUSSION – ADAM AND EVE (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Adam and Eve](#) (included in this document) ”
- Optional: Hebrew Bible

Preparation for Activity

- Reacquaint yourself with the story of Adam and Eve, in Genesis 2 and 3.
- Photocopy Story 1, “Adam and Eve,” one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss a story about the origin of sin.

Ask the group to tell you the story of Adam and Eve from memory. After several youths have shared their thoughts, either read or ask one or more volunteers to read Story 1, “Adam and Eve,” which is based largely on the language of the New Standard Revised Bible. If you prefer more modern language, paraphrase the story or use one of the many available modern versions.

Alternatively, you might read essential segments of the story from Genesis 2 and Genesis 3 of the Hebrew Bible.

After hearing the story, help the group to process it by asking questions like these:

- What were some of the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit?
- What do you think of the story?
- Why do you think it has been so popular for so many centuries?

In the course of the group’s discussion, consider offering thoughts like these:

For many centuries, people have asked themselves such big questions as, “Why do bad things happen?” and “Where does evil come from?” Different people and different religions have answered such questions in many different ways. The story of Adam and Eve shows some of the answers offered by the Hebrew, or Jewish, religion. Throughout our time together, we hear what other people have to say about the origin of evil, too.

Complete the activity by asking if participants can tell you why the Conundrum Corner contains an apple. They will probably state correctly that many people think of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge as an apple.

ACTIVITY 3: TEMPTATION TALES (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Participants share personal stories of temptations.

If your group seems willing to share, ask participants to tell stories about temptations they overcame. What did they really want to do that they knew was wrong? How did they overcome the temptation? If this seems too personal, ask the group to share stories about characters overcoming temptation in books, movies, and television shows.

ACTIVITY 4: ETHICS PLAY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Leader Resource 1, [Ethics Play Roles](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resources 2-7, [Ethics Play Scenarios](#) (included in this document)
- Reusable nametags for roles
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- Secure two dice of different colors. You might find giant dice at a toy or novelty store.
- Copy and cut apart Leader Resource 1, Ethics Play Roles. Affix the roles to reusable nametags.
- Copy and have available the numbered Ethics Play Scenarios pages, which are Leader Resources 2 through 7.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

Ethics Play is a game for up to twelve players, each playing a role. They are Star, Devil, Conscience, God, Parent, Friend, and six Jurors. If your group is larger, consider dividing it into subgroups and letting each play the game. If your group is smaller, drop some of the parts, but always have a Star and at least one Juror. Begin with the group in a circle on the floor or at a small table and the dice in the center. Then follow these steps:

- Announce the game: Ethics Play. Explain that "ethics" is the study of right and wrong behavior,

and an "ethicist" is a person who specializes in ethics.

- Put the nametags in a bag and let players draw roles at random. Explain the roles:
 - Star is the person who has to make an ethical decision. Remember that the Star is a role like any other: the person playing that part does not have to act as they would in real life. They are free to make any choice, right or wrong.
 - Devil is the name given to the character who wants the Star to make choices that are hurtful or unethical. Feel free to portray this character in any way; you do not have to play a stereotypical devil.
 - Conscience is the name given to the character who helps the Star weigh decisions.
 - God is the name given to the character who wants the Star to make ethical choices that are not harmful. You can play God any way you like; you do not have to play a stereotypical God.
 - Parent is just that.
 - Friend is another sixth grader.
 - Juror does not participate in the action, but gives a verdict at the end as to whether or not the Star acted in an ethical way.
- Optional: If you have costumes, distribute these. Note that such materials will increase the fun of Ethics Play, but also the time required for it. You might wish to let participants make costumes at a future session.
- Say that Adam and Eve did not have a problem until they happened to meet the serpent, who tempted them. Note that life is often like this: all of a sudden, we find ourselves in a difficult situation and we have to decide fast what to do. Sometimes it is just chance or luck that lands us in those situations. In Ethics Play, you will use different colored dice to select a situation. One color stands for the group of scenarios from which the day's challenge will come (i.e., Babysitting, Peers, etc.); the other is used to select a specific challenge from that group's list.
- Decide which color stands for group and which for challenge. Have the Star throw the dice. The numbers that come up correspond to a

numbered group page and a numbered challenge on that page. *Note:* At future sessions the Star will keep throwing the dice until you come up with a situation the group has not done before.

- Have the Star ask all players in turn, except the Jurors, what she/he should do. When the players are asked for opinions, they should give answers and arguments appropriate to their roles. Encourage participants to stand and be dramatic in playing their roles. If they want to move around and use makeshift props when they speak, that is fine.
- If there is time, let the players each speak again so they can respond to one another's ideas.
- After all non-jurors have weighed in, give the Star thirty seconds to decide what he/she will do, reminding players that often we have very little time to make important decisions.
- Give the jurors two minutes to decide whether the Star's action is right or wrong.
- End the role-playing and let all participants discuss the situation, the Star's decision, and the Jurors' verdict. Ask the group what, if anything, the game has taught them about right and wrong.

Mark on the scenario sheet which scenario you played to avoid repetition. Keep the name tags and scenarios in a secure place for future sessions. In future sessions, rotate the role of Star. If participants find themselves frequently playing other roles, help them switch with other youth so everyone gets a chance to play all the roles during the program.

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out copies of Taking It Home and explain that

every week they will receive ideas for ways to take home the topics discussed in the session.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and listen to these closing words, and then to repeat them with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

Play more of "Amazing Grace" as closing, benedictory music.

FAITH IN ACTION: BRAINSTORMING ACTION (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Decide with your co-leaders which of three approaches to use for Faith in Action.

Description of Activity

Youth brainstorm ideas for future Faith in Action activities.

The Faith in Action sections of Amazing Grace invite participants to express their Unitarian Universalist faith through active support of or opposition to causes as they relate to our Unitarian Universalist Principles.

There are at least three different approaches your group could take with Faith in Action. In the congregational approach, the group would work with members of your congregation on social justice projects that already exist. This could include monthly rotation at a homeless shelter or annual holiday gift giving to needy families. In the community approach, your group would identify and work for or against local community causes that they consider to be demonstrably virtuous or sinful. This could mean anything from helping at a local animal shelter to working against commercial attempts to convert public recreational land into a mall. In the group approach, your group would work on a different Faith in Action activity at every meeting. These would be original activities that are tied into the specific theme of each session.

In each session of Amazing Grace, you will find all you need to plan an activity with the group approach. If you, your co-leader, and the youth decide to use either the congregational approach or community approach, you will want to investigate far in advance what opportunities already exist and be prepared to offer them during today's Faith in Action.

First, however, you should take some time to explain the concept of Faith in Action as suggested below.

As written, the following activity and the Faith in Action segments of other sessions assume that you will be taking the Group Approach. Each session offers a fresh activity that can be done independently of the Faith in Actions from other sessions. If your youth become excited about a particular Faith in Action project, consider sticking with it and building on it throughout Amazing Grace. This session may offer a good starting point for such a project. Youth will brainstorm Faith in Action ideas and then agree on the most promising. If the youth come up with good ideas and seem excited about following through, then by all means help them to do so in future sessions. Asking for their ideas and then not using them would get things off to a poor start.

Begin the activity by explaining to participants that each session of Amazing Grace has a time called Faith in Action. Offer additional ideas like the following, adapting them to the apparent interests and maturity of your group:

Our faith is our activity we do to make meaning. Faith is our spiritual or religious belief. It grows out of our religion and our own personal ideas. Our faith is what we trust or know to be true.

Unitarian Universalists believe they should act on their ideas, act to make the world a better place. They want more good, or virtuous, stuff, and less bad, or sinful, stuff, so they work for justice or social action. Reading 471 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, says "service is [our] prayer." Some people think prayer means talking to God or to the Great Mystery, and it can mean that. However, if we say "service is [our] prayer" we mean that social action is a way we connect with God or with the great mystery of all existence.

Therefore, Unitarian Universalists are involved in social action. That is why we will talk about Faith in Action every time we meet for Amazing Grace.

Invite the group to brainstorm ways they can make the world a better place by trying to increase rightful actions or decrease wrongful ones. The ways can be simple or complicated. No one is going to disagree with anybody's ideas because this is brainstorming. Every idea is worth thinking about. The group will come up with all the ideas it can, so that they can choose the ones they want to try. As you proceed with Faith in Action, be aware that your group may disagree about what is virtuous and what is sinful and may need to spend time coming to consensus.

Although such discussion might seem to waste valuable moments that you think could be better used in action, it may also be central to the purpose and goals of Amazing Grace, which is a program that encourages youth to make their own decisions. It also reflects our Principles, which say we believe in the democratic process. So do not cut these interactions short if you can avoid it. Use consensus if you can, and votes only if you must. With consensus, everybody wins. With votes, some people win but others lose.

If the brainstorming begins slowly, consider making some general suggestions, such as improving things at school, thinking about television shows with questionable content, or wrestling with typical problems of youth in grades six through eight: getting schoolwork done, dealing with bullies, having disagreements with parents, and so on. You could also suggest the ideas in the Faith in Action sections of this program.

If the group decides on issues of interest to consider at future sessions, that is fine, but make some specific plans for exploring the current project further. Ask if youth as well as leaders will research the topic and bring information to the next session. Consider asking an outsider to visit the group and talk about the chosen subject. If the group does not choose a topic to pursue, say that the leaders will prepare a Faith in Action activity for the next session. If participants have some ideas of their own to offer later on, the group can talk about those, too. Then move on to your closing.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on the session. How was your mix of discussion and action? In the midst of all the business, did you successfully include spiritual elements? Do you have youth who have difficulty focusing? Can you find a special role for them next time, maybe helping you? Do you have youth who have difficulty connecting with others? Can you pair them carefully with potential friends in future activities? Were your activities appropriate for the maturity levels of your participants? What should you do differently at the next session? What about the use of music? Does it seem to help the group focus during creative activities or does it distract them?

Look ahead at Session 2, Curious Faith. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

— John Newton

IN TODAY'S SESSION... This was the first session of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong. Our story was "Adam and Eve," from the Hebrew scripture. We made our own Garden of Eden from pipe cleaners and talked about how this story poses one explanation for how sin came into the world. We took part in a game, Ethics Play, for the first time and used role-playing as a way to help decide what's right and wrong .

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- The situation your group explored in Ethics Play. What do your family members and friends say the Star should do?
- Where did your family members first hear the story of the Garden of Eden? What do they think about what it has to say about the origins of sin?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Watching a television show together and seeing what it tells you about right and wrong.
- Going through the family bookcases. Look at some stories everybody has read. What do they say about virtue? Are there any that have no sin in them at all?

MYSTERY AND ME

Welcome to Mystery and Me!

Everybody wonders about life's big questions, questions such as How did evil come into the world? Some people think the answers are clear because they are written in the bible or in some other source. Other people think that the answers remain hidden in mystery. We may never find perfect answers, but it is still important to search through the mystery, to understand as much about life as we possibly can. The Mystery and Me sections of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong invite you do that exploring after every session.

One way to use Mystery and Me is to keep a journal on your thoughts in response to the question asked. The journal does not need to be fancy. It can be a notebook, a diary, or kept on your computer, or any other way you have of keeping notes for yourself. Writing helps some people think better. If you think it might be useful, try it. You do not need to bring your journal to our meetings or share it with anyone. Writing down thoughts does make them visible, however, so be careful of writing anything

so personal that it could be embarrassing if someone else saw it.

Take some personal quiet time and think about the story.

- Why did God forbid the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge?
- Why do you think the serpent wanted Eve to eat the fruit?
- What temptations do you have to overcome in your life?

A FAMILY RITUAL

Find a time each day when you can talk about the right and wrong you have experienced. Maybe late afternoon or a mealtime will work. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Virtue Scavenger Hunt. Have each person in the family go around and put a marker somewhere to show a virtuous thing another family member has done. You might use colored sticky notes or paper for your markers. The individuals placing the markers can initial them. What will you find? Maybe it is a stack of clean dishes that somebody washed without being asked; maybe it is homework completed early. It might even be a flyer from an outside organization one of your family members belongs to that does good things.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Talk about a family rule and discover the reasons for it. Maybe it is the bedtime rule. Why that time? Why not fifteen minutes later? Why not earlier? Is there a good reason for the rule and does everybody agree with it? Should you talk about it more?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: HIGH-ENERGY ROPE PULL (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Strong rope long enough for a tug of war; maybe 20 feet

Preparation for Activity

- Find an area, outdoors if possible, where your group can engage in a high-energy activity.

Description of Activity

This activity uses a concrete action to illustrate the abstract idea of arbitrating between good and bad thoughts.

Engage the group in a modified tug of war, first taking youth to an area that is safe for such an activity. Divide the group into two teams of approximately equal size, weight, and strength. Identify one group as virtue and the other as sin, and announce that they are going to have a modified tug of war. You want them to arrange themselves at both ends of the rope so that when everybody leans back, there should be perfect balance, and neither team should move. You may have to swap people around or ask somebody to leave one of the groups and stand aside to achieve balance. At your signal, ask everybody to pull with approximately half strength so that the balance is maintained. Then ask this question: "If virtue and sin are perfectly balanced, how much additional virtue will it take so that virtue can win?" Now add another person to the virtue side. It could be a participant who had to stand aside to help balance the group or a leader. Now tell the groups to pull again at half strength. Virtue should win, though you may need to ask the sin side not to follow their natural instinct of increasing their effort to resist the new addition on the virtue side. (If this does not work, add another leader to the virtue side and try again.) Now ask the group to drop the rope and come together. Ask what it has proved about virtue and sin. Help the group to this answer: "In a group, one or two people can easily make enough difference so the group does the right thing." If you are feeling brave and trust your group not to get out of control, you can ask the group to repeat the experiment with everybody pulling at full strength. If a youth notes that a slight addition to the sin side can shift the balance as easily as the slight addition to the virtue side, accept the reasoning, and add that you hope the youth will generally look for an extra pull on the virtue side of their decisions.

Including All Participants

If you have participants with limited mobility, make sure you find a way that they can participate. Maybe they can hold the rope and pull while seated. If you cannot accommodate all participants comfortably in this activity, you should skip it.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: PLAYING GOD (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

A conversation about free will for groups that enjoy discussion

Begin this activity by asking whether participants would like to play God. That is, would they like a chance to control other people?

Does being God just mean you can control what happens or does it also mean that you assume

responsibility for everything? Does this latter aspect of being God appeal to participants?

If they were God, would they allow free will? Talk about free will, asking what it means and how it works. Say that some people do not believe we really have free will. They believe we are controlled by our own chemistry and by the world around us. Do participants believe they have free will? Can they make their own decisions and do what they want, even if they get in trouble doing it?

Point out, if participants do not, that people who write fiction and make movies are in a sense playing God. They get to create their characters and tell the characters what to do. They also decide whether the characters get free will and how they use it. In the movie *Click* (made in 2006; rated PG-13), the lead character, played by Adam Sandler, gets a “universal remote” switch that lets him control the universe around him. In “The Sims” computer game, players create and control virtual people who live near SimCity and can decide whether to give their created characters free will. Why would you want your characters to have free will? What reasons can you give for not wanting characters to have free will?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: ADAM AND EVE REVISITED (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, “[Adam and Eve](#) (included in this document)”

Description of Activity

If you have a bit of extra time to fill at any point, consider returning to the story of Adam and Eve and adding to the discussion with ideas like these:

Hymn 207 in the Unitarian Universalist hymnal *Singing the Living Tradition*, is called “Earth Was Given as a Garden.” The second verse asks that people be given a chance to see the original garden again, and concludes with these words: “Then once more will Eden flower.” Does this hymn show that all Unitarian Universalists believe in the story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden?

Some people find God’s punishment of Adam and Eve too harsh. If your parents told you not to eat something and you ate it anyway, would your parents punish you? How? Would they throw you out of the house forever? Why do you think the story says God was so rough on Adam and Eve when all they did was to eat an apple?

Some people interpret the stories in the bible as literal truth: they happened exactly as described. Others see the stories as more allegorical, meaning they are

symbolic. The characters do not so much represent actual people, but ideas or certain human traits. Aside from a literal interpretation, how else might people analyze this story? If responses are few, consider adding these questions:

What do you think about the bible? Are all the stories really true? Or are they just stories that are meant to teach us something? Is it good to know these stories even if you do not think they are true? Can you name some bible stories that you like?

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 1: STORY: ADAM AND EVE

Excerpted from Christian scriptures, Genesis 2 and 3 of the *New Revised Standard Version*.

Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were

naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

To the woman he said,

"I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

And to the man he said,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,'

cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all who live. And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

Then the Lord God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might

reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever"— therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the

east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 1: ETHICS PLAY ROLES

STAR

DEVIL

CONSCIENCE

GOD

PARENT

FRIEND

JUROR

JUROR

JUROR

JUROR

JUROR

JUROR

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 2: ETHICS PLAY SCENARIO 1 THE BABYSITTER

There are six Ethics Play scenarios. Scenarios stand alone from the themes of any particular session, so you may use them with any session. The roll of the dice determines which scenario you use and which question you ask. Mark questions as you use them, to avoid repetition in future sessions. See Description of Activity for further directions.

- A friend wants to visit you while you are babysitting. The people you are working for do not want you to have visitors. However, the kid you are babysitting is asleep and you think you can get away with it. What do you do?
- The boy you are babysitting loses a ball behind the couch. You move the couch and find the ball along with a dusty \$20 bill. You do not think the boy has seen the money. What do you do?
- You break a valuable glass in the house where you are babysitting. The glass is part of a large set, and the homeowners probably will not notice right away. You are babysitting a one-year-old girl who cannot yet talk. What do you do?
- You find a parent's diary when you are snooping around while the child you are babysitting is asleep. What do you do?
- The child you are babysitting has gone to sleep for the night. You find a DVD of a movie you want to see, but that your parents have said you cannot watch because it is violent and R-rated. What do you do?
- The child you are babysitting wants to watch a TV show that he or she is not supposed to watch. You want to see it too. The child promises not to tell his/her parents. What do you do?

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 3: ETHICS PLAY SCENARIO 2 PEERS

There are six Ethics Play scenarios. Scenarios stand alone from the themes of any particular session, so you may use them with any session. The roll of the dice determines which scenario you use and which question you ask. Mark questions as you use them, to avoid repetition in future sessions. See Description of Activity for further directions.

- You are planning to stay at a friend's house when your parents go away for the weekend. You find out that the friend's parents are going away, too. They think the friend is staying with you. Your friend says not to tell anybody. What do you do?
- Your older brother is an usher at a movie theater. He says he will let you and two friends sneak in free. He warns you not to get caught. What do you do?
- A friend lives near a man who beats his dog, and plans to do something about it. The friend wants your help cutting the dog loose from its rope, removing its collar, and taking it to a shelter. What do you do?
- You know that a friend got a bad grade on a test at school. You also know that the friend is telling family members and other kids that the grade was much higher. What do you do?
- You have always been friends with both Kim and Lee. Now Kim says that Lee is "stupid and queer." Kim will not be friends with any friend of Lee, and this means you. What do you do?
- You have a friend who sometimes bullies other kids, but never bullies you. Two of the other kids want you to tell the friend to stop bullying. You think if you do that you will lose the friend. What do you do?

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 4: ETHICS PLAY SCENARIO 3 SCHOOL

There are six Ethics Play scenarios. Scenarios stand alone from the themes of any particular session, so you may use them with any session. The roll of the dice determines which scenario you use and which question you ask. Mark questions as you use them, to avoid repetition in future sessions. See Description of Activity for further directions.

- You are taking a test in a subject you do not understand very well. The best student in the school is sitting next to you and you can see her/his answers. What do you do?
- Your friends are planning to play a nasty trick on your substitute teacher. They say the teacher is stupid, ugly, and mean. You like the teacher, who is a friend of your family's. You have fun when the teacher visits you at home. What do you do?
- There wasn't any school today. Somebody called in a bomb threat. You think you know the kid who did it. The kid is a friend of yours. What do you do?
- There wasn't any school today. Somebody called in a bomb threat. You think you know the kid who did it, and you have never liked the kid. What do you do?
- You have a small and close group of friends at school. The group is making fun of a new kid in the school. The new kid lives near you. Your families got together last weekend and you liked each other. What do you do?
- The art teacher in your class is not very good. She cannot control the class. When she goes into the supply closet, one of other kids shuts the door. Another one locks it. The teacher cannot get out. What do you do?

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 5: ETHICS PLAY SCENARIO 4 FAMILY

There are six Ethics Play scenarios. Scenarios stand alone from the themes of any particular session, so you may use them with any session. The roll of the dice determines which scenario you use and which question you ask. Mark questions as you use them, to avoid repetition in future sessions. See Description of Activity for further directions.

- It is your sister's turn to do laundry. When she complains of having too much homework, you volunteer to do the laundry. She does not thank you. While preparing the laundry, you find a dollar bill in your sister's pocket. What do you do?
- Your brother likes a certain girl. However, the girl likes you more than him. She invites you to a party but says not to tell your brother and not to bring him. What do you do?
- Your uncle just got a gas-eating car. You told him that was wrong the day he did it, and said you would never ever ride in it. Now he wants to take you to a movie in it. What do you do?
- Your sister was driving the family car while you were in it. She hit another car and bent the fender badly. The accident was her fault but she told your parents it was not. You promised you would not tell your parents but now you are mad at her for something else. What do you do?
- The pet cat you love is dying. Your parents will not pay \$100 for medicine because they say the cat is so old it will die soon anyway. You have \$175 in your account that you are saving for a bicycle. What do you do?
- You stole some money at school. You did not mean to do that, but somebody left it in an open locker and suddenly it was in your pocket. You think your little sister knows and that she might be going to tell. What do you do?

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 6: ETHICS PLAY SCENARIO 5 SPORTS

There are six Ethics Play scenarios. Scenarios stand alone from the themes of any particular session, so you may use them with any session. The roll of the dice determines which scenario you use and which question you ask. Mark questions as you use them, to avoid repetition in future sessions. See Description of Activity for further directions.

- You make a great hit and are running the bases in a league ballgame. You miss second base but the umpire does not see that. You score a triple. What do you do?
- Your basketball team is ahead by one point. An opponent drives in hard for a lay-up. The only way to prevent the score is to foul your opponent. What do you do?
- A track star once shoplifted and was caught by the police. The star has stayed out of trouble since, but still gets upset if anybody mentions that one mistake. Your friend is going to race the star, and the star is a better runner. The friend wants you to stand near the finish line and yell "thief" so the star will get upset and lose. What do you do?
- You are sitting in the crowd at a basketball game. The referee makes a bad call against your team. Everybody around you starts complaining and booing. Some people throw paper cups onto the court. What do you do?
- A cousin you do not like is visiting and wants to play tennis with you using your equipment. You have two good rackets and one that is strung too loosely for anybody to play well. Your cousin does not know this. What do you do?
- You and a friend are swimming in the same breaststroke race. Your friend needs to win to qualify for the state meet. You are the better swimmer, but you could let your friend win. You have already qualified for the state meet. However, if you win this race you will set an all-time team record for winning qualifying races. What do you do?

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 7: ETHICS PLAY SCENARIO 6 THORNY SITUATIONS

There are six Ethics Play scenarios. Scenarios stand alone from the themes of any particular session, so you may use them with any session. The roll of the dice determines which scenario you use and which question you ask. Mark questions as you use them, to avoid repetition in future sessions. See Description of Activity for further directions.

- Your grandfather has lung cancer, but he still smokes. Your adult cousin wants him to stop smoking, so she hides his cigarettes. Later that evening, your grandfather is looking for his cigarettes. What do you do?
- You love your family and try to do what your parents say. However, your family is vegetarian and you love meat. When you go to a friend's house, you have a choice of hamburger or a veggie burger. What do you do?
- Your birthday is coming up, and you can have any kind of cake you want. You love chocolate, but the friend who is spending the night likes white cake. What do you do?
- You are at summer camp. Your cabin mates want to sneak into the kitchen at night and get some food. You are very hungry. Camp counselors never said the kitchen was off-limits. What do you do?
- Your friend was playing with matches. A grass fire starts, and the friend runs away. Nothing is damaged and no one is hurt before the fire department puts the fire out. What do you do?
- Your aunt gave you an ugly sweater last Christmas. Now she has asked you in an e-mail whether you like the style. If you say no, you may hurt her feelings. If you say yes, you may get another horror next Christmas. What do you do?

FIND OUT MORE

"About Styrofoam Products," tips on using floral foam and other Dow Styrofoam projects at [Styrofoam Crafts](http://craft.dow.com/tips/) (at craft.dow.com/tips/).

Delf, Brian, illustrator. *The Bible: The Really Interesting Bits!* Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999. Very brief and well-illustrated versions of many Bible stories.

Forrest, Heather. *Wisdom Tales from a round the World.* Little Rock: August House Publishers, 1996. Includes

"Amazing Grace: The Story of John Newton (1725-1807)."

Greeley, Andrew M. *God Game.* New York: Warner Books, 1986. An adult novel for leader interest and amusement, about a man who gets to play God via computer.

Parker, Victoria. *The Children's Illustrated Bible.* UK: Lorenz Books, 2002. A large and excellent collection of Bible stories, some in need of abridgement for telling in the time typically available during Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong.

SESSION 2: CURIOUS FAITH

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity.
—Albert Einstein

This second session speaks of faith, curiosity, and more. The session begins by asking youth to identify some of the wrongs they frequently encounter in their sixth-grade lives and then offers the story of Pandora's box as one explanation of how and why humans first encountered sins and other troubles. The session offers faith as one antidote to evil and then introduces the seven heavenly virtues and the seven deadly sins as examples of one religion's beliefs about virtue and sin. Temptation and curiosity are considered in connection with "Pandora's Box."

As always in *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*, a variety of activities keep things lively while also offering opportunity for deep and meaningful thought and introspection.

Some recurring activities, such as *Conundrum Corner* and *Faith in Action*, assume familiarity of both leaders and youth from previous use during Session 1. If you and others have not yet experienced these activities, you might wish to review the introductions in Session 1 before trying them.

Ethics Play is an alternate activity in this session. If it was a big hit in Session 1, you might consider reordering things to work it in for this one.

GOALS

This session will:

- Ask participants to consider how sin and virtue affect their own daily lives
- Offer a story from another faith tradition that explains the origins of sin and other troubles
- Explore religious understandings of what virtues and sins are
- Consider the meaning of faith
- Understand faith as one response to the existence of sin and other troubles.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Reflect upon wrongdoings that are common and significant for sixth graders
- Discover or rediscover the story of Pandora's box
- Explore the value and nature of curiosity
- Meet one list of major sins, the seven deadly sins
- Meet one list of some virtues, the seven holy virtues
- Consider religion and faith as antidotes and responses to trouble, evil, and sin
- Optional: Play roles in a hypothetical scenario in which ethical decisions are demanded.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Sixth-Grade Sins	5
Activity 2: Story and Discussion – Pandora's Box	10
Activity 3: Sins and Virtues Relay Race	20
Activity 4: Backwards Pandora	7
Activity 5: Word-ly Ups and Downs	10
Faith in Action: UUs and Action	15
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Your Own 7s	10
Alternate Activity 2: Ethics Play	15
Alternate Activity 3: Kid Curiosity	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, revisit your own understanding of religion, faith, and spirituality. Explore your own thoughts about how the concepts of virtue and sin relate to and inform religion and faith. How

has your faith informed your understanding of right and wrong?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe

deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- A gift-wrapped box with a top that can be lifted off and a tag that says "DO NOT OPEN"
- Chalice and matches
- Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the gift-wrapped box on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Have your recording of "Amazing Grace" ready to play.
- Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals: a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Play "Amazing Grace" while participants gather. Use any version you like—bagpipe, voice, or another. As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask participants to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it say you will be talking about it later. Discourage attempts to open the box and peek.

Stop the music, or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May the light of this chalice help us to see through eyes that are curious—but not too curious.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

Ask the youth to go around the room and state in a word or two how they are doing. If everybody in the room does not already know everybody else, have them say their names as well.

Say that the title of this session is "Curious Faith."

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: SIXTH-GRADE SINS (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Small slips of paper
- Fine-tipped markers or pencils
- The gift-wrapped box in your Conundrum Corner

Description of Activity

The group will create its own Pandora's box of daily evils.

Begin with words like these:

Sin or wrongdoing affects our lives often. Sometimes people do wrong against us, and sometimes we do wrong against others. The wrongs are not usually huge. Most of us do not kidnap anybody or start wars. However, sometimes I do things I should not do, you do things you should not do; all of us do things we should not do. Sometimes we do things that bother each other or hurt others. Sometimes we do things that hurt ourselves.

Ask the group to write down some of the daily sixth-grade wrongdoings that bug them the most. Suggest that they think of times that something they (or someone else) did was hurtful or harmful or had bad consequences. Maybe somebody lied to you; maybe you got mad at somebody who did not deserve it.

Distribute three or four index cards or slips of paper and a marker or pencil to each participant. Say they should each write one wrongdoing on each piece of paper. Then they should take the paper to the Conundrum Corner, lift the cover of the box, put the paper in, and

replace the cover. Do not share what you wrote with other participants. Later, you will share with the group.

When all have done that, ask what the youth think is going on. "What is that box all about, and why have you just put all these wrongdoings in it?"

Somebody may remember the story of Pandora's box and guess what is happening. If not, accept a few guesses, then explain that they are making their own sixth-grade version of "Pandora's Box," a story they will now hear.

Including All Participants

If your group includes youth with limited mobility, you might deposit their cards or papers in the box for them. Alternatively, you might pass the box around so everybody can make his/her contributions while remaining seated. If youth appear to struggle with spelling, let them know that spelling is not important for this activity or offer to assist with spelling.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY AND DISCUSSION – PANDORA'S BOX (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Pandora's Box](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Re-acquaint yourself with the story of Pandora's box.
- Photocopy Story 1, "Pandora's Box," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss a story that explains how evil came to exist.

If you have time, ask youth to recall what they can of "Pandora's Box." Explain that it is an ancient Greek myth, one of many stories about the gods and goddesses who lived on Mount Olympus.

Before beginning the story, set the stage by explaining that Zeus was the ruler of the gods on Mount Olympus. Another god, Epimetheus, made animals to live on Earth. Then Zeus asked Prometheus, the brother of Epimetheus, to make humans. Things went well for a while, but then Prometheus thought that people were cold, and he stole some fire from Zeus to give them. That made the people happy, but it made Zeus furious. (Do not dwell on Prometheus, whose story will be central to a later session of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong.)

Tell or read the story of Pandora and the box of evils. You could also ask for one or more volunteers to read the story or volunteers could pantomime the action of the story while you tell it. Use the version offered as Story 1, or any other version that you like. Note that some other versions speak of a jar instead of a box. You may wish to adjust them to allow for the presence of a box in Conundrum Corner.

After the story, take the sixth-grade wrongs out of the box and share them with the group. How do they compare to the troubles in the Pandora story? Does the group agree that each of the sixth-grade wrongs is common and important?

Have the group respond to questions like these:

- Do you think this story is really how sinning and other evils got started?
- If not, what is your explanation?
- Did a god create virtue and a devil create sin?
- How does this story of how evil came into the world compare with the story we heard last time about the Garden of Eden?
- What made Pandora open the box? Do you agree that it was a combination of temptation and curiosity? We talked about temptation in Session 1. What about curiosity? Is curiosity a sin? Is it bad or good?
- Does the existence of sin and evil in the world help explain why religion and faith exist? If there were no bad things to think about, would people need hope or faith? Or would everybody just sit around being happy?

ACTIVITY 3: SINS AND VIRTUES RELAY RACE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Seven Deadly Sins and Seven Heavenly Virtues](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [Sins and Virtues Meanings](#) (included in this document) for each team
- Index cards
- A pencil for each team

Preparation for Activity

- Find a good, safe place for a lively relay race, if that is the approach you decide to take.

- Prepare separate sets of the seven deadly sins and the seven heavenly virtues written on individual cards, one set of each for each team.
- Photocopy Handout 1, Sins and Virtues Meanings, one for each team.

Description of Activity

This activity introduces youth to the seven deadly sins and the seven heavenly virtues, and includes a quick examination of ways that religion and faith relate to virtue and sin. Your presentation of the activity can be as lively as a relay race or as quiet as a discussion or even a short lecture from you. The description that follows assumes that you will use the relay approach, but adapt it as you wish.

Introduce the relay with a brief statement such as this:

The version of "Pandora's Box" that we just shared said the box contained not just sins but all sorts of other evils, such as diseases. Other versions of the story describe the contents differently, though they all include hope. As a matter of fact, people have very different ideas about what the worst things in the world are—and the best things. Now we are going to find out about a very famous list of the worst sins in the world. These are called the "Seven Deadly Sins." The list comes from the Roman Catholic Church. They are called "deadly" because they can destroy the sinner's good life unless the sinner is forgiven through confession. During confession, Catholics tell a priest about everything they have done wrong and the priest gives them ways to correct their wrongdoing. Now we will figure out which sins the Catholic Church thinks are deadly.

Divide the group into teams of no more than seven. Give each team a copy of Handout 1, Sins and Virtues Meanings, and a pencil. Say that each team will send one member at a time running (or walking as fast as possible, with one foot on the floor at all times) to get a card with the name of one of the sins from one of your leaders. These team members should then race back to their own teams and read the card aloud to the group. Next, the team must refer to the list of meanings and write the letter of the correct meaning on the card. Then another team member will race up to get the second sin and bring it back to read to the group. This will continue until each team has all seven sins. The first team to match all definitions correctly wins.

As the game progresses, be available for questions about definitions, and help out as needed with useful suggestions or hints.

When all have finished, pronounce the winner (without much fuss). Ask what the seven sins and their definitions are. Offer simple definitions for those you think might not be familiar to your group, and any further explanations you think are appropriate. The sins are: lust (letter E on the list, an uncontrolled desire for something like power, or especially for sexual activity), gluttony (F, too much eating or drinking), greed (B), sloth (A, laziness), wrath (D, anger), envy (C), and pride (G).

Then introduce the seven heavenly virtues with words something like this:

Remember, our program is Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong. So it is not just about sins. The Catholic Church talks about virtues as well as sins. In fact, it has a list of seven heavenly virtues that are opposed to the deadly sins. Let us find out about the virtues.

Repeat the game, this time introducing the virtues. Vary the teams if you like, to help ensure that the winners are different this time.

After the game, pronounce a winner (again, without making much of this victory) and ask what the seven heavenly virtues and their definitions are. They are: chastity (I, moral purity, especially sexual innocence before marriage), abstinence (L, staying away from bad things like too much food or drink), liberality (N, being generous), diligence (J, paying attention), patience (M), kindness (K), and humility (H, being modest about yourself).

Ask the youth what they think about the lists. Tell them that this is just one set of sins and virtues; others exist. It is not necessarily the best or the worst, but it is very well known. Point out that the seven deadly sins and the seven heavenly virtues are based on what the Christian scriptures say. The Bible does not have those exact lists, but it often talks about both sin and virtue. You might also say that it would take a lot of study and thought to really understand what the Catholic Church or any other religion says about sin and virtue. Simply listing sins and virtues is just a beginning. It is easy to disagree with the lists or say that we would have included something else. We should not dismiss other people's ideas without taking the time to really learn about and understand them.

Conclude with something like this:

Unitarian Universalists have their own spirituality, their own religion, and their own faith. We also have our own list of Principles, or ideas about what is good. Yet, we do not have rules of exactly how to behave. We believe everybody has their own ideas about that.

Including All Participants

If your group includes youth with limited mobility, do not conclude automatically that they would not enjoy this activity. It might be fine to include youth who use wheelchairs or crutches. If that will not work, consider a more stationary approach, maybe assigning one leader to each group of seated participants and having the leaders pass out the cards to their group one at a time. The youth would be challenged to explain the meaning on the card to the leader's satisfaction before going to the next one. The first group to finish all the cards would be the winner.

ACTIVITY 4: BACKWARDS PANDORA (7 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity solicits youth's ideas about which evils the world could do without.

Ask the group to conceive the story of Pandora's Box written backwards. How would it go? Maybe Pandora would open the box and it would suddenly suck in all the troubles and evils of the world. Maybe hope would slip away.

If the group could select just one of the evils that escaped the box in the story they heard or that the group discussed today to be sucked back into the box, which one would it be? What about the daily sins they identified? Which one of those would they eliminate by sticking it into Pandora's Box and closing the lid?

You can enliven this activity by having each youth choose an evil or sin and act it out so others can guess what it is. Once the sin or evil has been guessed, everybody can make a giant sucking sound while the youth acts out being sucked into the box.

ACTIVITY 5: WORD-LY UPS AND DOWNS (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity combines discussion with some simple movement as it leads participants to think about the meaning and purposes of religion and faith. It ends with an optional summary of faith definitions.

Remind the group, as appropriate, that you talked earlier about the idea of finding faith instead of hope in Pandora's box (in Activity 2). Then ask what else could have replaced hope as something that helps people cope in bad times. What about love? What about peace?

Listen to a few comments, then say that it is time for some yes-or-no decisions. Explain that you will make

several statements. After you present each one, participants are to stand up if they agree, remain seated if they do not. Between statements, everybody should sit down and briefly discuss the idea just presented. If you decide as you go through the questions that some participants are following others instead of making up their own minds, ask the whole group to respond to a question or two with their eyes closed.

The idea is to convey ideas and prompt thought, not secure complete agreement, so encourage discussion as you proceed. Use these statements, or your own variations of them:

- The word "religion" refers to belief in a set of ideas.
- A religion is an organization of people who mostly agree about what they think.
- Most religions talk a lot about virtue and sin.
- Unitarian Universalism is a religion.
- The word "spirituality" refers to your personal beliefs about how you connect to the universe.
- "Faith" can be based upon institutional religion, or a person's own spirituality, or a combination of both.
- Faith can help people answer life's big questions.
- Faith helps many people believe that there is meaning in the universe.
- Faith also helps many people believe that no matter what happens, things will turn out all right in the end.
- In other words, sometimes faith is a lot like hope.

Summarize the session's message and clarify the term "faith" a bit more with ideas like these:

We use the word "faith" in more than one way. Your personal faith is your set of personal beliefs, the ideas that come from your inner spirituality, your religion, and from other sources, like family and friends and school. Faith is what helps you make meaning out of the experiences of life and order out of randomness. We can also talk about the Unitarian Universalist faith, the Jewish faith, and other faiths. So the word "faith" can be used to replace the word "religion." "Faith" can also mean a deeply held belief in something without concrete evidence. So you can say you have "faith in the future." This means you believe that the future will be good,

that things will get better and better as time goes on.

Including All Participants

You can easily vary this activity for participants with limited mobility by asking participants to signal their answers with a raised hand if they agree.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and listen to these closing words and then to repeat them with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

Play more of "Amazing Grace" as closing, benedictory music.

FAITH IN ACTION: UUS AND ACTION (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Any information you have found in response to youth ideas offered during the first session
- Small pieces of scrap paper
- Pencils
- Small pieces of string

Preparation for Activity

- Collect and bring in any information that may be helpful to the group as it moves forward with the ideas it produced in Session 1.

Description of Activity

If your group decided on a Faith in Action project during Session 1, then follow through with it now in any appropriate way. If not, begin this time with a brief discussion of the term "faith in action."

Ask what the youth think the term means. When they are working on a project to make the world a better place, are they practicing Faith in Action? Is this just a Unitarian Universalist thing to do, or do other religions do the same thing?

During the course of discussion, consider offering ideas like these:

Faith has a lot to do with belief. If you believe something, you have faith in something. If your faith says you should be virtuous and work to make the world a better place, then you can describe what you do as Faith in Action. In other words, you are acting out of your belief, or your faith. As the old saying goes, you are putting "your money (and time) where your mouth is."

Point out that many Unitarian Universalist congregations have social action or social justice committees that practice Faith in Action, and many other religions do similar things. They believe that if the world has troubles like disease and sin and evil, they should do something about it. Their faith tells them to do good work and they have faith that their good work will make the world a better place.

Connect the idea of Faith in Action to the daily wrongdoings identified earlier. Ask if one way sixth graders can practice Faith in Action is to try to stop some of those sixth-grade wrongs.

Pass out slips of scrap paper and pencils. Say the youth should each write down one wrongdoing they are sometimes guilty of committing and would like to stop doing. It could be not keeping promises or secrets; it could be not being inclusive of some youth in their conversations or activities. Remind participants that we all sometimes do the wrong thing: children, youth, and adults. However, we can always try to do better. (It might be helpful for leaders to participate in this activity to demonstrate that having shortcomings is universal.)

Participants do not need to show their papers to anybody, but they should stick it in a pocket or somewhere else where they can find it later.

Give each youth a small piece of string and say they might tie it onto a finger to remind themselves of what they are trying not to do. If they do not want other people asking about the string, they can tie it to a toe or somewhere it is less likely to be seen. Say you will ask at the next session how they have made out, but still you will not ask them to identify the behavior if they do not wish to do so.

Including All Participants

Be sure to make all activities planned by your group as inclusive as possible. All youth should be able to participate.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on the session. How was your mix of discussion and action? In the midst of all the business, did you successfully include spiritual elements? How much philosophy and depth are your participants able to handle or interested in discussing? Can you talk about serious matters like religion and faith without boring youth to the point of disruptive behavior? If not, can you find ways to present ideas in very small doses? Are newcomers to the group feeling comfortable? Should you break away from the curriculum at your next meeting for a few moments of getting-to-know-you activities? What will you do differently next time?

Look ahead at Session 3, Being Good, Being Bad. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity.
— Albert Einstein

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We talked about curiosity, and we shared the story "Pandora's Box." We saw faith as one answer to the problems of the world, and we discussed different definitions for "faith." We heard about the seven deadly sins and the seven heavenly virtues, and we made our own list of common sixth-grade sins.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- The situation your group did in Ethics Play (if your group played that game). What do family members and friends say the Star should have done?
- How important is religion to your family? Do you spend a lot of time with the members of your congregation? Do you participate in congregational activities during the week?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Reading a news story about a youth who got in trouble. Ask: How does our family try to avoid problems like that? How would we handle it if somebody in the family made a serious mistake?
- Seeing a movie together. Have each person look for ethical decisions in the film. What was the hardest decision any character had to make? Did the character make a good decision?

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and think about the answer to this question: Do you have your own faith? Think of faith as your own important beliefs, your own ideas about all the big questions, like what is virtuous and what is sinful. Having faith does not mean you have all the answers. It does mean you have some good ideas that help you understand life, how you want to live it, and what is meaningful in it.

Having faith also does not mean you will not change your mind. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe that faith will deepen, grow, and change throughout our lives because of the new experiences, new people, and new ideas we are constantly encountering.

If you are journaling Mystery and Me, write down some of your beliefs and their source or sources (what causes you to believe as you do). If some of your beliefs have changed over time, note that, too.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Find a regular time if you can, when everybody is together. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Or is there something you wish you hadn't done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Curiosity Continuum. Decide who the most curious members of your family are. Gather in the same room. Say that one wall stands for "very curious" and the opposite wall stands for "not very curious." Have everybody at once go stand in a line between the two walls, wherever they think is right for their own level of curiosity. Does everybody agree that the order is right? Is it okay if you disagree? Let family members each talk about how curiosity has sometimes helped and sometimes hurt them.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Talk about where your family beliefs come from. Did your great-grandparents have the same religious beliefs

your family has today? Does everybody in your family have the same important beliefs, the same faith? If not, can you help one another understand things better by sharing your ideas with them?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: YOUR OWN 7S (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Index cards and pencils

Description of Activity

Ask participants to create their own lists of the seven worst (deadly) sins and the seven best (heavenly) virtues. The group can brainstorm its answers while a leader records them on newsprint. If participants offer more than seven possibilities, the group can use discussion to try to reach consensus on the most important. If that fails, the leader can have participants vote for the top seven.

As an option, consider having individuals propose original ideas by writing them on index cards. The recorder can then list the ideas on newsprint for group consideration.

For this activity, the group can focus on typical sixth-grade or daily wrongdoings or on more major sins usually found in the larger world, such as theft or murder or making war. Leaders should decide which, based on the group's response to earlier activities.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role nametags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game ask whether any of the problems suggested by the game were mentioned in the story of Pandora's box. Ask why participants think life sometimes seems complicated and confusing. Is it because gods and devils are trying to push everybody into either virtue or sin? Is life more interesting because it has so many problems to solve? Or is it worse than it needs to be? Do your youth have faith that all the world's problems can someday be solved and that everything will turn out all right?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: KID CURIOSITY (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Lead a group discussion about curiosity. Is curiosity in children a virtue or not? Start things off with questions like these:

- Has anybody here ever gotten in trouble because of curiosity?
- What about birthday presents or Christmas presents—have you ever sneaked a peek ahead of time? Is doing that wrong?
- Would you want to have a friend who was never curious about anything? Do you want your brothers and sisters to be curious?
- Do you know any sayings about curiosity? Why do you think people say that "curiosity killed the cat"?
- Did you ever hear any children's stories about curiosity? Do they seem to say that curiosity is good or not?
- Do people ever get into serious trouble because of curiosity? (For example, people who experiment with drugs risk both legal and health problems.)

Consider sharing these words from Canadian writer Arnold Edinborough: "Curiosity is the very basis of education and if you tell me that curiosity killed the cat, I say only the cat died nobly."

"Pandora's Box" may be the most famous story about curiosity. Youth may also remember reading others, including the "Curious George" stories by H.A. Rey and Margret Rey (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969). Ask if

they have recently seen movies or read other stories that involve curiosity.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 2: STORY: PANDORA'S BOX

If Pandora were alive today, she would probably sneak a peek at every gift under her Christmas tree. However, Pandora lived in very ancient times, according to a Greek myth. She herself was a gift, a special gift that Zeus sent to Earth. Zeus was the head god of all the gods and goddesses who lived on Mount Olympus in ancient Greece. He was angry at the human race because a rebel god, Prometheus, had given people the gift of fire. But that's another story.

In this story, Pandora went to Earth and caused a huge problem because of her curiosity. When Zeus sent Pandora to Earth, he gave her to Epimetheus as a wife. Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus, paid no attention when Prometheus said to be careful of any gift from Zeus.

In fact, Epimetheus thought Pandora was a wonderful gift and a wonderful wife. She was bright and she was beautiful and she was a good musician. She was also curious, of course, but Epimetheus had no reason to worry about that.

Epimetheus also liked a second gift that Zeus presented. So did Pandora. The gift was a beautiful wooden box that anybody who saw it would admire. There was only one hitch. The box was locked, and Zeus warned them never to open it.

For a while, that was not a problem. Life was beautiful in those days. There was no sickness. People never grew

old or died. Everyone was happy, and that included the newlyweds.

Except for one thing—that box. Pandora could not stop wondering what was in it. Every time she looked at it, she wondered more. She asked Epimetheus to open it, but he said no. He wanted to make Pandora happy, but he was not about to cross Zeus.

Then one day Epimetheus left the house. Pandora tried to keep her eyes off the box, but she could not. She was just like a little kid left alone with the Christmas tree today. First, she looked at the box. Then she touched it. Then she lifted it up and shook it. Then, finally, after hours and hours of smelling and feeling and shaking and wondering, she could not stand the temptation any more. She broke the box open.

Instead of the jewels she hoped to find, instead of the pleasures she wanted, evils flew out; evils that still fly around today. One was hate and another was jealousy. Then came anger, hunger, cruelty, poverty, sickness, and death.

Pandora screamed and slammed down the lid. But it was already too late, and the lid did not quite close. She lifted it again to slam it even harder, and one more thing came floating out. This one last thing was good. It was hope.

Maybe Zeus was happy about Pandora's Box, but humans were not. The world now had evil in it. Things would never be the same. Still, not everything was ruined. People had the one thing they needed to keep going despite their new problems. They had hope.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 2: HANDOUT 1: SINS AND VIRTUES MEANINGS

Match the sin or virtue with its definition. Write on the index card the letter below that matches the sin or virtue it describes.

Sins

- A. Laziness
- B. Trying to get everything for yourself
- C. Being jealous
- D. Anger
- E. Uncontrolled desire for something
- F. Too much eating or drinking
- G. Thinking how great you are

Virtues

- H. Being modest about yourself
- I. Being pure and innocent
- J. Paying attention
- K. Being nice
- L. Staying away from bad stuff
- M. Willingness to wait calmly
- N. Being generous

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 2: LEADER RESOURCE 1: SEVEN DEADLY SINS AND SEVEN HEAVENLY VIRTUES

Print each sin and virtue on an index card to make a set. Make a set for each team. Teams may not have more than seven participants. You will need to estimate how many teams you will have. Keep the sets of virtues separate from the sets of sins.

Sins

Lust

Gluttony

Greed

Sloth

Wrath

Envy

Pride

Virtues

Chastity

Abstinence

Liberality

Diligence

Patience

Kindness

Humility

FIND OUT MORE

Andrews, Rev. Dr. Barry M. "Educating for Faith" in *Essex Conversations: Visions for Lifespan Religious Education* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2001). Examines the idea of faith as a product of spirituality and religion.

Amery, Heather. *Greek Myths for Young Children* (Tulsa: EDC Pub., 2000). Despite its title, this beautiful book can be shared with sixth graders. Includes a version of "Pandora's Box."

Colum, Padraic. *Great Myths of the World* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2005). Also includes a version of "Pandora's Box."

SESSION 3: BEING GOOD, BEING BAD

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The third session of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong asks youth to consider the nature of virtuous and sinful lives. It begins with the youth concocting a story of a personal day made awful by the presence of sin. They then try to conceive of pure virtue and pure sin, and make abstract paintings representing both in the form of heaven and hell. They hear a story that distinguishes heaven from hell through the presence of virtuous and sinful acts, then move on to Ethics Play.

This session is the third in a series of four that focuses on faith as it relates to right and wrong, virtue and sin.

When you speak of heaven and hell, be sure that youth know you are not presuming their belief in those concepts. Say that it is useful even for nonbelievers to think about them. They are important to consider because some people believe strongly in them, because they are central to the way that some religions deal with virtue and sin, and because they are interesting representations of pure virtue and sin, pure good and evil.

Faith in Action suggests that youth take on a project to improve congregational space, specifically the program space devoted to religious education. You might ask your director of religious education in advance about project ideas.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the nature of virtue and sin
- Ask youth to conceive of purely virtuous and purely sinful lives
- Expose participants to several ways religions respond to good and evil
- Understand the concepts of heaven and hell as one of several ways faith groups respond to the existence of right and wrong
- Optional: Demonstrate why faith groups are important in promoting social justice
- Optional: Invite participants to create a group covenant.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider how wrongdoings affect their own lives

- Imagine the nature of pure virtue and pure sin
- Use art to explore their own feelings about virtue and sin, heaven and hell
- Continue reflecting upon the relationship between free will and making ethical decisions
- Play roles in a hypothetical scenario where ethical decisions are demanded
- Optional: Reach an agreement upon how they will be together in the program
- Optional: Appreciate the importance of coming together as people of faith to work toward social justice.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	10
Activity 1: An Awful Day – Round-Robin Story	10
Activity 2: Drawing Pure Virtue and Sin	15
Activity 3: Story and Discussion – Heaven and Hell	12
Activity 4: Ethics Play	15
Faith in Action: Group Strength Applied	30
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Free Will by Age	15
Alternate Activity 2: Covenant Making	15
Alternate Activity 3: Acting Out Heaven and Hell	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, think about heaven and hell. When and how did you first hear about them? Did you ever believe in them as real, potential destinations after death? Do you believe in them now? How have your ideas about heaven and hell changed through the years? When did they change? Why did they change?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe

deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy

of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- A cardboard sword
- Chalice and matches
- Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Cut a large sword shape from cardboard. Decorate the hilt. Place it on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Have your recording of "Amazing Grace" ready to play.
- Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

This activity gathers the group for the day's opening rituals: a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Play "Amazing Grace" while participants gather. Use any version you like, bagpipe, voice, or another. As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

Stop the music, or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

Let the light of this chalice shine through all the universe so we may see beyond ourselves.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End

the silence by saying "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

If you did Faith in Action in Session 2, remind the youth of the string promises, and ask whether they were successful keeping those promises. Give youth a chance to talk about their experiences, but do not push them to do so or ask for details.

Say that the title of this session is "Being Good, Being Bad."

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: AN AWFUL DAY ROUND-ROBIN STORY (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Ask your group to create a round-robin story featuring ways that small sins or wrongdoings that people commit mess up sixth-grade lives. If your group is large, you might want to divide it and create two stories, with one leader assisting each group.

Get things started with an explanation like this:

People sometimes sin, or do wrong, in small ways that bother us. The wrongs are not always huge. Nevertheless, we do get bothered; even by the minor failings of other people, as well as our own.

What is a bad day like? We can find out by creating a round-robin story. I will start the story off with two sentences. Then we will go around the room and each of you can add one or two sentences that continue the story. The title of the story is "An Awful Day." It tells about a sixth grader who is having an awful day because of the wrongdoings of other people, and, perhaps, his/her own. There will probably be sixth graders acting badly in the story, and maybe a brother or a sister or a teacher, too. We will have to wait and find out. Remember, we are not talking about huge things. Most sixth graders suffer from minor crimes like spreading rumors, or — but you know better than I do. So here are the first two sentences: I was still half asleep when I climbed on the school bus that awful day. That's because I got up late, and I got up late because my older sister was busy downloading music to her MP3 player and forgot to call me on time."

Indicate the direction the story will travel around the circle, and ask one participant to create the next segment. If anybody objects, saying that they do not know much about sixth grade because they are home-schooled, tell them to use their imagination.

Let the story keep building around the circle until time or ideas run short. Call a halt and conclude the activity with a summary comment, noting that you have just heard about lots of different wrongs.

Ask for quick responses to these questions:

Have you ever had a day that had only good and virtue in it, when nothing bad happened? Could you have a whole year like that?

At the end of the story, ask how the youth would have reacted if they were having a day like the one in the story. Would they have been virtuous and forgiven everybody along the way? Or would they have gotten angry and told everyone off?

ACTIVITY 2: DRAWING PURE VIRTUE AND SIN (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Drawing paper, two sheets for each youth
- Oil pastels
- Cleanup supplies
- Music player and recordings of background music
- Optional: Tacks, painter's tape, or other supplies needed to display completed paintings

Preparation for Activity

- Gather supplies and place them where youth can reach them quickly and easily.
- Decide whether and how to display the completed drawings.

Description of Activity

In this activity, youth imagine heaven and hell to inspire them in making abstract drawings that reflect pure virtue and pure sin.

Set the philosophical stage for the drawings with a brief introductory discussion. Begin with a few questions. Could you really experience a day in which everybody you met sinned all the time and never did anything virtuous? Can you imagine what pure virtue looks like? What about pure sin? If you lived in a world where everybody was virtuous, or good, all the time, would that be like living in heaven? If you lived in a world where

everybody was sinful, or evil, all the time, would that be like living in hell?

Make these points as time allows during or after the group's discussion:

- People in some religions, especially Christianity, talk a lot about heaven and hell. They say that heaven is where good people go after they die, and hell is where bad people go. In other words, hell is the consequence of living a sinful life, as heaven is the consequence for living a virtuous life. Defining consequences is just one way religions respond to the fact that there is both virtue and sin in the world. Not all religions believe in heaven and hell. Most UUs do not believe in a literal heaven and hell as places where you go after you die. Yet, all religions, even Unitarian Universalism, believe there are consequences brought about by how we live our lives. We will talk more about this in a later session.
- A second way religions respond to virtue and sin is to say how people should act to avoid sin and be virtuous. That is what the seven deadly sins and the seven heavenly virtues attempt to do.
- A third way religions respond to virtue and sin is to help individuals survive and be happy in a world where bad things happen.
- A fourth way religions respond to virtue and sin is by working to improve things in a world where bad things happen.

Say that most Unitarian Universalists have their own feelings about virtue and sin, and about heaven and hell. Sometimes you can state your feelings in words, but other times it is easier to show them with art. Ask the youth now to make abstract drawings that show their feelings about what pure virtue (or heaven) is like or what pure sin (or hell) is like. Explain "abstract drawings," if necessary, as drawings with no specific, identifiable forms or as the opposite of representational art in which you draw objects as they really appear. Youth can draw a series of swirls, if they want, or lines that seem to connect in any way. (If you wish to devote more time to this activity, ask participants to draw both virtue and sin.)

Play some gentle background music to help participants focus while working. Show the youth where to get paper and oil pastels and where they should draw. Start the background music, and let the drawing begin. As time grows short, give a five-minute warning. When time runs out, ask the youth to put their supplies away and clean up their workstations.

Give the youth time to share their drawings. If displaying the drawings for some time is appropriate for your space, say you will put them up later. If that is not appropriate, let the youth take them at the end of the session.

When the group has settled, ask if the youth find that drawing abstractly is a good way to express their feelings. Ask also for any additional comments about pure virtue and pure sin, heaven and hell.

Including All Participants

If you have participants with limited mobility, be sure that workspaces and supplies are accessible to them. Help them as necessary to begin their drawings.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY AND DISCUSSION – HEAVEN AND HELL (12 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Cardboard sword in Conundrum Corner (see Opening)
- Story 1, "[Heaven and Hell](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read through the story "Heaven and Hell"
- Photocopy Story 1, "Heaven and Hell," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Youth react to a story with a Buddhist approach to heaven and hell.

Use the cardboard sword from the Conundrum Corner to introduce the story. Ask the group what it might have to do with heaven and/or hell. Hear some guesses. If somebody in the group has heard the story and knows the part that the sword plays in it, accept the answer, saying, "I think you might be right," and go on to the story.

Read or tell the version from Story 1, "Heaven and Hell." Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it or use three volunteers (samurai, monk, and narrator) to act it out.

When you have finished, ask for reactions. Use the following prompts:

- According to the story, what are some descriptions of what heaven would feel like? Hell?

- Is there a connection between free will and the samurai's reactions?
- Ask youth if they think this Zen Buddhist story is a teaching story and, if so, what is it teaching?
- How might these teachings be useful to us in our day-to-day lives?

If you will not be doing Alternate Activity 3, Acting Out Heaven and Hell, and you have additional time, ask youth how the depiction of heaven and hell differ from ideas of heaven and hell they might have now or had as a child or have seen in other contexts. Remind participants that Unitarian Universalists have varying notions of heaven and hell. Since none of us can know for sure, there is no wrong or right answer concerning one's belief in the afterlife.

ACTIVITY 4: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role nametags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

Ask at the end of the game whether the suggestions and decisions that participants made were good or bad. If gods and goddesses, parents, or Santa Claus were judging the youth, how would they come out? If religious judges had to point the participants toward heaven or hell, what would they say? You might mention that some religions distinguish major and minor sins. Those religions that teach that heaven and hell do exist often say that your fate depends on all you have done in life, not just a few actions. Remind participants that "good" and "bad" can be relative terms; what's right for one situation might be wrong for another.

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home, one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and listen to these closing words, and then to repeat them with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: GROUP STRENGTH APPLIED (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Any material your group needs for continuing Faith in Action projects
- Twenty-five small sticks, wooden craft sticks, or pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Collect and bring in any information that may be helpful to the group as it moves forward with the ideas it produced in earlier sessions.
- Experiment with the sticks or other objects to be sure the demonstration described below will work.
- Ask your director of religious education about projects your group might do to improve your congregation's religious education spaces. Suggestions include organizing the craft closet, cleaning the playground, and organizing books in the congregational library.

Description of Activity

If your group decided during Session 1 on a long-term Faith in Action project, then carry through with it now in any appropriate way. If not, use this time to help participants see how much the combined energies of a group can contribute to Faith in Action efforts.

Ask participants why faith groups are important in efforts to make the world a better place. After all, groups are just collections of individuals. Can't individuals act independently and get the same results?

After a brief discussion, ask the youth to imagine that they are trying to organize a Faith in Action project that will work for social justice. How could a few voices convince others that it is important to act together as a group?

Accept a few ideas and then say that you will now demonstrate a couple of possibilities.

For the first demonstration, hold up a bunch of pencil-sized sticks if you have them. Ask for a volunteer to try to break one single stick. When the youth does so, say something like this: "That was easy, wasn't it? A single stick is not very strong. However, there is strength in numbers. Let's put a whole bunch of sticks together." (Hold up the sticks.) "Now who can break them without separating them?" (Let youth try.)

Ask if the youth agree that this is a good way to show that people in groups have more strength than they do as individuals.

Introduce the second demonstration, saying it is called a "community chorus." It shows that many voices speaking out are much stronger than a single voice.

Write these words on newsprint: Save the world from sin and sorrow.

Ask for a youth to say the words in a powerful way, but without shouting. Then ask the same youth to say the words over and over again, being forceful each time, while one more youth joins in with each repetition. Point to an additional youth who is to add his/her voice, and continue to point to others, one at a time, until the whole group is chanting very strongly. If you wish, begin conducting the group, first diminishing the sound to an intense whisper, and then building it back up to a loud and fervent demand.

How does the group feel about this approach? Suggest that the youth might try either approach the next time they wish to convince other people to join a group effort.

Connect the activity to the round-robin story of Activity 1. Was the story better because many people contributed to it? Point out that stories written by individuals have

some strengths and stories written by groups have other strengths. You can say the same about Faith in Action projects.

Working together as people of faith has additional advantages. One is that your values will be similar to those of the other people you will be working with. It's likely that everyone will feel the work is important because of those shared values. Another benefit is that working together creates shared memories that strengthen our faith community. Putting our "Faith in Action" affirms our feelings of belonging to our UU faith.

Now suggest that the youth use their own group strength by finding and doing a congregational project they would enjoy doing as a group. Pass on any suggestions you have received from the director of religious education and let the group decide which to accomplish. The project does not need to be huge; it could be on the level of organizing supplies or cleaning the nursery. Help the group find a time to do the project; it could be after the regular program some Sunday or perhaps during an overnight retreat in the church.

Including All Participants

Be sure to make all activities planned by your group as inclusive as possible. All youth should be able to participate.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you talked about religious concepts such as heaven and hell without giving youth the impression that you are telling them what to believe? If not, how can you correct that? What will you do differently next time?

TAKING IT HOME

To different minds, the same world is a hell, and a heaven.

— *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We made up a group story about an awful day. We talked about whether we could have a day with just good acts and no wrongdoing—or the reverse. We tried to imagine what pure virtue and pure sin look like, and we expressed our feelings about heaven and hell through drawing. We heard a story about heaven and hell. We did Ethics Play, and we saw how much strength people have when they join together in groups.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- The situation your group did in Ethics Play. What do family members and friends say the Star should have done?
- How you feel about the idea of heaven and hell. Ask: Do you think they exist? Do we agree or disagree with one another? Is it okay to disagree? Have our ideas changed about these things as we have grown older? Is it okay for our ideas to change?
- Free will in your family. Does everybody have a chance to use free will? Is everybody comfortable with the amount of free will they get to use? Does free will need to be balanced with other concerns, and what are some of those concerns?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Asking what people mean when they talk about "hell on earth" or "heaven on earth." What are your family's ideas about either one? What was a time when your family seemed to be going through either one?
- Asking how strong a group your family is. How can you make it stronger? Talk about that.

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and let your mind drift away into the mysteries of the universe. What does this mean? Just relax and let go of your thoughts. When your mind floats back to your own life, think about tomorrow. Will you have a perfectly virtuous day, a day with no wrongdoings at all? What will that look like? Write some of your ideas in your journal and come back to them in a few days after you see how the day actually turned out.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Create a family round-robin story. It could be about anything. Let one person start and see what happens. When you finish, ask whether the story talks more about good or evil. Try a round-robin story sometime when your family is planning a special day or riding somewhere in a car. Build a story that shows what the day or the rest of the trip will be like. When you are

done, decide whether everybody has the same ideas. If not, how can you make a time that everybody enjoys?

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Discover what groups you all belong to. Why are you in them? Do any of the groups work to make our world a better place? Which is the most important group for everybody in the family?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: FREE WILL BY AGE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two signs on newsprint, one saying NONE OR NEARLY NONE and the other saying AS MUCH AS THEY WANT
- Optional: Painter's tape or tacks to attach the signs

Preparation for Activity

- Hang or place one sign on one wall and the other sign on the opposite wall. Choose walls the youth can move between easily.

Description of Activity

Invite your group to explore how much free will people have at different ages.

Point out the two signs saying NONE OR NEARLY NONE and AS MUCH AS THEY WANT. They should be placed on facing walls with space between for youth to move.

Say that you will call out different human ages. Whenever you say an age, you want youth to stand at or anywhere between the two signs to show how much free will people at that age are allowed to use. Call out the ages individually, allowing time in between for discussion. As you get to different stages, ask some of these questions:

Infancy

Do infants have any free will? Can they use it? Can infants do anything they want? If so, does that mean they have free will? Who can stop them? Does anybody want to move after thinking about that? Or could it be that infants have no free will because most of their actions are controlled by basic drives for food, shelter, and comfort and are not always deliberate? Does anybody want to move after thinking about that?

Five years old

How much more could you do when you were five than when you were a tiny baby? Does that

mean you had more free will? Could you use your free will more as a five-year-old?

Ten years old

How much more could you do when you were ten than when you were five? Could you have all the free will you wanted and do anything you wanted? Should parents and teachers let ten-year-olds do anything they want?

Your own age

What about now? Do you have free will? Can you use it? Can you do anything you want? Should you be able to? What will you say to somebody your age when you are a parent or teacher?

Sixteen years old

What's your guess about sixteen-year-olds? Do they have a lot more freedom than you do? What about those who drive—does that change things? Can they use their free will whenever and however they want? Should they be able to? Or should they do what their parents say? Or what their church says? Or what the law says? Or what their teachers say?

Twenty years old

Now think about twenty-year-olds. Do they have free will? Can they use it any way they want? What happens to a twenty-year-old who tries to buy a beer? If the twenty-year-old goes to jail, does that mean she or he did not really have free will? Or does it mean the person made a bad decision about how to use free will?

Adulthood

Finally, we get to adults. How much free will do they have? How much can they use? How much are adults controlled? What about parents? Can parents do anything they want? Or do they have to spend their time taking care of kids and working at places where their bosses tell them what to do? What do you think? Do you want to move after talking about this?

Ask youth to return to their seats, and conduct a brief discussion. Ask how free will fits in with virtue and sin. Does free will allow people to choose between right and wrong? Do most people use their free will in a good way, as best they can? If there were no free will, would we have any laws? Any jails? Any religions talking about how to behave? Were youth using free will when they decided how to answer the questions? What else helped them decide how to answer?

Including All Participants

If some of your participants have limited mobility, devise a different way for the group to make their judgments known. You might give them paper and pencils and ask them to use a scale of 10, with 0 standing for NONE OR NEARLY NONE and 10 standing for AS MUCH AS THEY WANT. Each participant can hold up a sign. Do not assume, however, that a youth using a wheelchair or crutches would not enjoy the movement of this activity as much as any other youth.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: COVENANT MAKING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Description of Activity

Invite participants to create a group covenant to guide them in their work.

Ask the group to work together to construct a group covenant. Inform participants that a covenant is a promise, an agreement as to how the group will be together; that is, how it will conduct itself. Use the following discussion prompts to start covenant making:

- Has anyone in the group ever created a covenant? If so, do they remember any of the agreements in the covenant?
- 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, that is, what they will do, not what they will not do. 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 one another's welfare; each person has the right either to pass or to share when it is his/her turn.
- Be respectful; insults and sarcasm are not allowed.
- Make sure everyone is heard; no interrupting others.

- Be inclusive; help everyone feel like she/he is part of the group. This means not assuming everyone thinks or believes the same as you do. It also means being welcoming to youth you might not know well or who might seem different from you.

Review the covenant. Then ask, "What should happen if someone breaks the covenant?" Have participants use "I" statements to point out when a guideline has been broken; for example, "I feel the remark was insulting," instead of "You made an insulting remark." Resolve the problem and review the solution in light of the covenant. Revise the covenant as needed and make sure the group agrees with the change. Explain that you will post the covenant and that the group can revisit, add to, and revise it so it remains meaningful. Thank participants for creating the covenant as a group and for sharing the responsibility of upholding it.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: ACTING OUT "HEAVEN AND HELL" (20 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how to divide the youth into skit groups.

Description of Activity

Ask participants to act out their ideas of heaven and hell.

Say they should divide into two teams (or three or four if your numbers are large) and talk about how to act out different ideas of heaven or hell. To get ideas, they might try to remember what they thought when they were younger and first heard about heaven and hell. They could act out their own ideas or those of different religions, like Buddhism or Atheism.

Depending on the time you have available, the teams could each act out both heaven and hell or just one; they can choose or you can assign which.

Help them divide into teams and get started, as necessary. Allow time for teams to rehearse in separate spaces, if possible. Give a two-minute warning, then reconvene the group and give each team a chance to present its ideas. Then ask how those ideas compare to the story they heard.

Be sure the youth understand that you are not asking them to believe in heaven and hell. Say it is okay if they do, but that many people today, even some Christians, do not believe in traditional ideas about heaven and hell.

Including All Participants

Working in small teams is not easy for many sixth graders. Observe the teams with an eye toward making

sure everyone has an opportunity to contribute and that everyone's beliefs are honored. Remind participants of the covenant (if you completed Alternate Activity 2) and/or our first Principle: We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 3: STORY: HEAVEN AND HELL

From *Kindness: A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents*. Collected and adapted by Sarah Conover (Cheney and Spokane, WA: Eastern Washington University Press, 2001); used with permission.

Long ago in Japan, a samurai—a warrior of those ancient times—went to visit a monk named Hakuin. The samurai was elaborately dressed in armor, and by his side swung a gleaming, sharp sword. He was a big, proud fellow, used to getting whatever he wanted.

"Hakuin!" The samurai bellowed at the temple door, "I want to have a word with you right now!"

Unruffled, the monk ended his meditation with a slow bow. He rose from his meditation bench and took some time to stretch his legs before turning toward his visitor. The large figure of the impatient samurai blocked the temple entrance.

"Well, monk," grunted the samurai, "If you know so much and are so wise, tell me all you know about heaven and hell!"

Hakuin inspected the fierce-looking samurai closely. Finally he replied, "You disrupted my meditation to ask something every fool knows? What kind of second-rate soldier are you? You look like a tramp in that outfit! Did you steal that sword from a child? It wouldn't slice a cucumber! Leave this temple and never bother me again!"

If you can picture the reddest plum you've ever seen in your life, you can picture the color of the insulted samurai's face. He was furious! No one ever dared to speak to a samurai rudely—they would surely lose their life before they had time to apologize! In a flash the samurai unsheathed his sword and raised it high over Hakuin's head. "You will die for those words little monk!" he roared.

Hakuin looked directly at the warrior. "This is what hell feels like," said the monk calmly. The samurai froze, his sword poised in mid-air. In an instant he understood that his anger did feel like fire—the fires of a terrible place! The samurai slowly lowered his sword to his side and resheathed it. By the time his gaze met the monk's, his anger had vanished as quickly as it had appeared. He felt as if cool water had extinguished the fire: he was grateful and calm.

"And this is what heaven feels like," said Hakuin, looking at the samurai's peaceful face.

FIND OUT MORE

Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006). Says that all religions are equally bad and absurd.

Harris, Sam. *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* (New York: W.W. Norton and

Company, 2005). Warns against the threats of modern religions and calls religious moderation a false hope.

Hitchens, Christopher. *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Warner Books, 2007). True to its title.

SESSION 4: TELLING RIGHT FROM WRONG

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Heaven and hell suppose two distinct species of men, the good and the bad. But the greatest part of mankind float betwixt vice and virtue.
—David Hume

Having examined the nature of virtue and sin in previous sessions, participants in the fourth session confront the fact that the line between good and evil is often thin and unclear. Telling right from wrong is not always easy.

Activities begin with a competitive review of the meanings of virtue and sin. They continue with an exploration of "Amazing Grace," the theme music used by the curriculum, music that tells of a sinner finding grace through belief in God's word. Participants hear about texts that some religions use to teach what is right and wrong. They experience a Buddhist story, "When No One Is Looking," which brings up the idea of conscience. They review some ideas from the faith segment of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong as they express some of their own beliefs. Finally, they look for virtue in two kinds of ice cream and speak together of ethical eating.

This session is the fourth in a series of four that focuses on faith as it relates to right and wrong. It concludes by asking for youth reaction to some belief statements that reflect all four faith sessions.

As in Session 2, Curious Faith, Ethics Play is here as an alternate rather than as a basic activity. If your group has been enjoying the game, you might wish to find a way to move it into the core of the session.

Several activities in this session call for opinions from participants. You might need to remind youth to respect the opinions of others.

GOALS

This session will:

- Review understanding of virtue and sin
- Introduce the concept of grace
- Explore the idea of conscience
- Recap and complete the faith segment of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Develop a vocabulary of synonyms for "virtue" and "sin"
- Learn the story behind the hymn "Amazing Grace"
- Recognize versions of the Golden Rule from different religions
- Continue to examine the role conscience plays in ethical decision-making
- Express and reflect on their own beliefs about faith and right and wrong
- Explore the concept of ethical eating.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Word List Competition	10
Activity 2: Meeting the Theme Song	15
Activity 3: Story and Discussion – When No One Is Looking	10
Activity 4: The Golden Rule	7
Activity 5: Wall-to-Wall Questions	8
Faith in Action: A Taste of Ethics	20
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Ethics Play	15
Alternate Activity 2: Virtue and Sin Poems	15
Alternate Activity 3: Electronic Virtue and Sin	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, reflect on how you personally resolve conflicts regarding right and wrong. Do you consult the religious teachings held in your mind? Do you reason things out with the Golden Rule or another such guide? Do you rely on conscience? How can you help youth find the guidance they need to negotiate the early teen years successfully?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for

yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what

is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- An empty plate
- Chalice and matches
- Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the plate on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Have your recording of "Amazing Grace" ready to play.
- Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

Play "Amazing Grace" while participants gather. Use any version you like, bagpipe, voice, or another. As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

Stop the music, or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us to tell right from wrong.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

Ask the youth to raise a hand if they have ever had to make a decision when it was hard to know what was right and what was wrong. Say that you are not going to ask about the situations, but that you hope this session will help them make decisions in the future. Its title is "Telling Right from Wrong."

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: WORD LIST COMPETITION (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and a washable marker for each small group
- Optional: Card stock or newspapers to use as backing for newsprint

Preparation for Activity

- Identify areas where small groups can work without interrupting or overhearing each other.

Description of Activity

In this activity, teams compete to see who can come up with the most words meaning or relating to "virtue" or "sin." Divide the group into an even number of smaller groups, each with three to six participants. Say that each group is to make a list of as many words as it can think of related to either virtue or sin. Identify half the groups as "virtue" groups and half as "sin" groups. Set whatever guidelines you like about the types of words they should list. If you have limited time, you might say to list only synonyms, or words meaning the same thing, for either virtue or sin. If you have more time, you might say to list both synonyms and examples of virtue and sin. Give each group a sheet of poster paper, a marker, and, if needed, backing for the poster. Send each group to a different spot in the room. When they are settled, they should each select someone to record the group's words and wait for your signal to begin the list. When all are ready, say, "Go." Call a halt when you are running out of time or when the groups are running out of steam. Bring the groups together and share the results. Declare winners in the competition, but do not make a big deal of that. Review the lists with the entire group.

Conclude with words like these:

You are pretty good at identifying words related to virtue and sin. However, sometimes it is easier to talk about what is right and wrong than

it is to decide just what we should do when we are faced with a problem. We know we should not run around lighting forest fires, for instance. Not all decisions are that simple, though. Today we will talk more about telling right from wrong. We will also learn more about our theme song and how it relates to telling right from wrong.

ACTIVITY 2: MEETING THE THEME SONG (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of the hymnbook, [Singing the Living Tradition](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565)
- Music player
- Recording of "Amazing Grace," preferably one that includes the words

Preparation for Activity

- Have your recording of "Amazing Grace" ready to play.

Description of Activity

Introduce your group to the song and hymn "Amazing Grace."

State (if this is the case) that the group heard the curriculum's theme song, "Amazing Grace," playing when they entered the room. Play a verse or two of the song now.

Explain that you might hear this song sung by a soloist or played on bagpipes. Many Unitarian Universalist congregations also sing this hymn.

Ask if anybody knows the story of "Amazing Grace." Perhaps some youth have seen the movie of that title (a PG film released in 2006). Hear what the group has to say and then summarize the story:

John Newton, an Englishman who lived from 1725 to 1807, wrote the words for "Amazing Grace." As a young man, John Newton was a slave trader. He sailed to Africa many times and brought black people to Jamaica, where he sold them as slaves. One day his ship nearly sank in a storm. Newton prayed to be saved, and the ship and its crew survived. He began to pray regularly, and then to treat his human cargo better. One day he realized that what he was doing was evil and he gave it up. He ordered his crew to turn the ship around and take its black prisoners back to Africa. Newton returned to England, where he began to fight for an end to slavery. His words to "Amazing Grace" tell the

story of his great change from a man who traded slaves to a man who fought against slavery.

Distribute copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and ask participants to turn to Hymn 205, which is the first of two versions of "Amazing Grace" included in the book. Ask for a volunteer to read the first verse aloud.

Ask your youth what the words mean. Help them to see how the verse tells of John Newton's great change. Explain that many Christians think of "grace" as a gift that God gives simply out of love; it is not deserved or given as a reward for good behavior. John Newton felt saved from sin by God's grace.

Expand on this brief definition as much as seems helpful with ideas like these:

Grace is one of those words with several meanings. If you say a grace, you are saying words of blessing or thanks before a meal. A person can be graceful, for example, in the way she/he moves. And grace notes in music are quick little notes leading up to bigger notes. Even the religious idea of grace has two different meanings, especially for Christians. Grace can be gifts from God to humans, such as love and mercy; it can also mean being free of sin after repenting and asking for God's forgiveness. Repenting means feeling deep regret for something.

Ask if participants think John Newton was a virtuous man or a sinful man. Discuss their answers and introduce the idea, if others do not, that a person can be both virtuous and sinful. Does the group think that just about everybody is both sometimes good and sometimes bad, or are some individuals totally virtuous or totally sinful? If we are all both good and bad, what does that say about human nature? Does saying that everyone does wrong things sometimes make it okay to be bad?

Say that you will play the song again in future sessions and talk about some of the other verses.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY AND DISCUSSION – WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[When No One Is Looking](#) (included in this document) "
- Sign from Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Read through the story.

- Photocopy Story 1, "When No One Is Looking," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Share a Buddhist story about making an ethical decision.

Prepare for the story with a comment and a couple of questions:

The Bible and the word of God helped John Newton know what to do. Where else can we get help deciding what is right and what is wrong? What are some of the religious rules you know about right and wrong?

Offer ideas like these in the course of your discussion, if participants do not:

Family members, teachers, friends, and the law often help us know what is right and what is wrong. Many religious faiths have rules about what is right and what is wrong. We saw some of those when we talked about the seven deadly sins and the seven heavenly virtues. Another famous set of religious rules is the Ten Commandments, which we will explore more thoroughly in Session 11.

Point out the empty plate in your Conundrum Corner. Tell participants that it has to do with today's story. Read or tell the Buddhist Jataka tale retold in Story 1, "When No One Is Looking." Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

Help the class understand that many faith groups use stories to help people decide how to act virtuously.

This is just such a story. But in the story, the student did not turn to a religious book like the Bible. Instead, she/he seemed to look inside for the answer. Would you agree that sometimes we just know what is right and what is wrong without someone or something telling us? Is that an example of conscience?

Lead a brief discussion of conscience, using these questions as needed:

- What is it? Some people would describe it as "a small voice inside you that knows what you should do."
- Does everybody have a conscience?
- Where does it come from? Do we develop a conscience or are we born with it? If it develops, how does that happen?
- How does conscience relate to temptation? ("Sometimes your conscience tells you not to do

something that temptation wants you to do. That's when the inner battles begin.")

- Does the group agree that your conscience is a good tool for helping to distinguish right from wrong? Can youth offer examples from their own lives?
- Should it be your only tool? (See Session 9, Spirituality and Me, for more about conscience.)

ACTIVITY 4: THE GOLDEN RULE (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Golden Rules](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy Handout 1, Golden Rules, one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Youth become familiar with many versions of the Golden Rule and reflect upon its universality.

Introduce the Golden Rule by noting that religions often disagree about what is right and wrong, virtuous and sinful. Some religions say you should not eat certain foods. Some say you should dress in certain ways. The lists go on and on. However, there are some ideas about behavior that many religions share. One of the most famous is the Golden Rule.

Ask participants what the Golden Rule says, and whether they try to follow it.

Say that ethicists, or people who study ethics, speak of the Golden Rule as "the ethic of reciprocity." Write that term on your newsprint, and explain that "reciprocity" refers to a mutually beneficial interchange between two or more people or groups. Explain further, "Whatever you call it, the Golden Rule or the ethic of reciprocity, it boils down to the same thing: treating other people the way you want them to treat you. Another way to say it is, 'You scratch my back and I will scratch yours.'"

Say that most of the world's religions have some version of the Golden Rule. Therefore, this is a case where many religions agree. Their rules do not all use the same wording, of course, but they mean basically the same thing. Distribute copies of Handout 1, Golden Rules. Read it with the class, asking different participants to read most of them, but possibly reading the most difficult yourself.

Ask if participants think the Golden Rule should apply in every case. After receiving a brief answer or two, pose this challenge: "What if I love peanut butter but you are deathly allergic to it? I want other people to feed me peanut butter, but should I feed it to you?"

After hearing some participants' comments, ask if participants can think of other such situations, where what one person wants would not be right for another person. Then offer this suggestion: "Would it help to add a little something to the rule and say you should 'treat others the way you would want them to treat you in the same situation'?" See what the group has to say. Conclude by suggesting that participants try applying the Golden Rule in the next week.

ACTIVITY 5: WALL-TO-WALL QUESTIONS (8 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity asks youth to move around as a way to show their answers to some belief questions based on the first four sessions of *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Ask the youth to help move aside any chairs or other furniture that might prevent easy motion. Explain that you are going to play wall-to-wall questions. You will ask a series of questions and you want the youth to show their answers by choosing and moving to one of two opposite walls. Say that there are only two choices for each question; standing in the middle is not an option.

Remind the group that there are no right or wrong answers. Show the youth the two walls where they are to go in response to the questions. Then ask the questions from the following list, stating after each question which wall represents which answer. Give youth a chance to talk about each question and their responses before moving on to the next one.

I believe ...

That I get to decide what is virtuous and sinful for me:
yes or no

That my faith can help me decide what is right and wrong: yes or no

That people who are sinners go to hell when they die:
yes or no

That a person can live without ever, ever doing wrong:
yes or no

That there is a Devil who tempts us to do bad things:
yes or no

That the Golden Rule can help me decide what is right and wrong: yes or no

That I have a trusted person I can talk with when I have trouble deciding what is right and what is wrong: yes or no

That I have the resources I need to make good decisions and be a virtuous person: yes or no.

A Caution: In UU groups, youth who express belief in God, the Devil, and heaven and hell are likely to be a minority. Before you ask about such beliefs, remind the group that UUs and UU congregations respect everyone's opinions. You might also ask if the group is comfortable speaking of such beliefs. If not, skip the questions and approach those subjects in ways that will not force youth to reveal ideas they would rather keep to themselves. If you are concerned that your youth will find these questions intrusive, or that they have not yet formed firm opinions on these matters, consider allowing them to place themselves wherever they like between the two walls and thereby take neutral positions.

Including All Participants

If some of your participants have limited mobility, devise a different way for the group to make their choices known. They might use a thumbs up for yes and thumbs down for no. Alternatively, you could provide everyone with two differently colored index cards: blue for yes and yellow for no, for example. However, do not assume that a youth using a wheelchair or crutches would not enjoy the movement of this activity as much as any other youth.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of *Taking It Home*, one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from *Taking It Home* that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any *Taking It Home* activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and to speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: A TASTE OF ETHICS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two packages of ice cream (or other foods) of the same flavor — one organic and the other not
- Serving spoons
- Small bowls and spoons for sampling the ice cream
- Napkins and cleanup supplies
- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Determine whether anybody in your group has a dairy allergy or extreme lactose intolerance (your director of religious education may have a record of allergies made at the time of youth registration); if so, choose a different food. Nut allergies are also common, so do not choose a food made with nuts or nut oils.
- Prepare two samples of ice cream for each participant, being sure you know, but youth do not, which samples are organic and which are not.
- Consider reading for your own background information an article about ethical eating in the spring 2007 issue of *UU World* (see Find Out More).

Description of Activity

Invite your youth to "have a taste of ethics" and then to discuss the ethics of eating.

Distribute to each participant two samples of ice cream in the same flavor. Without explaining in advance, use organic ice cream for one and non-organic ice cream for the other. Mark the dishes in some way that tells you which is which. You might tape numbers to the bottom of each dish, using 1 for organic and 2 for non-organic.

Ask the group to decide which sample tastes more virtuous than the other. If you get puzzled looks, explain that some people say some foods are produced using no chemicals while others are made with extra chemicals that may harm the environment and us. Some people would say that one of these ice creams is ethically better. "Which one is it? Can you taste the difference?" Record youth responses on newsprint, keeping count of how many chose which ice cream.

Explain that one sample is organic and one is not. Identify which is which.

Then ask whether choosing organic foods is an act of virtue because those foods are all natural, without artificial substances. Without trying to answer the question by consensus, enlarge the question to ask about the ethics of eating in general. Are some foods more ethically correct than others? Why or why not? Can we eat in ways that express our "Faith in Action"?

Say that good people disagree about the ethics of eating. Some people feel strongly about organic foods and/or about banning meat from their diets. Other people say that not everyone has the financial resources to buy organic food. Point out that our position in the food chain dictates that we must kill something—whether animal or plant—to eat or we will die. Unitarian Universalist congregations have members and friends with many different beliefs about food.

Ask youth if they can name certain dietary restrictions set by religions. They might name:

- Restrictions on pork (Islam and other religions)
- Eating fish (or no meat) on Friday (Catholicism)
- Vegetarianism (practiced by many Buddhists and Hindus)
- Eating kosher (according to Jewish dietary laws) or halal (according to Islamic dietary laws)
- Restrictions on alcohol (Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, and other religions)
- Fasting (many religions)

What we sometimes do not acknowledge is that many of these laws were established because of concerns about health and safety.

Invite the group to brainstorm some considerations that come into play when making decisions about the food we eat. The list should include:

- Religion and spirituality
- Health
- Personal taste
- Financial
- Ethnicity and culture
- Location (you need to have access to food) and the culture of the region
- Environment
- Nutritional needs (for example, a pregnant woman might need additional calcium)
- Allergies

- The needs and desires of the entire family or group that is eating

Tell your youth that you are not telling them how to eat, nor are you asking them to change their eating habits. (These points are important. Parents may not be pleased to have youth coming home and demanding immediate changes in the family diet.) However, you do hope they will think about the choices they make. As the brainstorm list demonstrates, there are many factors to take into account when making dietary decisions.

As Unitarian Universalists, we believe everyone has to make these decisions for themselves. Our religion does not have dietary restrictions. Your congregation, though, might have a "food culture" with implicit guidelines around what is acceptable and what is not. If so, include a conversation about what dishes you generally find at potlucks or what snacks you get in the religious education program. Do your congregation's eating habits reflect any Faith in Action?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Were participants respectful of each other's views when they talked about the ethics of eating? Review responses to the belief questions in Activity 5, Wall-to-Wall Questions. Did they indicate that participants have absorbed some of what the group talked about in its first four sessions? Note that Sessions 8, 12, and 16 conclude with similar activities, providing a quick way to review and summarize each of the four FUSE segments (see Introduction).

Look ahead at Session 5, Introducing Unitarian Universalism. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies. Note that Faith in Action for Session 6, The First U suggests inviting a visitor to talk about your congregation's overall approach to social action. Start planning for that now.

TAKING IT HOME

Heaven and hell suppose two distinct species of men, the good and the bad. But the greatest part of mankind float betwixt vice and virtue.

— David Hume

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We had a competition to see which groups could come up with the most virtue and sin words. We heard the story of "Amazing Grace," and then another story about a student who refused to steal. That led to a talk about conscience. We thought about the

Golden Rule, an idea that many religions share. We played Wall-to-Wall Questions.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- The situation your group did in Ethics Play (if your group played that game). What do family members and friends say the Star should have done?
- Food and your family. Ask, Do we connect food to the idea of virtue and sin? Do we think some foods are better to eat than others? Why? Are we vegetarian? Vegan? What considerations factor into our family's dietary decisions? What do we think about other people with different ideas?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Applying the Golden Rule the next time you disagree. Take time to stop defending your position and to think instead of how the other person feels. Can you see the disagreement from their point of view? Talk about the results. Can the Golden Rule help solve arguments?
- Analyzing the way you make decisions about right and wrong. Ask, Do I try to decide what really is right and what really is wrong? Or do I decide what I want to do first and then try to convince myself that this must be the right thing?

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and think about a person you do not understand. It might be a member of your family or a classmate from school. How could a person be like that, or think like that? Is that a mystery? Why are you you, and why are other people who they are? Is that a mystery, too? If you are journaling, write a paragraph or two saying who you really are deep inside. See if you can discover something new about yourself as you write.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Or is there something you wish you hadn't done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Try actually wearing one another's shoes. How does this feel? Does it really help you think about what it might mean to be living the other person's life? To be that

person? Whose shoes are you most comfortable wearing?

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Discover something that you disagree about. Do some family members think it is good and others think it is bad? Is that because of what the thing is? Or is it because of who the people are? Can you find some way to agree about it? Do families always have to agree about everything? Can they?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role nametags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game, ask how participants decided what was right and wrong. Did they think about the Golden Rule? If so, did it help?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: VIRTUE AND SIN POEMS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper and pencils for all participants

Description of Activity

Youth express beliefs about right and wrong artistically.

Ask participants to write four-line poems about right and wrong. Say the poems can rhyme or not. They also can be serious or silly. That is all up to the poet.

If you hear groans or have participants you know will struggle, offer an alternate choice: making cartoon drawings of a bad kid and a good kid.

Distribute pencils and papers and let the youth begin. Play quiet background music as they work if you like. Be sure it has no distracting words.

If participants have trouble starting poems, offer these starter lines:

- I met a devil in the street
- Sometimes free will isn't free
- How can good food be so bad?
- Pandora's brother had a box
- Heavenly virtue number eight

Ask participants to share their poems or drawings. Ask the group whether the creations tell them anything new about virtue and sin. If you have drawings, ask what makes a good kid or a bad kid. Can you tell whether people are good or bad by looking at them? Are there any such things as totally good people or totally bad people? (Be alert for stereotyping in the pictures and caution against it if you find it.)

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: ELECTRONIC VIRTUE AND SIN (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Ask your youth to talk about what computer and video games teach people about right and wrong. Are the messages good or bad? Is playing such games good for kids? What about kids younger than sixth graders? Does playing violent video games encourage a person to violence? Does it make violence seem more acceptable? Is there a difference between cartoon violence (like a Mario Brothers game) and realistic violence (like Grand Theft Auto)? Ask participants who have played a violent video game: How did it make you feel? Should there be laws to control who gets to play such games or to keep the games from being too violent? How do participants decide which games to play?

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 4: STORY: WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING

Buddhist Jataka tale retold by Jessica York.

In the town, there was a school for young people. The school was very poor, but the youth were mostly happy because they had teachers who were wise and who cared for them very much.

One day, one of the wise teachers gathered the students. "Our school needs money to buy food. We have exhausted all our resources. I need for you to go out into the town and steal items we can sell for money. Steal only luxury items, though, things people do not really need. Steal only when no one is looking."

The students started talking among themselves. Everyone made plans—everyone except for one student who simply stood there with downcast eyes. The teacher approached this student. "What is wrong with you? Everyone else is glad to help out! Are you lazy or afraid? Do you not love your school?"

"I am not lazy or afraid. I love my school as much as anyone here does. Yet, I cannot do what you ask of me."

"Why is that?" the teacher asked angrily.

"It is impossible for me to steal when no one is looking. I will be there. I will be looking. I will see myself steal," the sad student replied.

The teacher hugged the student. "You are the only one who has learned what I have been truly teaching."

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 4: HANDOUT 1: GOLDEN RULES

Christian: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Hindu: Do naught to others which would cause you pain if done to you.

Buddhist: Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.

Jewish: What thou thyself hatest, do to no man.

Confucian: What you do not wish upon yourself, extend not to others.

Bahá'í: And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbor that which thou choosest for thyself.

FIND OUT MORE

Forrest, Heather. *Wisdom Tales from around the World* (Little Rock: August House Publishers, 1996). Includes a version of the Jataka tale used in this session, called "Wise Master," and another story, "Amazing Grace: The Story of John Newton." This book is a wonderful resource with many stories you can use in the context of Amazing Grace.

Hassinger, Amy. "Eating Ethically." [UU World](http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/11130.shtml) (at www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/11130.shtml), Spring 2007 (Boston: UUA Publications). Good background information.

Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, "[Shared Belief in the 'Golden Rule.'](http://www.religioustolerance.org/reciproc.htm)" (at www.religioustolerance.org/reciproc.htm)" Offers versions of the Golden Rule from various religious and secular sources

SESSION 5: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*My Church Believes in Civil Rights for All
— Bumper stick produced by the Allen Avenue
Unitarian Universalist Church in Portland, Maine,
during a state referendum about the rights of
sexual minorities*

This session is the first of four that focuses specifically on what Unitarian Universalism has to say about virtue and sin. It opens with a play, which shows that Unitarian Universalism honors many diverse ideas but places great value on its stated Principles and its reliance on many Sources. Participants will formulate their own succinct statements about Unitarian Universalist beliefs about virtue and sin. They will hear an African story that explains why wisdom is widespread, and they create bumper stickers about their religion.

GOALS

This session will:

- Use a story to express the Unitarian Universalist belief that no one religion has a monopoly on religious truth
- Recognize Unitarian Universalist activism in the participant's congregation
- Confirm that Unitarian Universalism confronts issues of good and evil
- Demonstrate various ways that Unitarian Universalists profess their faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Increase their understanding of Unitarian Universalism
- Understand UU Principles as a statement about right and wrong, virtue and sin
- Identify visual indicators of the values shared in their faith home
- Appreciate the Unitarian Universalist idea that we can find wisdom about right and wrong in many sources

- Optional: Be able to summarize their Unitarian Universalist faith.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: The UUs and the Bullies – A Play	15
Activity 2: The Congregation's Parking Lot	17
Activity 3: Story and Discussion – Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom	10
Activity 4: Elevator Speeches	15
Faith in Action: Making UU Bumper Stickers	20
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Ethics Play	15
Alternate Activity 2: Matching Holidays and Sources	15
Alternate Activity 3: Preparing for a Guest Speaker	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, create your own "elevator speech," a few brief sentences expressing your understanding of Unitarian Universalism. Afterwards, think about what this experience was like for you. What would composing an "elevator speech" about your faith have been like for you in sixth grade?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- Leader Resource 1, [UU Cars](#) (included in this document)
- Sign on newsprint asking, "Which of these are UU cars?"
- Chalice and matches
- Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy Leader Resource 1, UU Cars, in color, if possible. Place the photograph and newsprint sign on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.
- Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break from it if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the practice by playing different versions. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If you are playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us to see who we truly are.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

Ask the youth how often they talk with their non-UU friends about their UU religion. Say that some people believe religion and politics are subjects that people should not talk about because discussions about them often result in strong disagreement. Others believe that reasonable people should be able to talk about the things that matter most to them, even if they have different ideas. Announce that this session of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong gives some ideas about what UUs might want to say about their religion to other people.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: THE UUS AND THE BULLIES - A PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, "[The UUs and the Bullies](#) (included in this document) " script
- Name tags on card stock, with string attached to hang around actors' necks or hanging nametags
- Poster listing the [UU Principles and Sources](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=690)

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how to divide up and assign actor parts.
- Create nametags.
- Make a copy of the script for each actor and each leader.
- Determine what part of your meeting space will make the best stage.

Description of Activity

Participants perform the play "The UUs and the Bullies" (Leader Resource 2). The play speaks of UU Principles and Sources, and introduces the idea of elevator

speeches, which will be developed in other activities in this session.

Call for volunteers to act out the play. The play calls for nine actors. If you have fewer participants than that, let individuals play more than one part. If you have more than nine actors, stop the play from time to time and reassign some parts to new people. The nametags are important to help actors as well as any audience keep track of who is who. The tags should be large enough for you to see them at a distance. Actors who are playing more than one part should hold up the appropriate nametag whenever they are reading.

Act out the play. Afterwards, ask participants what they think about the play, using questions such as:

- Does "The UUs and the Bullies" have something to say about UU ideas of virtue and sin, right and wrong?
- What do you think of the way the UU youth reacted?
- Was it rude for the fourth UU youth to say, "You guys need a spell-check"?
- The UU youth said UUs respect everybody. Does that mean we respect people who intimidate and hurt others? Does respecting someone mean you agree with her/his actions?
- What are other ways UUs might react to bullies?
- Have you ever received a negative reaction when talking about Unitarian Universalism? Have you ever avoided talking about your religion or your congregation because you thought you might get a negative reaction?
- Have you ever avoided talking about your religion because it seemed too hard to explain?
- What do we mean when we talk about "elevator speeches"?

Point out the poster showing the UU Principles and Sources. Ask if your youth are familiar with the Principles and Sources. Most sixth graders who have been in a UU congregation for any length of time will know something about the Principles. If your group includes newcomers or others who answer in the negative, consider making time in your schedule to go through them. Point out that the Principles are really a covenant among the congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association. However, many UUs feel that the Principles are good guidelines for how individuals should think and act. Some UUs talk about the Principles in their elevator speech as something that holds members of our faith together.

Including All Participants

Quietly coach any participants with limited reading ability if they stumble over words.

ACTIVITY 2: THE CONGREGATION'S PARKING LOT (17 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Photograph and sign from the Conundrum Corner, Leader Resource 1, [UU Cars](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Photographs of bumper-sticker bearing cars in your own congregation's parking lot
- Optional: Paper and pencils/pens

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether your group can safely visit your congregation's parking lot. If not, take photographs of the cars in the lot to share.

Description of Activity

Participants compare elevator speeches to bumper stickers. They look at bumper stickers on cars in their congregational parking lot for signs of UU values.

Point out the photograph and sign in your Conundrum Corner. Ask youth to answer the question: How many of the cars in the picture are UU cars? After you get a few guesses, explain that they were all in a UU parking lot during a UU Sunday morning worship service.

Point out that UU cars frequently, though certainly not always, display bumper stickers. If you travel from one UU parking lot to another, you might find many of the same bumper stickers. They often express liberal religious or political ideas. (Among other things, liberal religious ideas say that people should be free to think for themselves. Liberal political ideas say that the government has a responsibility to use our tax dollars to help the disadvantaged and to make the world a better place to live.) UU bumper stickers often call for saving the environment, for helping people resist discrimination, or for freedom of religion.

Ask how bumper stickers are like elevator speeches. (If you need to, remind youth of the definition of elevator speeches from the play.) Explain, if others do not, that both of them are brief messages saying and/or showing what people believe and do.

Next, invite youth to take a field trip to your congregation's parking lot. Make sure you have enough adults on hand to help keep youth focused and safe. Wander through the lot looking together for interesting

messages. Are there any common ideas expressed in different ways? Do the bumper stickers talk directly about Unitarian Universalism, or are they about issues, politics, and events? Suggest youth watch for personalized license plates, too. Do any of these reflect Unitarian Universalist values and Principles? Consider equipping your group with paper and pencils so they can write down their favorite messages.

If you cannot visit the parking lot for some reason, show photographs of the cars that participants might find on a typical Sunday morning and proceed as suggested above. As an alternative, find a list of possible bumper stickers at one of the websites listed under Find Out More, or, if your possible, view bumper stickers online.

When you return to the meeting room, share your observations. Ask:

- Was any bumper sticker on more than one car?
- Did any surprise you?
- Did any make you laugh or smile?
- Did any make you angry? Did you see any that might make some people angry?
- Are there some bumper stickers you thought you would find, but did not?
- Why do some cars have bumper stickers and others not?
- If your family's car was not in the lot and it has bumper stickers, what do they say? Do you know who put them on the car and why?

If you have additional time, invite participants to make their own UU bumper stickers. You can find instructions online at several websites, including this [one on eHow](http://www.ehow.com/how_4841735_make-bumper-stickers.html) (at www.ehow.com/how_4841735_make-bumper-stickers.html).

Including All Participants

Arrange if at all possible to have all youth join you in the parking lot regardless of mobility issues. If that is not possible, consider using the photographic approach described above. Do not assume, however, that a youth using a wheelchair or crutches would not enjoy the movement of this activity as much as any other youth.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY AND DISCUSSION – ANANSI AND THE POT OF WISDOM (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read through the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Say that you are going to share a story from the Ashanti people, who live in Ghana, a country in western Africa. The story shows that UUs are not the only people who believe they can find wisdom in different sources.

Read or tell Story 1, "Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom." Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

Ask for youth reactions to the story. Use the following questions for further discussion:

- Do you think the story is true? If it is not true, does it say something truthful? How would participants say the same thing?
- What does the story say to people who are trying to find answers to questions about right and wrong or to other big questions?
- Why do UUs like to tell stories from around the world? Do you think this is a good story for Unitarian Universalists who believe that they should look for their answers in many Sources?

Offer language like this if it feels appropriate for your group:

You might say that everybody in the world has big questions. Moreover, everybody in the world has some wisdom, some part of the answer to those questions. When we get together to talk and share our ideas, we are all exploring the great mystery together. We are learning from each other, and through that learning we can help to make the world a better place. That is one reason why we gather with others in our UU faith home.

ACTIVITY 4: ELEVATOR SPEECHES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: A stopwatch

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Decide if you want to time the activity. If your meeting space does not have a clock with a second hand, obtain a stopwatch for this activity. Be prepared to show a youth how to operate it.

Description of Activity

Participants practice talking about Unitarian Universalism.

Say to the group:

Although the story we just heard is not a story created by UUs, it affirms something we, too, believe: that wisdom and truth are found in many different places, from different sources, and that no one religion owns all the truth or the answers to life's big questions. Did the youth in the play talk about this UU belief? If you were explaining your faith or what UUs believe to another sixth grader, is this something you would talk about? What if you had a short period of time to do so? What other UU values and beliefs would you share?

Tell the group that some Unitarian Universalists practice an "elevator speech": a short explanation of their faith that they could give between floors while talking to a stranger on an elevator. Some young people call this a "playground speech."

Invite youth to play a playground speech game. They will take turns pretending to be on the playground with another sixth grader, who will ask, "What do Unitarian Universalists believe?" There is one rule to the game: the speechmakers must say, "Unitarian Universalism" or "Unitarian Universalists," not "UU."

Optional: if you think the group could use help, brainstorm on newsprint some beliefs and/or values held by the group. These should include beliefs about virtue and sin, as discussed this far, but could include other beliefs. Use questions to solicit input, such as, "What do beliefs and values do you share with each other about how we should live our lives? What about beliefs about how we should treat each other? As a Unitarian Universalist, what is important to you? What activities do we participate in here at church and in the community?" After participants have suggested a good amount of material, give youth a couple of minutes to review the list

and pick out what they might use in their playground speech. They should talk about what Unitarian Universalism means to them, not feel compelled to compose a definitive description of our religion.

Designate an area to be the playground. Collect two brave volunteers to start the game. Let volunteers decide what they are doing on the playground and who will ask the question and who will answer first. The questioner asks, "What do Unitarian Universalists believe?"; the speechmaker replies. Then, reverse. Get two new volunteers and play again, until everyone who wants a turn has played or you run out time.

Optional: A fun alternative is to time the answer. Ask for volunteers to be the bell and the timekeeper. Give the timekeeper the stopwatch, if needed, and demonstrate how to use it. The questioner and answerer go to the playground and play until the bell says "ding." Then, the question is asked and the answerer has two minutes to answer. The timekeeper should call time after two minutes. Timing the game is intended to make it more fun; if it causes stress to participants, stop the timing.

If the game is hard for youth, lead it as a small group activity, where each small group composes a playground speech. Each speech will need to fit the beliefs of every individual in the group

Save a few minutes to debrief with the following questions:

- What UU values or beliefs showed up in more than one speech?
- What was this exercise like for the speechmakers?
- Did listeners get a good picture of what some UUs believe?
- If you had more time to practice, do you think playing a game like this would help you feel more comfortable talking about Unitarian Universalism? What else would increase your comfort level?

Encourage youth to keep practicing their elevator speeches. Remind them that since our spirituality changes and grows over time, so might our elevator speeches. Unitarian Universalism is a living faith, so we expect it to change and grow, too.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and to speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: MAKING UU BUMPER STICKERS

Materials for Activity

- Waterproof vinyl sticker paper, or sticker paper and acrylic paint
- Washable markers
- Photograph from the Conundrum Corner
- Lamination supplies
- Optional: Music player and background music

Preparation for Activity

- Look for waterproof vinyl sticker paper in craft stores, office supply stores, or on these websites: BumperStickerMaker.com (at www.bumperstickermaker.com/make_bumper_stickers.html) or Mr.InkJet.com (at www.misterinkjet.com/inkjet-printer-labels.htm).
- Prepare your materials and suitable workspaces for quick access and ease of use.
- Optional: Arrange in advance with your director of religious education to display completed bumper stickers in a public area.

Description of Activity

Ask participants to make their own bumper stickers that describe Unitarian Universalism, support actions that UUs think are virtuous, or object to activities that UUs think are wrong.

Make the photograph from the Conundrum Corner available to help inspire ideas. Youth may use their original ideas, those in the photograph, or those they have seen in the parking lot.

Play appropriate music quietly in the background if you like.

If the group has trouble getting started, consider brainstorming ideas. You might also offer "starter words" to the full group or to individuals who need them:

- UUs are. . .
- My church believes. . .
- Wisdom. . .
- My Principles say. . .

You might also offer ideas of specific causes:

- Saving the environment
- Ending war
- Stopping discrimination
- Respecting all people

Once bumper stickers are complete, laminate or add vinyl covering, or spray with acrylic paint.

Place the completed bumper stickers where all can see them—in a public area if you have arranged this in advance with your director of religious education. Ask for comments. Does the group think its bumper stickers would really help the world understand Unitarian Universalist ideas about right and wrong? Would their parents want them on their family cars? Is displaying bumper stickers a form of Faith in Action? If possible, leave the bumper stickers on display for others to see at a later time.

Another way that the bumper stickers can put Faith in Action is if participants donate them for auctioning—all either a congregational fund-raiser or a special fund-raiser to raise money for a project of the group's choosing.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? Did your group seem familiar with the Principles and Sources, or should you review them? If so, when will you do that?

Look ahead at Session 6. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies. Note that Faith in Action for Session 6 suggests inviting a visitor to talk about your congregation's overall approach to social action. If you

have not already made plans for that, decide now how to proceed.

TAKING IT HOME

*My Church Believes in Civil Rights for All
— Bumper sticker produced by the Allen Avenue
Unitarian Universalist Church in Portland, Maine,
during a state referendum about the rights of
sexual minorities*

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We performed a play about some UU youth meeting some bullies. We talked about elevator speeches that describe our religion. We heard a story from Africa and we made UU bumper stickers.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- The situation your group did in Ethics Play (if you did Ethics Play). What do family members and friends say the Star should have done?
- Elevator speeches. Ask: Do members of your family ever explain Unitarian Universalism to other people? What do you say? Do you have something like an elevator speech that you use every time? What do you think of the idea that people should avoid talking to each other about politics and religion?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Talking about religion with friends or family members who are not Unitarian Universalist. See if you can find ways for everybody to show respect for other people's ideas.
- Thinking about how your religion would view the situation the next time you have a family disagreement. Can the UU Principles help you decide what is right and what is wrong?
- Get or make a UU bumper sticker and place it on your family car. Choose the wording together.

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and think about your religion. Does it help you to think about big things like life and death? Or is your congregation mostly a place where you come to meet friends and have fun? If you are journaling, write down some of your thoughts about your congregation's activities.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish

you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Ride in an elevator and talk about your religion together. How much can you actually say between floors? Are you comfortable talking in front of other people or does it feel weird?

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Discover a new Unitarian Universalist activity. Do something in your own congregation that you have never done before. Go to a UU conference or retreat center or visit another UU congregation. What do you learn that you never knew before? How does knowing this new thing expand or change your faith?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role name tags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#)) (included in this document)
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game ask how participants decided what was right and wrong. Do they ever think of the UU Principles when they play this game or when they make decisions in daily life? If so, are the Principles helpful?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MATCHING HOLIDAYS AND SOURCES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Holidays and UU Sources](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils
- Optional: Markers and paper or card stock for a more active approach

Preparation for Activity

- Review the resource page and decide whether you wish to add any holidays to the list.
- Copy the resource page for all participants or, if you want a more active approach, make a single copy and cut it apart.

Description of Activity

In this activity, youth consider how various UU Sources connect with the holidays they celebrate.

Say that you have talked some about how UUs connect with different Sources. Now you will think about how those various Sources affect our lives outside our congregation.

Distribute copies of the resource page and pencils to youth. Ask them to follow the instructions and put the letters representing the Sources in the spaces next to the holidays.

Active option: If you have time and want a more active approach, make a single copy of the resource page and cut apart the list of holidays. Write the names of the Sources on individual pieces of paper or card stock, in letters large enough so everyone can see them from a distance. Place these names at various spots around the room. Distribute the holidays to youth and ask them to move around the room and place their holidays with the names of appropriate Sources.

When the youth have finished, talk about their ideas. Say that there are no real right and wrong answers, because the more you think about things, the more connections you can find between Sources and holidays. For example, you might think of Christopher Columbus as a prophetic man. But then you might also add Christian teachings to the Columbus Day line, because his Catholic religion was important to Columbus. In fact, he said one reason he wanted to travel was to convert people to Catholicism. Some UUs do not celebrate Columbus Day because they do not

approve of the way explorers exploited native people. Ask the following questions to aid discussion:

- Which of our UU Sources are most honored by our holidays?
- Does your congregation celebrate other religions' holidays? Why do you think this is appropriate or inappropriate?

Tell participants that sometimes there is a thin line between cultural sharing and cultural theft or misappropriation.

One way to respect and maintain that line is to admit that a holiday might not mean the same to us as it does to followers of the other religion. For instance, many UUs celebrate Christmas, even though some UUs do not think Jesus was a divine birth; Christian UUs, however, might disagree.

Another way is to honor the original culture is by acknowledging that its members created the celebration. For example, some would not display a Kwanzaa table without explaining that Kwanzaa is an African American holiday created to remind African Americans of their Afro-Caribbean heritage.

Including All Participants

If your group includes youth with poor reading and academic skills, offer individual help as necessary or consider going through the page as a group and asking people to suggest aloud which letter goes where.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: PREPARING FOR A GUEST SPEAKER (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Description of Activity

Participants prepare questions for a guest speaker.

If you plan to do the Faith in Action from Session 6, The First U, when your group next meets and you will have a visitor talk about your congregation's approach to social action, take a few moments now to plan for the event. Ask youth to suggest questions they might ask the visitor. Let them know who the visitor will be and tell them about the kind of social justice work the guest will talk about. Record their ideas on newsprint for use during the talk.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 5: STORY: ANANSI AND THE POT OF WISDOM

An Ashanti story retold by Jessica York.

Anansi, the spider, loves to spin a tale! He can regale you for hours with stories full of wonder, stories full of fun, and stories full of facts, too. Because he is so nosy, Anansi knows almost everything about almost everybody. Almost.

But Anansi wants to know everything! So, one day, he goes to the house of the Sun God. "Oh, mighty Sun God! You see everything and everyone! Won't you share your great wisdom with me? I'll use it wisely to spin tales of wonder and fun for everyone."

The Sun God says, "Anansi, I will put all the wisdom in the world here in this clay pot. You must share this wisdom with everyone." Anansi promises to do so.

Anansi takes the pot home. He looks deep into the clay pot and sure enough, he sees sights he has never seen before. He hears sounds he did not know existed. "This is too good to give away. I will keep this great wisdom

for myself," thinks Anansi. "I must hide it!" he says, and he looks around for a good hiding place.

Anansi decides to climb to the top of the tallest tree. There he will tie up the clay pot and the leafy branches will hide it. He starts climbing the tree, holding the pot in front of him. The climbing is hard! Have you ever climbed a tree while holding a pot? Anansi wishes he had nine limbs!

His youngest daughter is outside and sees what a hard time Anansi is having. "Father, it would be easier if you tied the pot to your back. Then all your limbs would be free for climbing."

Do you think Anansi is happy to get good advice from his daughter? Think again! "She is right—that would be easier! Why is it some young pup thinks of this when I who possess all the wisdom of the world did not?" Anansi gets so angry that he throws the pot to the ground.

All the wisdom of the world comes flowing out of the pot. Some falls here, some falls there. No one gets all the wisdom, but everyone gets some wisdom. This is why, even today, wisdom is everywhere. If you listen to the stories—stories spun from storytellers all around the world—you will hear it.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 5: LEADER RESOURCE 1: UU CARS

Take a look at some cars with [Unitarian Universalist \(UU\) bumper stickers](http://www.uua.org/images/programs/tapestryfaith/amazinggrace/115845.shtml) (at www.uua.org/images/programs/tapestryfaith/amazinggrace/115845.shtml).



AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 5: LEADER RESOURCE 2: THE UUS AND THE BULLIES

Characters

Narrator

First UU Youth

Second UU Youth

Third UU Youth

Fourth UU Youth

First Bully

Second Bully

Third Bully

Fourth Bully

Props

Name tags for characters, on card stock with string for hanging around the neck

Scene

A city sidewalk outside a tall parking garage

NARRATOR: Some UU youth arrive in the city for a UU conference. They walk out of the parking garage and onto the street.

FIRST UU YOUTH: That's got to be the slowest elevator in the world. Oh-oh. Here's trouble.

NARRATOR: A gang of bullies is blocking the sidewalk.

FIRST BULLY: Hey you!

SECOND UU YOUTH: Yeah?

SECOND BULLY: Who do you think you are?

SECOND UU YOUTH: Ah . . . I'm me.

SECOND BULLY: You got a name?

SECOND UU YOUTH: Hugh.

SECOND BULLY: Hugh? Hugh what? You got a last name?

SECOND UU YOUTH: Hughes.

THIRD BULLY: Hugh Hughes? You gotta be kidding.

SECOND UU YOUTH: That's what I keep telling my parents.

FOURTH BULLY: So who are the rest of you guys?

THIRD UU YOUTH: We're UUs.

FIRST BULLY: What? You can't be. (Points) I thought that was Hugh Hughes.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: Not Hugh Hughes. UUs. Unitarian Universalists.

SECOND BULLY: Uni-Uni what?

FIRST UU YOUTH: Unitarian Universalists. It's a religion.

THIRD BULLY: What, like you gotta believe in God and stuff?

SECOND UU YOUTH: We don't got to. I mean we don't have to. We can if we want.

FOURTH BULLY: You don't have to believe in God? What kind of a religion is that?

THIRD UU YOUTH: It's Unitarian Universalism. We all have our own beliefs about God. But we all agree on our Principles.

FIRST BULLY: Don't go swearing at me!

THIRD UU YOUTH: Swearing? Where's the swear?

SECOND BULLY: Where's the swear? You don't even know? The swear is "principals." That's even worse than "teachers." And that's as bad as "school."

FOURTH UU YOUTH: We're talking about principles, with an E, not principals with an A. You guys need a spell-check.

THIRD BULLY: Oh yeah? You better button up that lip before I bloody it up.

FIRST UU YOUTH: Excuse us. We're going to be late.

NARRATOR: The UU youth try to move on but the bullies keep blocking their way.

SECOND UU YOUTH: What do you guys want? Our advisors are waiting for us and our conference is starting. We need to go.

FOURTH BULLY: You're not going anywhere until we say so. This right here is our sidewalk. And it's a toll sidewalk. What we want is a little bit of money and a whole lot of respect.

THIRD UU YOUTH: We haven't got any money. But we've got respect. You can have all the respect you want.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: UUs have respect for everything and everybody. It's in our Principles.

FIRST BULLY: There you go dissing us with rotten language again!

FIRST UU YOUTH: And the Principles aren't all we've got. We've got Sources, too.

SECOND BULLY: Sorcerers? You've got sorcerers?

SECOND UU YOUTH: Sources, not sorcerers. Spell-check time again.

THIRD BULLY: Spells? Sorcerers and spells? Is that what this uni-uni stuff is all about?

FOURTH BULLY: Sorcerers and spells! I am so, so scared!

THIRD UU YOUTH: No. Earth-based religions are among our Sources. But we're not talking about magic.

FIRST BULLY: Sorcerers and spells, huh? Tell me more about this uni-uni stuff. Maybe us guys should join.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: We'll tell you everything you want to know. But not now. We can meet you later and talk.

FIRST UU YOUTH: Right. It's hard to explain Unitarian Universalism in a nutshell.

SECOND BULLY: Who are you calling a nut?

NARRATOR: The bullies snarl and move toward the UU youth.

ALL BULLIES: Snarl.

SECOND UU YOUTH: Wait! I'll tell you about Unitarian Universalism. I'll give you my elevator speech.

THIRD BULLY: You're messing with us, right?

THIRD UU YOUTH: No, we're not. Our minister says every UU should have an elevator speech.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: That's right. An elevator speech is a short description of Unitarian Universalism. It's something you can tell another person very fast.

FIRST UU YOUTH: Like when an elevator is going up or down.

FOURTH BULLY: So let's hear it. And it better be quick!

FIRST BULLY: Yeah, and the part about the magic better be good!

SECOND UU YOUTH: But we can't tell you here.

SECOND BULLY: Why not?

THIRD UU YOUTH: You can't give an elevator speech on the sidewalk. You have to be in an elevator.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: Like the one we just came down on in this parking garage.

THIRD BULLY: So let's go. You guys lead the way so we can keep an eye on you.

NARRATOR: The bullies follow the UU youth to the elevator. At the door, the First UU Youth pushes the up button. When the elevator comes the youth steps back and says respectfully to the bullies:

FIRST UU YOUTH: You first. This is your territory, so be our guests.

FOURTH BULLY: If it's our territory, how come you guys ain't the guests?

SECOND BULLY: Oh, shut up. Let's get in there and get this over with.

NARRATOR: So the bullies go to the back of the elevator. The First and Second UU Youths enter behind them. The First UU Youth presses the top floor button and jumps off. The Second UU Youth presses the close door button and jumps off. The door begins to close and the Third UU Youth yells through it.

THIRD UU YOUTH: Have a heavenly ride!

NARRATOR: The door clangs shut. But the UU youth can still hear the bullies yelling back.

ALL BULLIES: Hey, you . . . you . . . you . . .

FOURTH UU YOUTH: Wow. That was close. Let's get out of here fast.

FIRST UU YOUTH: I thought we were done for. Is this what they call universal salvation?

SECOND UU YOUTH: I don't know. We haven't had that lesson yet.

THIRD UU YOUTH: Let's book it before they get out!

FOURTH UU YOUTH: There isn't any hurry. That elevator takes forever even to get to the first floor. And we're still in time for the opening chalice lighting.

NARRATOR: The end.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 5: LEADER RESOURCE 3: HOLIDAYS AND UU SOURCES

Instructions: On the left is a list of holidays that many people celebrate. On the right is a list of the UU Sources. On the line next to each holiday, write the letter of the Source that has the most to do with the holiday. You can put more than one letter per line if you like. If you think no Source connects to a holiday, leave the line blank.

Holidays	UU Sources
_____ New Year's Day	A) Direct experience of mystery and wonder that everybody feels
_____ Martin Luther King Day	B) Words and deeds of outstanding men and women
_____ Valentine's Day	C) Wisdom from the world's religions
_____ Presidents' Day	D) Jewish and Christian teachings
_____ St. Patrick's Day	E) Humanist teachings based on reason and science
_____ Easter	F) Earth-based teachings from earth-based groups like pagans and ancient peoples
_____ Passover	
_____ Mother's Day and Father's Day	
_____ Summer Solstice, Winter Solstice	
_____ Fourth of July	
_____ Labor Day	
_____ Columbus Day	
_____ Thanksgiving	
_____ Ramadan	
_____ Hanukkah	
_____ Christmas	

FIND OUT MORE

Morales, Peter., editor. [*The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*](#) (at <http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=649>) (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2012). A brief but excellent introduction to Unitarian Universalism.

[Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations](#) (at www.uua.org/).

[Tools for Change](#) (at www.syr culturalworkers.com/catalog/Buttons/ButtonsStickers.html), website of Syracuse Cultural Workers, [Northern Sun](#) (at www.northernsun.com/), and [UniUniques](#) (at www.uniuniques.com/) are just a few websites offering a list of liberal bumper stickers.

SESSION 6: THE FIRST U

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Guilt is anger directed at ourselves.
— Peter McWilliams

The second of four sessions concerned with the Unitarian Universalist denomination, this one focuses on its Unitarian strand.

The session begins with a basic tenet of early Unitarianism, the oneness of God and considers some historical consequences of holding that belief and of human actions in general. Then the session explores the consequences of wrong actions, paving the way for discussing Universalism's ideas about salvation in Session 7.

The session plan suggests using fifteen minutes for a Faith in Action talk with a visitor who is involved with your congregation's social-justice programs. If you will not be doing that, consider using the alternate Ethics Play activity and tying it to the session's themes.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the Unitarian strand of Unitarian Universalism through a story about famous Unitarians and background on Unitarian beliefs
- Consider intended and unintended consequences of human actions
- Examine the nature of guilt
- Explore the concept of punishment
- Optional: Hear from a guest speaker about the congregation's justice work
- Optional: Debate capital punishment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand a core idea of early Unitarianism
- Hear of two outstanding Unitarians and the consequences of their actions
- Discuss the consequences of human actions, especially wrong acts
- Consider appropriate punishments for doing wrong

- Optional: Learn of their congregation's efforts to right wrongs
- Optional: Examine opposing views of a controversial ethical issue.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Conundrum Corner	7
Activity 2: Story and Discussion – Two Men Named James	15
Activity 3: Matching Punishments and Wrong Acts	20
Activity 4: Discussion – Getting Rid of Guilt	10
Faith in Action: Speaking with a Visitor	20
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Ethics Play	15
Alternate Activity 2: Debating Capital Punishment	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, review your own thoughts about God. Do you use that word in connection with your own life? How will you respond if youth ask about your personal theological beliefs? Think also about how you weigh the consequences of your own actions. How much did you consider consequences when you were in sixth grade? Were you a thoughtful youth or were you more carefree in your actions?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself, and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- Six pencils or sticks, four about five inches long and two about 3 inches long, set up in an equation like this: III=I, with a package of matches sitting nearby
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the equation and sign on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break from it if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the practice by playing different versions of the song. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light shine today on the history of Unitarianism.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying "blessed be," or other appropriate words. Ask the youth to raise a hand if they have ever felt guilty. Assure them that you will not ask what they have felt guilty about. Ask if anybody has felt guilty in the past week—but again, do not ask the reason. Say that guilt is one of the subjects you will discuss during the session because it is one of the possible consequences of doing wrong. Another subject you will discuss is the idea that people's actions have consequences.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: CONUNDRUM CORNER (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Supplies for Conundrum Corner, as described in the Opening materials list

Preparation for Activity

- Be sure that the Conundrum Corner is set up and that participants have a chance to look at it before you begin.

Description of Activity

This activity introduces youth to the basic Unitarian belief that God is one rather than a trinity.

Ask what anybody thinks the message in the Conundrum Corner says. Confirm or explain that it reads as "three equals one." (The message is in the form of a mathematical statement, but you do not need to make a point of that.)

Then ask, "How can that be? How can three equal one? And what can this possibly have to do with right and wrong or with this sixth-grade group?" After brief discussion, explain with words like these:

In 325 AD, a church council gathered in Nicea to settle what Christians believed about God and Jesus. Christians disagreed on the nature of Jesus: Was he divine and equal to God, or a very wise human teacher? The Council of Nicea

decided that God exists as three beings in one—Father (God), Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit (a helping spirit with no physical form).

In the 1500s, some Christians publicly disagreed. They said that God could not be in three parts; God was one—a unity, not a trinity. That is what the message in the Conundrum Corner shows, that three are really one. In the year 1600, in a part of Europe named Transylvania, these Christians were the first who called themselves Unitarians. And so the Unitarian religion was born. That was three and a half centuries before the Unitarian and Universalist religions joined into the denomination we know today.

Ask if the youth think this "anti-trinitarian" belief was right or wrong, virtuous or sinful. Accept some comments and then tell how people reacted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:

Most Christians in those days thought that believing in the trinity was the right thing to do and that believing in anything else was the wrong thing. They said that arguing against the existence of the trinity was a terrible sin. In Geneva, Switzerland, in 1553, they burned to death a man named Michael Servetus because he was an anti-trinitarian. That is what the matches near the sticks in the Conundrum Corner symbolize.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY AND DISCUSSION – TWO MEN NAMED JAMES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Two Men Named James](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read through the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "Two Men Named James," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

This activity introduces two UU ministers who both suffered consequences as a result of their faith.

Give participants a one-minute stretch break if you like. Tell them to stand or stretch, or jump up and down, as they like. When all becomes calm again, introduce the story with words such as the following:

Michael Servetus was burned at the stake because he spoke against the trinity. That is an extreme consequence for his action. But every

action we take and every choice we make have some sort of consequences. They might be big or little, bad or good; we do not always know about that. But we do know that all our actions have consequences. Now we are going to share a story called "Two Men Named James." It is about two Unitarian ministers, their actions, and the consequences that followed.

Read the story of James Luther Adams, the Unitarian minister who studied ethics and became Professor of Christian Ethics at Harvard Divinity School, and of James Reeb, the Unitarian minister killed in 1965 when he went to Selma, Alabama, to help win civil rights for African Americans. Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

Ask for general reactions to the story, and then pose questions like these:

- Some people thought Adams was too critical of Unitarian Universalism, yet he continued to call for changes in our religion. What consequences resulted from his action? What were the consequences of his work in Germany?
- What were some of James Reeb's choices and actions?
- Were the consequences positive, negative, or both?
- In the case of James Reeb, which were more important—the bad consequences or the good ones? Is it even possible to tell? Or is the question impossible to answer without further information? Were the consequences for Reeb and his family different from the historical consequences?

Conclude with a summary statement:

As we said before, all our actions have consequences. Sometimes we can guess what the consequences will be, and sometimes not. Sometimes they will be bad. Sometimes they will be good. And sometimes they will be both. But there will always be consequences.

ACTIVITY 3: MATCHING PUNISHMENTS AND WRONG ACTS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Ten newspaper posters, each with one of these headings: School Detention, Church Punishment/Penance, Grounded at Home, Going to Jail, Paying a Fine, Doing Community Service, Getting Scolded by Police, Loss of

Allowance, Having Angry Friends, Feeling Guilty Is Enough

- Washable markers
- Painters' tape for hanging posters
- Newspapers to place under posters as necessary to protect tables or carpets

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare the posters and hang them around your meeting space.
- Before beginning, be sure to place the posters around the room so that participants can write on them without damaging anything. If you cannot use tape on walls, place the posters on tables or on the floor. Protect surfaces beneath the posters with newspapers if necessary.

Description of Activity

This activity allows youth to brainstorm real-life situations that might involve punishment and to consider what kinds and amounts of punishment are just.

Ask the group to think for a moment about "making the punishment fit the crime." Ask a few questions like these:

- Why does society punish people for doing something wrong?
- Is punishment a good thing or a bad thing?
- Who decides on the punishment?
- Is it fair for parents, teachers, juries, and judges to have that power?
- What would life be like if no one had the power to punish?

Point out the posters placed around the room. Say that when you begin, each youth will get a marker and will go to stand in front of one of the posters. The youth should divide up as evenly as possible. (If there are ten youth in the group, one should be in front of each poster.)

Read the titles of all the posters aloud. When you say "start," the youth should read the title on their poster and then write on the poster as many wrong acts or "sins," to use the religious word, as they can think of that fit the punishment. For example, if the punishment is School Detention, someone might write "talking in class"; if it is Going to Jail, "robbing a bank" might be an answer. The youth should keep writing until you say, "change posters." Then they should each move one poster to the right and do the same thing. They will continue until everybody has had a chance at every poster. As the lists of sins get longer, participants should try to think of new

things to add and not repeat what is already there. Tell the group that some lists are easy and some are not. If they get stuck, they may not be able to write anything on that particular poster, but they should keep trying to come up with something until it is time to move on.

Give the youth no more than a minute at each poster, at least at the beginning — less if time is short. As the lists get longer, they may need more time because more reading time is required. If some of the youth are having trouble thinking of wrong acts, offer quiet assistance.

When the lists are complete, ask participants to rejoin the circle. One list at a time, read the entries to see if everybody agrees that the "crimes" fit the punishment. Point out that some sins or wrong acts can be on more than one list. In many cases, the seriousness of the act might affect which punishment is appropriate; shoplifting a small item may deserve a lesser punishment than robbing a bank. Anticipate questions about both the Feeling Guilty Is Enough and Church

Punishment/Penance lists. You may wish to clarify that most Unitarian Universalist congregations do not punish their members. But some religious faiths punish their members or require penance for church-forbidden acts such as wearing the wrong clothes, or eating the wrong foods, or acting in particular ways the faith says is sinful.

Conclude with a brief discussion of guilt. Ask what it is. Affirm that guilt is the feeling that you did something wrong. Point out, if the group does not, that when judges and juries say somebody is guilty, they mean that person is responsible for having done something wrong. However, all of us sometimes feel guilty without anybody else saying that we did something wrong.

Ask if most of the bad acts the group listed in this activity would result in guilty feelings for somebody. Ask also how conscience and guilt compare to each other. Offer this idea if you need to: "Conscience is the feeling inside us that we should do the right thing. Guilt is the feeling inside us that we have already done the wrong thing." Help the class to see that guilt can be so strong that it actually hurts a person. Guilt can compel people to confess to crimes or to help people they have hurt, or even to hurt themselves in some way.

Ask the youth if they think guilt is a good thing. What would life be like if nobody ever felt guilty?

Including All Participants

Place posters where participants with limited mobility can reach them. If you have youth with limited reading and writing skills, consider working in pairs.

ACTIVITY 4: DISCUSSION – GETTING RID OF GUILT (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Scrap paper and pencils for the higher-energy approach

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether to use the higher-energy approach described at the end of the activity description.

Description of Activity

This activity gives youth a symbolic way of getting rid of guilt.

Ask the group what people can do when guilt is eating at them. Say a person might feel guilty if they have done something they know is wrong. The guilt can be so bad it can make a person sick. What could a person do to feel better? Here are some possibilities:

- People can figure out why they did the wrong thing and promise themselves to act differently next time.
- People can correct the mistake they made. If they told a lie, they can now tell the truth.
- People can make up for what they did. If they hurt a friend, now they can help the friend in some way.
- They can admit what they did and take the consequences. The punishment might not be pleasant, but putting something bad behind them might feel good.
- They can talk to somebody about what they did. A parent, a teacher, a counselor, or a friend might be able to help.

Higher-energy approach: You can enliven this activity by distributing scrap paper and pencils and asking youth to write down something that they feel guilty about or felt guilty about in the past. Then ask them to decide what they should do to get rid of the guilt — perhaps they could use an idea from the list above. When that is done, they can stand, crumple up the paper, throw it on the floor, jump up and down on it, and, finally, rip it dramatically into shreds and throw it away in the trash or recycling bin. Help the youth protect their privacy by suggesting they use a code word for the thing that makes them feel guilty or write so small that nobody else will be able to read what they wrote.

Including All Participants

Avoid the higher-energy approach if your group includes youth with limitations that would preclude their participation.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities you used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: SPEAKING WITH A VISITOR (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- List of visitor questions made at previous meeting

Preparation for Activity

- Invite a visitor to join your group and describe some of your congregation's social action programs. Tell your visitor about the Faith in Action component of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong, and be sure to mention details such as the best arrival time and the amount of time available for this sharing. Suggest that the visitor try and bring something for the youth to do—maybe something as simple as addressing postcards or folding and stuffing letters to be mailed to legislators.

Description of Activity

This activity allows youth to hear about the social justice work their own congregation has done or is doing.

Introduce your visitor to the youth, and ask for a brief description of the congregation's social justice activities. Let the youth ask questions; if they run out of questions, use the ones the group listed in Session 5. Ask about any activities that youth and their families might

participate in, either as an Amazing Grace group, or individually. If the youth seem interested in any particular project, plan to build on those interests in future sessions. If your visitor has brought something for the group to do, be sure and allow time for that. Participants can do some tasks, such as stuffing envelopes, during the discussion.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? Does the group seem comfortable in its understanding of punishment? Should you find a way to process that subject further in future sessions? Did your Faith in Action discussion produce interest in a specific social-action project? How can you follow up on that? How can you tie the project to the idea of right and wrong?

Look ahead at Session 7. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

Guilt is anger directed at ourselves.
— Peter McWilliams

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We talked about the kinds of punishments some early Unitarians faced because they believed in one God instead of the trinity. We heard the stories of James Luther Adams and James Reeb. We said that all decisions and actions have consequences, some bad and some good. We considered what punishments might fit what wrong acts, and we talked about our congregation's social action programs.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- Guilt that family members felt when they were kids.
- Punishment in your family. Is it used? Is it fair? Should it be used more often? Less often? Who decides when punishment is due and what the punishment should be?
- The situation your group did in Ethics Play, if you played the game. What do family members and friends say the Star should have done?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Watching the news to see what happens to people who commit crimes in your state. Are the punishments fair?

- Thinking about what should happen to youth when they break the law. Should they be treated like adults? Should their childhood and teenage court records be destroyed when they turn eighteen?
- Doing something as a family—anything at all. When you are done, list the consequences. Were they good, bad, or a mix? Did they make anybody feel guilty?

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and think about your own god beliefs. Do you believe in one God? A lot of gods? None at all? Are you an agnostic? That means you do not know whether God exists. Are you an atheist? That means you are sure God does not exist. Is the question of God's existence unimportant to you? If you are journaling, write down the word or words that best describe you as a religious thinker and then add why you believe what you do.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you hadn't done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Make up your own version of Ethics Play. Think of some difficult decisions and ask what different people would do in those situations. What would you tell them if you were playing the Devil? What would you tell them if you were playing God? Does everybody agree about what the Star should do?

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Travel into the past. Get the adults in your family to talk about what punishments were like when they were kids at home or in school. Did they think the punishments were fair? How old were they when they learned that every action has consequences?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role name tags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#)) (included in this document)

- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game, ask if participants carefully considered the consequences of their actions. Could any of the decisions have resulted in punishment? Who would have handed out the punishment? What might it have been?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: DEBATING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how to conduct your group's debate.

Description of Activity

This activity gives youth the opportunity to explore their feelings about capital punishment.

Announce a group debate about capital punishment. Capital punishment means punishing somebody for a crime by putting them to death. Some people think that it is the right thing for governments to do; some people think that it is the wrong thing. What does your group think?

Divide the group into pro and con subgroups. If possible, arrange chairs so the two sides face each other.

Announce rules for the debate. It is probably easiest to keep things informal and to give each side thirty seconds or a minute at a time to speak and then go back and forth until time or ideas run out. Encourage the teams to listen to each other and to respond to specific points made. Remind participants to be respectful.

As the debate progresses, have a leader moderate to keep things going smoothly and without rancor.

Be sure to save time to process the debate. Several questions you might ask include:

- If you debated a position that you do not believe in, was it difficult?
- Capital punishment is an extremely controversial topic. Is it easier or harder to debate a controversial topic than one that is not controversial?
- What authorities did participants refer to in defending capital punishment? What authorities did they use to argue against it? Could the same authority, such as, perhaps, your religion, be used to defend both sides? Is that one reason why capital punishment is such a controversial topic?

Make sure the group does not become so involved in the debate that it feels divisive.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 6: STORY: TWO MEN NAMED JAMES

By Polly Peterson.

Two famous twentieth-century Unitarians were James Luther Adams, born in 1901, and James Reeb, born in 1927. Both men were deeply committed to a search for truth and both reached the conclusion that the highest good is found, not in prayer or in personal spirituality, but in how a person relates to other people. They both believed that actions, not words, are the proof of a person's faith.

James Luther Adams was the son of a fundamentalist preacher. In college, he rejected his parents' rigid beliefs and frequently spoke out against religious fundamentalism. His college friends were probably very surprised when this young man, who was so outspoken in his dislike of religion, went on to divinity school after graduation. But for Adams, becoming a minister made sense. He continued to reject fundamentalism, but he was deeply interested in religious thought, and he found a home for his liberal ideas in Unitarianism.

Adams became a leader among Unitarians; he was an influential speaker and teacher who was never afraid to challenge the status quo. Despite his passion for free thinking, Adams steadfastly refused to let his fellow Unitarians take an easy, "anything goes" approach to their faith. One of James Luther Adams's well-known sayings is: "An unexamined faith is not worth having."

He believed in certain bedrock truths. Among these is the idea that to be human is to be a member of a community. Freedom, justice, and virtue can exist only through human interaction. We express our faith through the institutions we create—our religious communities, our schools, and our political and social organizations.

Adams believed in Jesus' principle for identifying authentic faith: "by their fruits you shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). In other words, true faith is not just what people say they believe in; people show true faith by their actions and the consequences that result from them. Adams believed that people of faith must expose the evils of society and speak out for change. He believed we have a moral obligation to confront injustice, no matter what the cost. He used the pulpit to speak out against injustice. In Nazi Germany, he worked with the Underground Church Movement. As a result, the Nazis held and questioned him more than once, but they did release him.

James Reeb is probably the best example of someone who followed Adams's teaching. Like Adams, Reeb grew up in a rigidly fundamentalist Christian home. He

continued to embrace fundamentalist views throughout high school, military service, and college, and sometimes he preached them publicly. As a young preacher, he believed that love of self should yield to love of others. He had a natural inclination to care about people in need and to want to help them.

After college, Reeb began studying to become a Presbyterian minister—but his studies, instead of deepening his faith, caused him to question his beliefs and his calling. When he completed his seminary training, he became the chaplain of a large, inner-city hospital instead of the minister of a Presbyterian church. He believed that patients in a hospital needed him far more than people in church pews did. While a hospital chaplain, Reeb's ideas about religion continued to evolve. He decided to leave the Presbyterian Church when he realized that he no longer believed in many of its doctrines. He was in despair about his career until he chanced to read a book by a Unitarian whose ideas agreed with his own vision of truth. He immediately applied to become a Unitarian minister. All Souls Church in Washington, D.C., offered him a position as Assistant Minister and he accepted it. He brought with him his message that the ultimate concern of religion must be "the supreme worth and dignity of every human being."

Aside from his work as a parish minister, Reeb was heavily involved in the community. By 1963, after only a few years at All Souls, he realized that his work for improving conditions in the inner city was more important to him than preaching was. Although he was much loved as a minister, Reeb left his Unitarian ministry for a job in Boston, where he focused his efforts on fair housing. When he moved his family to Massachusetts, he took the unusual step of living with his family in the inner city and sending his young son to an inner-city public school. He was determined to understand the situation of the people he was there to help and to gain their friendship and trust.

During this time, the civil rights movement was happening; one of its goals was to help the many blacks who were unfairly denied the right to vote. Civil rights activists, especially in the South, were trying to convince Congress to pass a Voting Rights Act. One evening, Reeb and his wife saw an appalling sight on the television news. State police stopped nonviolent protesters who were marching from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama; they attacked the innocent marchers with clubs and tear gas. The next day, Martin Luther King, Jr., called for ministers from the North to join him and the marchers in Selma for another protest march. Reeb decided he must go.

Thousands of marchers gathered in Selma, and the police again stopped them, although this time without

violence. That evening, with tensions in Selma at a boiling point, four angry white men shouting racial insults attacked Reeb and two other ministers. One of them clubbed Reeb on the head and he fell to the sidewalk, unconscious. James Reeb never recovered from the blow. On March 11, 1965, at age 38, he died in a Montgomery hospital.

James Reeb's death stirred the conscience of the nation. Thousands of people protested outside the White House and in other cities throughout America. On March

15, Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke at James Reeb's funeral. That same day, President Lyndon Johnson addressed a joint session of Congress to introduce the Voting Rights Bill, which became law five months later. Was James Reeb's belief in social justice worth the price? According to his widow, yes. He "thought the movement worth any sacrifice."

James Reeb was a man whose actions proved him to be a man of authentic faith. By his fruits, we do know him.

FIND OUT MORE

Leonard, Richard D. "The View from the Balcony," in [UU World](http://www.uuworld.org/spirit/articles/2358.shtml) (at www.uuworld.org/spirit/articles/2358.shtml) (Boston: UUA Publications, 2001). This is an account of Dr. Martin Luther King's tribute to the Rev. James Reeb.

Morales, Peter, editor. [*The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=64) (at <http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=64>

9) (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2012). A brief but excellent introduction to Unitarian Universalism.

The Unitarian Universalist Historical Society has a website, [Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biographies](http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/index.html) (at www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/index.html), that includes biographies of many UUs, including James Luther Adams.

[Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations](http://www.uua.org/) (at www.uua.org/), the denomination's website.

SESSION 7: THE SECOND U

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Work out your own salvation. Do not depend on others.
— Buddha

This session introduces the Universalist strand of Unitarian Universalism. It is a companion to Session 6, The First U, which introduces the Unitarian strand. Session 7 is the third of four that focuses on Unitarian Universalism.

It begins by asking youth to identify and model the animals they would have chosen to save had they been in charge at the time of Noah. That activity serves as a jumping-off point to the Universalist concept of universal salvation. Next, there is a story about a famous Universalist woman, one of the first women to become ordained in response to a call to ministry. Participants then use movement to answer questions about being called in their own lives.

The session's Faith in Action segment asks youth to consider working to help domestic animals by volunteering at local animal shelters. You can make the activity more rewarding by finding out in advance where such shelters are and how youth may help them.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the Universalist strand of Unitarian Universalism
- Help youth understand the concept of universal salvation
- Explain to participants the meaning of "being called"
- Optional: Provide an opportunity for participants to help animals
- Compare the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to our UU Principles.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the concept of universal salvation through an activity related to the story of Noah's ark
- Understand eternal salvation as a religious idea

- Know Augusta Chapin as a Universalist called to serve the religion of universal salvation
- Consider the concepts of religious proselytism and evangelism
- Optional: Explore the idea of a call to save animals.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Playing Noah, Playing God	12
Activity 2: Speaking of Universal Salvation	10
Activity 3: Story and Discussion – Augusta Jane Chapin's Call to Ministry	15
Activity 4: Saving Other People	15
Faith in Action: Saving Animals	
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Ethics Play	15
Alternate Activity 2: Buddhism and Salvation	5
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SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, review your understanding of universal salvation. Is that a meaningful theological term for you? Think also about the concept of "being called" in your life. Have you been called to certain work or action? Are you called to work with youth in your congregation?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- A telephone of some sort, preferably a cell phone that you can cause to ring
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the telephone on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the practice by playing different versions of the song. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If you are playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music, or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light shine today on the history of Universalism.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

Ask the youth to raise a hand if they have ever been in such a dangerous situation that somebody else had to save them. Accept a few stories about such incidents, but ask responders to keep them brief.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: PLAYING NOAH, PLAYING GOD (12 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Polymer clay in various colors (or modeling clay, or self-hardening clay)
- Toothpicks and plastic knives for cutting, marking, and shaping clay
- Newspapers, vinyl tablecloths, or cardboard to protect surfaces from clay
- Optional: Music player and background music

Preparation for Activity

- Cover work surfaces.
- Place materials where all can get to them easily.

Description of Activity

This activity leads to thinking about physical salvation, in this case, saving lives.

Tell participants that they will now have a chance to play Noah and God. Remind the group of the Bible story of Noah (Hebrew scripture: Genesis 6–9): God sent a flood to cover the earth and extinguish all life, but first he instructed Noah to build an ark to save his family and pairs of all animals.

Now ask the youth to imagine that it was physically impossible to get all pairs of all animals aboard; the ark was simply too small. Some types of animals had to be left behind to drown, just like the people. Now offer this challenge:

If you were God or Noah and you had to choose among the animals, which ones would you save and which ones would you leave? Your job now

is to make a clay model of the one animal you would consider most important to save. It could be an animal that lives today or one that is extinct. Think hard about this: Why would some decisions be right and other decisions be wrong? It's your choice.

Point out the supplies and tell the youth they have about ten minutes to make their models. Say they should work only on surfaces protected by newsprint or vinyl. Play quiet background music if you like. When time becomes short, give the group a two-minute warning. If you are using self-hardening clay, ask that participants place models on a protected surface to dry. Give youth an opportunity to point out their own models and share their ideas about them.

Including All Participants

Be sure that all supplies are within easy reach of any youth with limited mobility and that work surfaces are accessible to all. If you think some youth will have difficulty completing models on their own, allow them to work in pairs.

ACTIVITY 2: SPEAKING OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity will introduce the idea of the eternal salvation of human souls.

Give a brief talk to move youth beyond their consideration of saving animals' lives to an elementary understanding of saving human souls through universal salvation. Use words and ideas like these:

We have just been talking about saving lives. However, many religious people want to save more than lives. They want to save souls. They think of the soul as the deepest spiritual part of you, or your human spirit. The soul has no weight and visible form. Many people think the soul stays alive after the body dies. What happens then? Some people believe that it goes to heaven or hell. Some people believe hell is an awful place where the soul suffers and that heaven is beautiful and everybody is happy there. If the soul goes to hell, it is lost for eternity, for all time. If the soul goes to heaven, it is saved. We call that salvation. When Christians say, "I am saved" they mean that they believe their souls will go to heaven when they die.

For centuries, people have disagreed about salvation. Some people do not believe in heaven, hell, or the idea of souls at all. Others say that bad people go to hell when they die and

good people go to heaven. Some Christians believe in predestination; they say that from the very beginning, God chooses some people but not others to be saved.

The Universalists had an idea different from this. They believed in "universal salvation." They said that God is a loving god and does not send anybody to hell forever; that God saves all souls and everybody goes to heaven. People should follow God's law and do the right things, they said, but doing the wrong things—sinning—would not land them in hell for all time. That is what Universalists argued for centuries.

Provide a more energetic moment by asking youth to stand and decide which appeals to them more—traditional Unitarian or traditional Universalist ideas? Invite them to move to one wall if Unitarianism is their choice and the opposite wall if Universalism is their choice. Explain further with words like these: "Imagine that you lived in a New England town many years ago. In that town were a Unitarian church and a Universalist church. Based on their ideas, which one would you choose to attend?" Remind the group of the differences with a quick summary statement: "The basic idea of Unitarianism is that there is one God, rather than a trinity. The basic idea of Universalism is universal salvation." After youth have voted and discussed their choices briefly, acknowledge that both religions are more complex than just these two basic tenets. They held many common beliefs, which is why they joined in 1961. Today, we get the best of both worlds. The idea of God as love remains important to Christian UUs today as well as to other UUs.

If you can, allow time for quick questions and a brief discussion before moving on. See Session 9 for more on souls.

Including All Participants

If you offer the energetic moment, describe it in ways that allow all youth to participate, perhaps by holding up differently colored cards or pieces of paper.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY AND DISCUSSION – AUGUSTA JANE CHAPIN'S CALL TO MINISTRY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Augusta Jane Chapin's Call to Ministry](#) (included in this document) "
- Phone in Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "Augusta Jane Chapin's Call to Ministry," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Youth hear a story about an early Universalist.

Prepare for the story by pointing out the phone in the Conundrum Corner. What do participants think it has to do with religion and what you have been talking about? Say that you think the answer will be clear as the group hears about Augusta Chapin.

Read the story of Augusta Chapin. Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

Explain that when a denomination "ordains" a person, the person becomes a minister and can begin serving congregations. Usually a lot of study and work is required before a person can be ordained.

Then note that Augusta Jane Chapin, at the age of seventeen, was "called" to be a minister; ask what that means. Is it sort of like being called to dinner? Or getting a phone call?

Say that the phone in the Conundrum Corner suggests the idea of calling. However, being called to the ministry is different from being called to the phone, because when you feel a calling—or a "spiritual calling" as some religious people say—the feeling is deep inside you. A calling is something you feel that you must do to be true to yourself. Some people say they are being "called by God" to do something. Other people say they are being "called by the universe." Others simply say they are "being called." They mean the same thing. They mean that they have a feeling deep inside that they simply must do something because that is what they were born and placed on earth to do. They believe that following their calling is the right thing to do and that doing anything else would be wrong.

Say that many people other than ministers speak about being called. Somebody might feel called to become a doctor, another, a writer. Someone might feel called to try to save the environment or to work with wood as a carpenter or an artist. Their feelings deep inside have more to do with pointing them in a certain direction than their brains do. What they are called to do is usually very serious and very good.

Ask participants about the consequences of Chapin's actions. Did she help lead the way for future women to seek education and to enter the ministry? Remind youth that many UUs actively advocated for women's rights early on in the struggle.

ACTIVITY 4: SAVING OTHER PEOPLE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Eight sheets of newsprint with the headings suggested below written with a marker
- Washable markers

Preparation for Activity

- Hang or place the prepared newsprint around the room as widely separated as your meeting space allows.

Description of Activity

This activity asks participants to think about what they would be willing to do to save other people. In the process, it introduces the idea of religious proselytism and evangelism.

In advance, prepare and place eight sheets of newsprint, each with one of these actions written at the top:

- Jump into the ocean to save a drowning person.
- Tell somebody to stop smoking.
- Hide cigarettes from smoker.
- Call the police if I saw somebody being robbed.
- Try to stop the robber if I saw somebody being robbed.
- Tell other people to believe what my religion says.
- Share my religious beliefs with others.
- Warn drivers that a bridge was out.

Point out the posters around the room. Say that each of them has a possible answer to the question, "What would you do to save another person?" Ask the youth to move around the room and read what each poster says, and then to sign it if they would do what it describes. When all have finished, have them return to their circle and discuss what they have done.

Read the words at the top of each poster and see how many participants have signed. Ask if anybody wants to say why he or she signed (or did not sign). Seek out remarks about the differences between similar actions, such as telling someone to stop smoking versus hiding cigarettes.

Focus on the two posters concerning religious beliefs. However youth responded to these written questions, ask them how they would answer if they believed that

they could keep a person from going to hell and save them for all eternity.

Explain the concept of religious proselytism and evangelism with words like these:

Some people believe that their own religion is the one true religion and that it's the only religion that will allow people to be saved. These people try hard to spread their religion by persuading other people to share their beliefs. One word for trying to spread your religion is "proselytizing"; another is "evangelizing." "Proselytizing" is a stronger word than "evangelizing." People who proselytize might try really hard to convince somebody to accept their beliefs. People who evangelize are more likely to preach their ideas loudly and hope that people who hear them will decide on their own to accept those ideas.

Lead a discussion about how youth feel about proselytizing and evangelizing. Point out that the word "evangelism" is most often heard in connection with Christian churches. In fact, some Christian churches have the word "evangelical" in their names. However, there are also Jewish and Muslim evangelists, and other religions around the world frequently try to "convert" nonbelievers by getting them to accept their religious beliefs. Consider asking the following questions:

- Have evangelists ever come to your home to talk about their religion? How did you and your family respond?
- Should people try to convince others to change their beliefs?
- Would you ever do that? What if you thought your ideas really could help other people get to heaven? What if you thought you would spend an eternity in heaven without ever seeing your loved ones again?
- Do you think that evangelists are following the Golden Rule? Are the evangelists doing for other people what they would want other people to do for them? (See also The Golden Rule, which is Activity 4 in Session 4: Telling Right from Wrong.) How do the youth feel about Unitarian Universalists trying to get others to join their congregations?
- If you think someone might like Unitarian Universalism, is it good to tell them about your faith?
- Where do you draw the line between sharing your faith and proselytizing?

Including All Participants

Adapt the activity as necessary to allow participants with limited mobility to be part of it. Do not assume that youth using wheelchairs or crutches will not be able or eager to move around the room with everybody else. You could eliminate the need for motion by having youth list their choices on paper in order of their comfort level with each action. If you have youth with limited reading skills, read each of the posters aloud before they get started.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities you used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: SAVING ANIMALS

Materials for Activity

- Information about local animal and pet shelters that you have collected in advance
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Local phone books

Preparation for Activity

- Collect information about local animal shelters and how youth can assist them.

Description of Activity

This activity asks youth to consider working in their own communities to help domestic animals.

Introduce the activity by saying that people often think of "being called" as something that happens in adulthood. It is possible for young people to feel called to do good things, too. These young people just know deep inside that they want to do something good to help make the world better for other people—or for animals.

In fact, working to save and protect animals appeals to many children and many youth. For Unitarian Universalists, this is a good way to honor the seventh Principle, which asks us to respect the "interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." This means all living things, not just people. For this session's Faith in Action, the group will explore some ways to help in its own community.

Say that animal rescue programs and shelters provide excellent opportunities for exploring right and wrong. Ask, "Why are animals and pets so often abandoned? What can you do to keep this from happening? What can you do to help the animals already in shelters?"

Ask if anybody in the group has ever volunteered at a dog shelter or a cat shelter or in another program to help animals. Was the experience fun? Did they feel good about it? What are some of the places they have volunteered? List any places they mention on newsprint.

Pass out any information you have collected about local shelters, along with phone books. Give youth a few minutes to look through the resources. Then ask the youth to share what they have found.

Ask if the youth are interested in working at such shelters, either as a group or with their own families. If interest is strong, arrange to have leaders and youth follow through before you next meet. One activity shelters commonly allow youth to help with is collecting newspapers. Some shelters require youth to be fourteen years old to volunteer, but they may welcome younger children with adult supervision. Perhaps a parent or two will assist in finding out more or arranging a trip to a shelter.

Seek creative ways to help. Could youth decorate the waiting rooms or office areas? How about persuading their family vet to donate vouchers for a free visit to anyone adopting from the shelter? Plan to return to this subject and possible project when you next meet.

Be sure to ask in the course of your research whether shelters put animals down or adhere to no-kill policies. Knowing that the animals they work with may be put to death can be difficult for youth, but it also may increase their enthusiasm for trying to save them. If the only option for volunteering in your area is with agencies that put down unadoptable animals, assess very carefully how you think your youth will handle that and involve parents in your decisions about how to proceed.

Alternate Approach: Another possibility to consider for your group is helping to plan and produce a blessings-of-the-animals event. Typically, church members and their friends, families, and children would bring pets to celebrate, appreciate, and share through worship,

readings, songs, and social gathering. Youth may help in a number of ways—by bringing their own animals and by assisting younger children with handling and caring for their pets. At one such event, a congregation took instant photographs of animals and their owners and then framed the pictures with simple craft-stick photo frames, sold the pictures to families at reasonable prices, and donated the money to a local animal rescue organization.

Including All Participants

If you have participants with limited reading ability, let youth pair up and look through the resources together. Be sure to find a good and useful role for any youth who cannot work directly with animals because of allergies or other reasons.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? How is group behavior? If there are issues, what can you do to correct them? Are you keeping the group moving enough? If not, should you add some simple stretch breaks to the mix? If you did Faith in Action as suggested, did it stir up interest in working with animals? What will you do to follow through?

Look ahead at Session 8. Decide who will lead which activities and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

Work out your own salvation. Do not depend on others.

— *Buddha*

IN TODAY'S SESSION...We heard the story of Augusta Jane Chapin and her frontier ministry. We talked about the ideas of universal salvation and of being saved. We wondered which animals we would have saved if we had had a choice at the time of Noah's flood. For Faith in Action, we talked about what we could do to help save animals today.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- Belief in God. Do you or other members of your family believe in God? If so, is this God a stern God, who punishes people for sinning, or a kind God, who forgives people for sinning? Or is it a God who is not concerned with individual human lives?

- Has anybody in your family felt called to do a certain job or anything else?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Thinking what your family can do to support the idea of universal rights. That means equal rights for everybody on earth. What can you do? Can you contribute to the United Nations or to other groups that help people secure human rights?
- Finding out about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Does the United States support that effort to help children? Should it? What can you do to help?
- Visiting a local animal shelter. Find out about volunteering there.

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and think about your own calling in life. Do you feel called to do something special with your own life? If not, do you hope that someday you will wake up in the morning and all of sudden know what you want to do later in life? If you are journaling, write down some of your ideas about being called. Save your writing so you can return to it later and see whether your ideas have changed.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you hadn't done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Make up funny punishments for small sins. What should happen to somebody who pops gum in your ear all the time? Should they have to listen to and smell popcorn popping for twenty-four hours without being able to eat any?

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Find out about the callings of your friends and relatives. Have any of them felt called to be ministers or to do something special? Do they ever talk about feeling called? They might use different words to describe their feeling that they are meant to carry out a specific purpose in the world.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role name tags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document)).
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game, ask if participants carefully considered the consequences of their actions. What would a firm and unforgiving deity say about such behavior? What would a kind and forgiving deity say?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: BUDDHISM AND SALVATION (5 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Make sure you are comfortable fielding participants' statements of prior knowledge about Buddhist thought and practice. If you wish, do a little research.

Description of Activity

Participants deepen their understanding of Universalism's key concept of universal salvation as they explore a similar concept in Buddhism. They see how both concepts fit in our living Unitarian Universalist faith.

Explain that people other than Universalists have long taught and believed that all souls inherently belong to the divine—that anyone can attain a state of communion with the divine. Ask what participants know about Buddhism. Affirm responses you know to be correct.

Say that many people have heard of and seen statues of the Buddha, and have heard about the Buddhist idea of reincarnation. However, Buddhism is a very old, multi-faceted religion—there is much more to it, and really understanding Buddhism would require much study. So today, you will talk about a bit of Buddhist philosophy, the part that relates to universal salvation.

Tell the group, in these words or your own:

The original Buddha, called Gautama Buddha, or simply Buddha, lived around the fifth century BCE. He believed meditation was a way for people to reach a state of inner peace and enlightenment. They can achieve "nirvana," a state or condition in which they feel perfect inner peace and complete happiness that lasts through all time.

Ask the group what nirvana and universal salvation have in common. Affirm:

- Both are something an individual can get to.
- Both are positive (peaceful, happy).
- Both are linked with God or the Divine.
- Both are eternal.

Say:

Many people gradually began to accept Buddhist teachings, and now the world has about 350 million Buddhists. Today, there are several branches of Buddhism. One of them in particular, Mahayana Buddhism, says that the individual's enlightenment—or, in our terms, salvation—is not enough. Mahayana Buddhists believe someone who becomes a Buddha is not done. To complete their enlightenment, they cannot think only of their own salvation while humankind continues in suffering and ignorance. They must continue to teach and to sacrifice, to help all the world move toward enlightenment.

Ask the group:

- How is the Mahayana Buddhist idea similar to universal salvation as the Universalists saw it?
- How is it different?

Clarify:

- Universalists believed everyone has the potential to be saved, in the Christian sense of being saved from eternity in hell.
- The idea of going to heaven forever is similar to the Buddhist idea of uniting with the Divine in eternity.
- Mahayna Buddhists believe one's personal salvation or enlightenment, to be complete,

requires a commitment to the salvation or enlightenment of everyone.

Conclude by affirming that both ideas are compatible with the values we live in our Unitarian Universalist faith. You might point to our Principles—particularly the first (inherent worth and dignity of each person), the second (justice and equity), the third (acceptance of one another, encouragement to spiritual growth) and the seventh (interconnected web of all life).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: UNIVERSAL RIGHTS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster of the UU Principles and/or Handout 1, [UU Principles](#) (included in this document)
- Poster of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and/or Handout 2, [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Secure a copy of and become familiar with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Place the posters where participants can gather around and read them.
- Photocopy Handouts 1, Unitarian Universalist Principles, and 2, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Youth compare the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights with UU's Principles.

Say that the word "universal" makes some people think first of conditions on earth instead of conditions in heaven. In fact, in 1948, the United Nations (UN) issued something called the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." This document says everybody on earth has the same very basic rights. Today the United Nations and many individuals, including many UUs, are still trying hard to make sure that everybody is treated justly and equally. The world still has a long way to go before this becomes true, but at least many people feel called to keep trying.

Now the class will compare two posters (or handouts), one that shows the Declaration of Human Rights and one that shows the UU Principles.

Ask the youth to go to the posters and look at them carefully. How are they alike? How are they different? Do you think that the people who wrote the UU Principles thought about what the UN Declaration said?

Including All Participants

Place posters so all youth can easily reach them, including those with limited mobility. If you use handouts and have participants with limited reading skills, allow pairs of youth to work together.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 7: STORY: AUGUSTA JANE CHAPIN'S CALL TO MINISTRY

By Polly Peterson.

Back in 1836, when Augusta Jane Chapin was born, women rarely spoke in public. Most Americans considered it highly improper, especially if men were present. The idea of a woman minister was simply unthinkable to conventional minds of the time. Yet, by the age of seventeen, Augusta Chapin knew that she would preach—and ten years later she became one of America's first ordained women ministers.

Augusta Chapin began life as a precocious child, eager to learn. Her father was proud of her abilities and allowed her to go to school from the time she was three years old. By age fourteen, she was a schoolteacher herself. Very few colleges accepted women at that time, but Augusta's hopes for a college education came true at the age of sixteen. She gained admittance to Olivet College, which was affiliated with the Congregational church.

Augusta had learned bible verses in Sunday school while growing up in Michigan, but she first began learning about religious doctrine in college. The Calvinist notion of eternal punishment troubled her greatly. As she studied and thought, she concluded that a loving God would never choose a few individuals to save, while condemning the rest for eternity. She became convinced that the ideas of Universalism were right and true. That realization set the course of her unusual life's journey. "I have no recollection of ever considering the question of whether I would preach or not," she told a biographer thirty years later. "I never deliberately chose the profession of ministry; from the moment I believed in Universalism, it was a matter of course that I was to preach it. I never questioned as to how I came by this purpose, nor did it ever seem in the least strange that I should preach, nor had I any real conception of how my course must appear to my friends and the world until I had been more than ten years in the active work."

Since there was no clear path for a woman who wanted to preach, Augusta Chapin had to find her own way. After taking courses at Olivet College and at Michigan Female College, she became a school principal and

then a teacher of Greek, Latin, French, German, higher mathematics, oil painting, and drawing. Meanwhile, she prepared herself for her true calling—the ministry. In 1859, Chapin preached her first sermon at Portland, Michigan. In December of 1863, after she had been preaching for more than three years, she was ordained to the Universalist ministry. At the time, there were only a handful of women in the ministry, and, of those few, three were Universalists: Lydia Jenkins, Olympia Brown, and Augusta Jane Chapin.

Chapin's work as a Universalist minister took her to many different towns and cities throughout the United States. She actively promoted the cause of women's rights. She was a founding member of the Association for the Advancement of Women, and she spoke at the first Women's Congress held in New York City in 1873. Her speech was an eloquent defense of women as ministers. Some critics dismissed woman preachers as an experiment—and one that was doomed to fail. In response, Chapin said: "My own experience, extending through fifteen years of uninterrupted pulpit and parish work; years of work in the rural villages and neighborhoods of the West; years of work as a settled pastor in a large and growing parish; personal acquaintance with hundreds of parishes east and west in a dozen different States of the Union; all this, together with years of study in college as a direct preparation for the work, has not led me to feel that it is at all an experiment. When I see as many of the wise, powerful and good, and as many of the poor and needy crowding to hear the glad tidings from the lips of my sister as from those of my brother; when I see as many converts bow at the one altar as at the other; when I see churches reared, debts paid, and all good works going on and prospering through the blessing of God, in her hands as in his, and this through a succession of years in the same parish, it does not seem an experiment, nor do the people blessed by such ministry so regard it."

During her career of more than forty years, Augusta Jane Chapin never regretted responding to the call. She never stopped learning, teaching, and preaching. Her unwavering confidence helped lead the way for dozens of other women who heard the call to become ministers and answered it. Augusta Chapin was living proof that a woman in the role of minister could be as capable as any man. Her successful career shone as a beacon to light the way for others.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 7: HANDOUT 1: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES

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

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 7: HANDOUT 2: UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act, the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

FIND OUT MORE

Beverly Burnbaugh. "[Augusta Jane Chapin](http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/augustajanechapin.html) (at www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/augustajanechapin.html)," *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*. Unitarian Universalist Historical Society (UUHS) 1999-2008.

Cassara, Ernest, ed. [Universalism in America: A Documentary History](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=648) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, pp. 213-215).

Morales, Peter, ed. [The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide](#) (at

www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=649) (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2012). This title has a brief but excellent introduction to Unitarian Universalism.

Syracuse Cultural Workers' website, "[Tools for Change](#) (at syracuseculturalworkers.com)," offers a [poster of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (at syracuseculturalworkers.com/laminated-poster-universal-declaration-human-rights).

United Nations, "[All human rights for all](#) (at www.un.org/Overview/rights.html)," offers a printable version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

SESSION 8: UUS IN ACTION

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

[T]he making of justice does not define our faith. Rather, our faith calls us to work for justice.
— Rev. William G. Sinkford

This is the last of four Amazing Grace sessions that focuses on Unitarian Universalism. The session speaks of the denomination's many continuing efforts to achieve social justice at all levels of society.

The central story is taken from the Christian scripture accounts of Jesus as shepherd and the parable of the lost sheep. A brief introduction to UU social activism follows. The session includes a round of Ethics Play. Faith in Action offers a chance for further exploration of UU social justice activities.

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate that working for social justice is a fundamental expression of UU faith
- Help youth appreciate that many other denominations and religions also work for social justice
- Share some teachings of Jesus and explore how his teachings relate to Unitarian Universalism
- Introduce participants to the music of Pete Seeger
- Familiarize youth with *UU World* magazine.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore Christian scriptural attitudes toward social justice through the stories of the good shepherd and the lost sheep
- Play roles in a hypothetical scenario where ethical decisions are demanded
- Question the role faith plays in their decision-making process

- Hear how one UU incorporates social justice themes in his music
- Optional: Find magazine accounts of UU social justice projects.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story and Discussion – Jesus and the Sheep	10
Activity 2: Conundrum Corner – Speaking of UUs and Social Justice	10
Activity 3: Finding Social Justice in Music	10
Activity 4: Ethics Play	15
Activity 5: Wall-to-Wall Questions	10
Faith in Action: Magazine Search	10
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: When I Made a Difference	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, consider your own work for social justice. What was the first action you can remember taking to make the world a better place? How have the consequences of that action influenced your social justice work today?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations complete, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- Scales of justice: actual balance scales or a drawing; see [Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document)
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the scales of justice on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the program by playing different versions of the song. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light show us the way to full social justice.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying "blessed be," or other appropriate words. Ask the youth to share briefly something they have done right since your group last met.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY AND DISCUSSION – JESUS AND THE SHEEP (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Jesus and the Sheep](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "Jesus and the Sheep," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Youth hear a parable of love and forgiveness.

Read or tell the story "Jesus and the Sheep." Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

Ask the youth for comments and reactions. Do they like hearing Jesus' parables? Is telling stories a good way to teach? Why do they think Jesus did not tell people more directly how they should act?

Offer these ideas if the group has not already done so in the discussion:

- In comparing himself to a shepherd, Jesus suggested that teaching, guiding, and leading other people are good, virtuous acts. Do UUs believe this?
- When he said that good shepherds love their sheep, he was preaching the value of love. Do UUs value love?
- By praising the shepherd who searched for the lost sheep, he encouraged people to value each other. Do UUs preach that we should value each other?

- Comparing himself to a shepherd taking care of sheep, Jesus used a metaphor. In the metaphor, his followers are likened to sheep. What would we today think of calling people “sheep?” Is the connotation pleasant? Do you think Jesus was calling his followers “mindless” or might the sheep metaphor have meant something different to people who were farmers and shepherds during Jesus’ time?
- When he spoke of heavenly joy over sinners who repent, Jesus suggested that God was loving, kind, and forgiving of sinners. Do UUs who believe in God believe God is loving, kind, and forgiving? Some UUs do not believe in a god, but do some still believe that the universe is a loving, kind, and forgiving place? Do most UUs believe we should be loving, kind, and forgiving of each other?

Would participants agree that UUs believe many of the things Jesus taught?

ACTIVITY 2: CONUNDRUM CORNER – SPEAKING OF UUS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Scales of justice in Conundrum Corner
- Samples of social justice statements issued by the Unitarian Universalist Association; see Leader Resource 2, [Social Justice Resolutions](#) (included in this document) or the pdf file linked below in Preparation for Activity.

Preparation for Activity

- Review your own understanding of Unitarian Universalism and social justice work.
- [Commission on Social Witness, Social Justice Statements](#) (at www.uua.org/documents/uua/socialjusticestatements.pdf) contains a collection of statements.

Description of Activity

Youth explore the idea of balance as it relates to social justice.

Ask youth to demonstrate what balance looks like by balancing on one foot. Then let them try that with their eyes closed. See if anybody can do that for a timed minute.

Point out the scales of justice in the Conundrum Corner and ask participants what they are. Say, if they do not, that these are the scales of justice. Scales of justice are

often used as symbols by lawyers and in courts. Ask them what connects the scales of justice with what they just did. Here are some thoughts to offer:

- Sometimes it is hard to know whether something is good or bad. You have to balance its good points and its bad points to decide.
- People who punish other people, like judges, and sometimes parents and teachers, have to balance the punishment and the sin. We do not throw somebody in jail for sticking gum under the seat in a movie theater.
- You often need to balance right and wrong when you act. You know it is wrong to break into a car; but it might be right to break into a car to help somebody who is unconscious and locked inside. Making the right decision sometimes requires a balancing act.
- When the scales of justice become unbalanced, bad things can happen. Even too much of a good thing, if an imbalance is created, can be bad.
- We have to balance our own lives. We need to decide how much time we should spend doing our homework or our jobs and how much time we should spend helping other people and making the world a better place.

Ask participants why they think Unitarian Universalists spend so much time and energy working for social justice. Why not just spend their time making money and having fun?

Suggest some of these answers if participants do not:

- They are taught to do so. The Bible and the Koran are just two of many UU Sources that say people should work for social justice.
- It just feels right to do so.
- They believe in the Golden Rule. They want to help people in trouble because they would want others to help them. (See also The Golden Rule, which is Activity 4 in Session 4, Telling Right from Wrong.)

Introduce the group to some of the social justice resolutions the Unitarian Universalist Association has passed at its annual General Assemblies. Say that the Commission on Social Witness is the organization in the UUA that is responsible for preparing these statements each year and making them available in print and online. Show the youth samples of such statements that you have found on the web or use the ones in Leader Resource 2, Social Justice Resolutions. Try to use

recent statements about subjects that you think will interest your sixth graders most.

Ask if your youth have ever attended general assemblies. Have they heard of them? General assemblies are held each year in a different American city. Thousands of delegates, representing every congregation, come together for meetings and worship, for fun and work. Some of the people at every GA are official delegates from their own congregations. They have the right to vote on behalf of their churches for or against ideas presented at large meetings called "plenary sessions." Some of the things they vote on are social action resolutions. These say what the Unitarian Universalist Association believes should be done to make the world a better place. One resolution might be about ending a war. Another might be about equal rights for minority groups.

Before concluding the activity, mention that Unitarian Universalists pride themselves on their work for social justice. However, many other denominations and religions do social justice work, and some of it is wonderful. Youth who visit other houses of worship with their friends will find that they, too, may go to soup kitchens, oppose wars, and support minority groups. Of course, different religions do not always agree about justice issues. Sometimes UUs work for causes that some other religions work against, and vice versa. But caring enough about the world to try and help it is common to religious people of many different faiths.

Say that in the next activity, Ethics Play, the group will think about doing the right things in their own lives.

Including All Participants

Skip the balancing demonstrations if youth have physical limitations that will preclude their involvement, but do not conclude too hastily that this is the case. A youth in a wheelchair may take pride in balancing on the rear wheels and somebody with crutches might have a special talent, too.

ACTIVITY 3: FINDING SOCIAL JUSTICE IN MUSIC (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Music player
- Recording of Pete Seeger singing; see Find Out More for suggestions
- Optional: The hymnal [*Singing the Living Tradition*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565). Boston: Beacon Press, 1993

Preparation for Activity

- Listen to the Seeger recording and choose a couple of social justice songs you want your group to hear.
- Listen for contemporary songs that ask for social change; if you find something appropriate, consider playing it for your group.

Description of Activity

This activity introduces your youth to music of social justice.

Play one or two Pete Seeger songs as examples of social-justice music. Explain that Pete Seeger is a famous folk singer who has performed all over the world. Many of his songs have something to do with social justice. Seeger is a member of a UU church in New York City .

The album, "Pete Seeger's Greatest Hits" has several songs associated with social justice. "Talking Union," with words written by Millard Lampell, Lee Hays, and Pete Seeger in 1941, is a call to join organized labor. "Which Side Are You On," another union song, was written by Florence Reece in response to a Kentucky coal strike in 1931. "We Shall Overcome," has been sung for decades to support various causes. It was especially popular during the civil rights movement, when thousands of Americans (including Unitarian Universalists like James Reeb) struggled to win equal rights for African Americans in the 1950s and '60s. "This Land Is Your Land" is Woody Guthrie's passionate tribute to the democratic vision. Written in the 1940s, the original version challenged the establishment with words that said, in effect, the land belongs to everybody, not just the rich, who treat it as private property.

Ask participants to identify more recent songs they have heard calling for social change. Ask also whether they think music is an effective tool to use in working for social justice. Are any members of the group musicians? Have they sung any songs relating to social justice?

You can extend this activity by having participants look through *Singing the Living Tradition* for hymns related to social justice. ("We Shall Overcome" is Hymn 169.)

ACTIVITY 4: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role name tags

- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game ask if participants had to do any balancing acts as they made their decisions. Is it always easy to tell right from wrong or justice from injustice?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ACTIVITY 5: WALL-TO-WALL QUESTIONS (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity asks youth to move around and show their answers to some belief questions based Sessions 4 through 8 of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong.

Ask the youth to help move aside any chairs or other furniture that might prevent easy motion. Explain that you are going to play wall-to-wall questions. You will ask a series of questions and you want the youth to show their answers by choosing and moving to one of two opposite walls. Say that there are only two choices for each question, yes or no; standing in the middle is not an option.

Show the youth the two walls where they are to go in response to the questions. Then ask the questions from the following list, stating after each question which wall represents which answer. Give youth a chance to talk about each question and their responses before moving on to the next one.

Do you believe...

- you have a good idea of what Unitarian Universalism is all about: yes or no
- your UU faith is helping to make the world a better place: yes or no

- punishments in your school are usually fair: yes or no
- as a UU, you have freedom to choose between right and wrong: yes or no
- as a UU, you must use your brain, your feelings, your education, and your experience to try and make the right decisions: yes or no
- your head is more important than your heart in making decisions: yes or no
- punishments in your family are usually fair: yes or no
- it is usually easy to know what is right and what is wrong: yes or no
- as a UU, you are called to try and make the world a better place: yes or no

Including All Participants

If some of your participants have limited mobility, devise a different way for the group to make their choices known. They might use a thumbs-up for yes and thumbs-down for no. Alternately, you could provide everyone with two differently colored index cards: blue for yes and yellow for no, for example. Do not, however, assume that a youth using a wheelchair or crutches would not enjoy the movement of this activity as much as any other youth.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If you earlier moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: MAGAZINE SEARCH (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A pile of back issues of *UU World* magazine, at least one for each participant
- Sticky notes or small pieces of scrap paper to use as place markers
- Newsprint and markers

Preparation for Activity

- Review the pile of *UU World* magazines to get an idea of their social justice content.

Description of Activity

Youth look through magazines to find out about social justice work UUs have done and are doing.

Distribute copies of *UU World* magazine and tell the youth to search through them for information about UU social action efforts. Pass out sticky notes or scrap paper so youth can mark their discoveries.

After youth have spent several minutes in their search, ask them to come forward and write social action topics they have found on the newsprint.

In the last few minutes of the activity, ask participants to put the magazines aside. Call attention to the newsprint and read the entries together. Do any common themes unfold? Does the list make the group feel proud to be UUs? Do they think we all had better get busy if we are going to achieve all the goals the denomination talks about? Are there any issues they would add, issues that they know their congregation or others are actively working toward improving?

Including All Participants

If participants with limited mobility have difficulty reaching the magazines, bring the magazines to them. If they have difficulty reaching the easel, bring the newsprint to them or write on it for them. However, do not assume that youth using wheelchairs or crutches do not wish to move about the room. The goal is to assist, but only when needed. If some youth have limited reading ability, have the group pair up to go through the magazines.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they

might have? Do you believe your youth feel a commitment to social-justice work as part of their UU identity? Can you lead them to projects that will help them put their ideas about right and wrong into action?

Look ahead at Session 9. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

[T]he making of justice does not define our faith. Rather, our faith calls us to work for justice.
— Rev. William G. Sinkford

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We heard about some of Jesus' ideas about right and wrong, and we talked about UU social action projects. We shared our beliefs by moving between two walls. We talked about the scales of justice and we did Ethics Play.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- Your ideas about Jesus. Do you think he was the son of God? Or a regular human who was also a great teacher?
- Balancing acts and the scales of justice. Have you ever had trouble deciding what was right or wrong? Or about what should happen to somebody who has done something wrong?
- The situation your group did in Ethics Play. What do family members and friends say the Star should do?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Finding a social action your family can do together: maybe it is working at a soup kitchen; maybe it is working on a political campaign for a candidate you support; or maybe it is going to a demonstration and holding a sign about something you believe in.
- Attending a UU conference as a family. It might be for all the congregations in your UU district. It might be a summer program at a retreat center, or it might be a retreat for just the members of your own congregation. At the conference, find out more about UU ideas of right and wrong and about social justice activities.
- Visiting some other churches of different faiths. Look at their bulletin boards to find out about their social justice work.

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and think what you do to help make the world a better place. Is it a social action project you do through your church, something at

school, or something you do on your own? If you are journaling, write what the activity is and how you feel about it. You can also write about an action you would like to take in the future.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you hadn't done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Have a family competition. See who can come up with the longest list of things you can do at home to help the environment or improve some other area of concern.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Find out about the social justice work of your friends and relatives. Are any of them doing something unusual, something you want to do, too? Are any of them doing something you feel is wrong? If so, what tells you the action is wrong?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WHEN I MADE A DIFFERENCE (15 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity asks youth to think about times when they have made a difference in someone's life.

Ask participants to tell about times when they have done something right and made a difference for somebody else. Say that their stories do not need to be exciting and dramatic tales of rushing into burning buildings. Most of us do not get called on to do those, but each of us has a chance to help other people in some way every day.

Ask the youth if they think they are bragging when they talk about good things they have done. Say that you do not believe this is the case. We all know that none of us leads a perfect life. We do wrong things as well as right things, and it is okay to talk about either. That is one of the ways we learn together and get to know each other better.

Higher-energy option: You can energize this activity by asking youth to pantomime the stories they are telling while others guess at their meaning.

Including All Participants

If you use the higher-energy option, be sure to give instructions that can be followed by all participants, including any with physical limitations.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 8: STORY: JESUS AND THE SHEEP

Excerpts from the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible.

Sheep were important in biblical times. They provided not just wool, but also meat and milk. Their horns were used as musical instruments or to hold oil. The skins were made into clothing and coverings for walls.

If you read the Bible today, you'll find that sheep and shepherds are mentioned many times. One person who counted says the Bible talks about sheep and shepherds 247 times.

The first part of the Bible, called the Hebrew scripture, includes a famous song called the twenty-third Psalm. It begins with these words: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures." In other words, people are like sheep, cared for by God.

The second part of the Bible is the Christian scripture. It tells about Jesus' life and teachings. In one famous story told by the disciple John, Jesus calls himself a shepherd. He says these famous words: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also,

and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd."

Of course, when Jesus said "Father," he meant God. But it wasn't always easy to know exactly what Jesus meant. That is because he often taught by telling stories called parables. One of the best known is called "The Parable of the Lost Sheep." Here is the way the disciple Luke tells the story:

So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance."

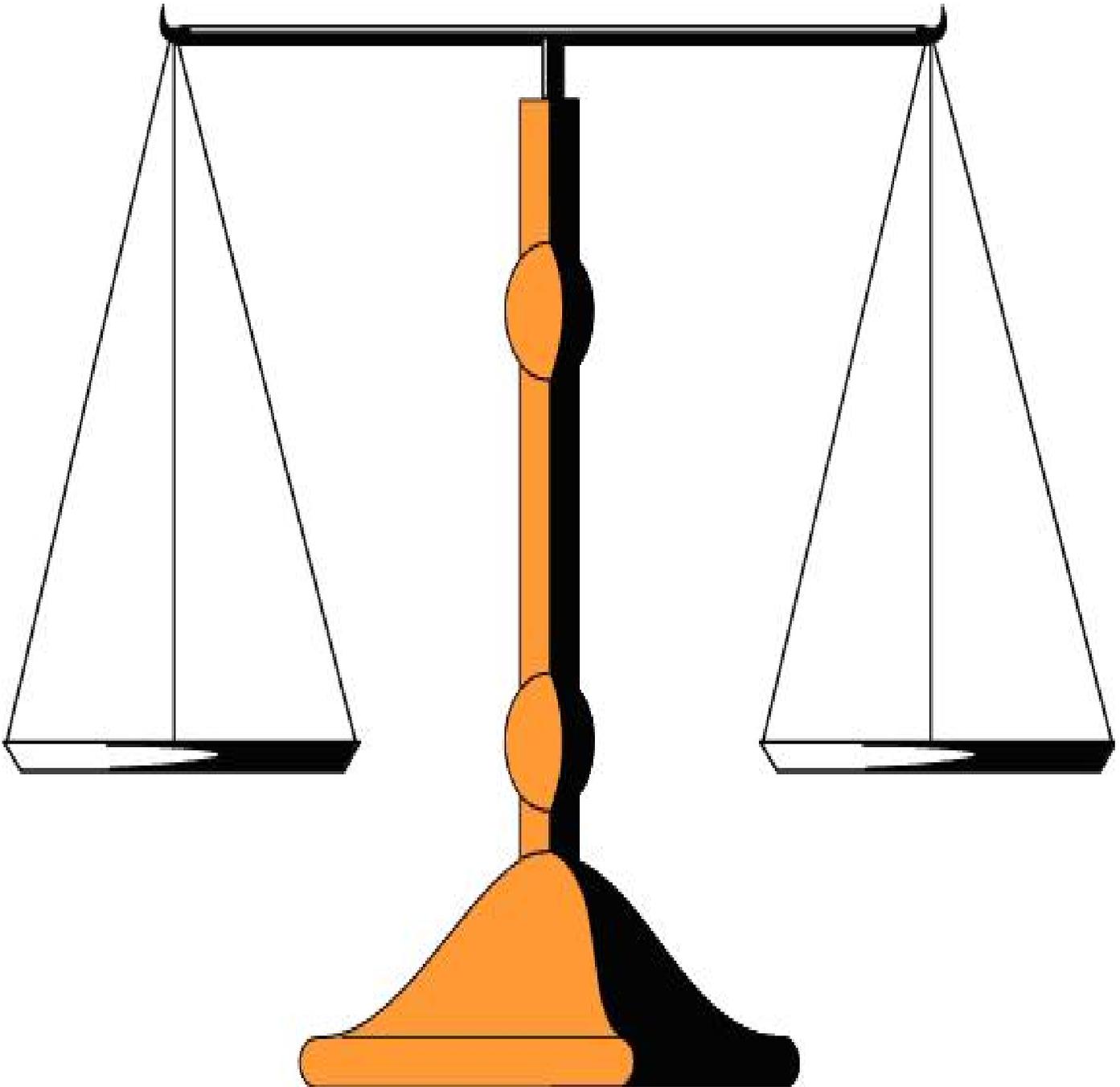
Why is this story so important? There are two reasons. The first is that it helps people know the difference between right and wrong. When there is a problem, the story says, you should not go away and ignore it. You should actively try to fix it.

The second is that the story talks about God's forgiveness. If you do something wrong, that is bad. But if you repent, God will celebrate. Repenting means feeling badly about what you did. If you repent, you admit that you were wrong, you say you are sorry, and you find ways to make things better.

So sheep in biblical times were good for more than meat, milk, wool, and skin. They and their shepherds were a big help to religious leaders and teachers who wanted people to know the difference between right and wrong.

**AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 8:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: SCALES OF JUSTICE**

Clipart drawing of the scale is from the CorelDraw! clipart collection.



AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 8: LEADER RESOURCE 2: SOCIAL JUSTICE RESOLUTIONS

From the Social-Justice Statement Book of the UUA

Here are a few sample resolutions.

1. END OF TOBACCO PRICE SUPPORT PROGRAM—1978

WHEREAS, tobacco smoking is harmful to human health; and

WHEREAS, the world needs more food crops grown on the limited areas of fertile land; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture spends many millions of dollars each year to support tobacco production; and

WHEREAS, such tax money should be used for more constructive purposes, not for the encouragement of farming practices that are ultimately detrimental to consumers;

BE IT RESOLVED: That the 1978 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges the United States Congress to terminate all price support programs for tobacco, beginning with the 1980 crop of tobacco, and to establish a program funded over a four-year period by part of the money thus saved to assist small farmers to convert from tobacco to the production of other commodities.

2. ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT—1973

BE IT RESOLVED: That the 1973 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association opposes the corporal punishment of children in schools, juvenile detention facilities, and other public institutions where children are cared for or educated and urges that members of UUA societies work actively through school boards, legislatures, and courts to help arouse public opinion to bring an end to the practice.

3. AGAINST CENSORSHIP IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS—1988

Because Unitarian Universalists have historically affirmed the value of public education in a pluralistic society; and

Because we believe that free inquiry strengthens minds in the individual search for knowledge; and

WHEREAS, recent history shows a continuing series of attacks on access to information and ideas in the classroom as well as attempts to promote sectarian ideology in public education at national, state, provincial, and school-district levels; and strategies are being pursued to eliminate from public school curricula any material considered by some parents to be offensive to their own religious beliefs; and

WHEREAS, a broad-based, multicultural public school system requires that teaching instruments, including textbooks, film, video, speakers, and student publications exhibit a varied and open exposition of historical, scientific, and cultural fact;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Unitarian Universalist Association, mindful of the roles played by religious movements throughout our history, encourages its members to affirm that educational excellence rather than the promotion of sectarian ideology is the proper business of public education and calls upon congregations and individual members:

1. To educate themselves and the public on censorship and sectarian interference in education;
2. To organize groups to monitor religious intrusions affecting public schools, especially curricula and educational materials;
3. To encourage teachers, parents, students, librarians, and other school officials and community residents to remain vigilant in the fact of censorship challenges;
4. To advocate laws, regulations, and policies in educational, legislative, and judicial arenas ensuring freedom from sectarian based censorship of curriculum and extra-curricular activities, which include student publications;
5. To oppose vigorously efforts to make public education conform to any group's sectarian beliefs;

and

6. To support the development of curricula designed to teach the historic and cultural influence of religious movements and religious motivation while excluding the teaching of specific sectarian doctrine.

4. ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES—1997

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; and

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists believe in the importance of religious community; and

WHEREAS people with physical, psychiatric, and developmental disabilities are becoming more involved in all areas and levels of the Unitarian Universalist Association; and

WHEREAS people with inabilities to see, hear, or maneuver around allotted space are often excluded from full participation in and leadership of our worship services and other activities because of the inaccessibility of our buildings;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 1997 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association undertakes an aggressive plan to address accessibility within the Association for people with disabilities by:

1. Establishing written policies and practices, providing staff training, and creating an accessibility manual for the Unitarian Universalist Association, allowing the Association to serve as a model of physical and attitudinal accessibility for its member congregations;
2. Encouraging congregations and districts to become more accessible by providing a variety of resources, including information on the Internet; and
3. Assuring that a Board-appointed standing committee, supporting congregations in their efforts to become more accessible, address matters of disability concerns and report annually to the General Assembly on these issues.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Unitarian Universalist Association acts as an advocate for the human and civil rights of people with disabilities both within its own association and globally.

FIND OUT MORE

Parker, Victoria. *The Children's Illustrated Bible* (Great Britain: Hermes House, 2001). This book has a large and very good collection of Bible stories for young people, including pictures.

Seeger, Pete. *Where Have All the Flowers Gone: A Singer's Stories, Songs, Seeds, Robberies* (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out Corporation, 1993); and Pete Seeger's *Greatest Hits* (New York: Sony Common Cord CD, 2002).

Morales, Peter, ed. [*The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=649) (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2012). This is a brief but excellent introduction to Unitarian Universalism.

The [Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations](#) (at uua.org/)' website has back electronic issues of *UU World* and information about social-action programs and general assembly resolutions.

SESSION 9: SPIRITUALITY AND ME

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The spiritual journey is the process of learning to know oneself and becoming self-aware. We learn to love ourselves as the sacred beings that we are, and discover in that love that we are connected to all that exists; thus we develop compassion and strength.
— Elisa Davy Pearmain

Sessions 9 through 12 all include spiritual moments of some sort. Their purpose is to let youth experience different paths to spiritual feeling. Creating a true spiritual moment that will sweep youth out of the present and into a transcendent experience of the mystery in the midst of a busy hour with friends is a major challenge and perhaps an impossibility. But showing them the way and preparing them to experience such a moment in their own time and space is a reasonable goal. Achieving it means treating the idea seriously yourself and encouraging the youth to settle down for a quiet moment and open themselves to the possibility of new sensation.

This session explores the nature of spirituality and how it relates to right and wrong. This session is the first of four that focus on spiritual development. The session begins by returning to the concepts of soul (introduced in Session 6, The First U) and conscience (introduced in Session 4, Telling Right from Wrong, and Session 7, The Second U).

Activities open with a play that deals with soul and conscience. The next activity involves a spiritual moment based in music. Participants then consider the relative influence of various moral advisors to youth and experience two stories relating to the session themes. Faith in Action asks participants to search for ways to develop their own understanding of soul and spirituality.

Earlier sessions have encouraged youth to honor the voice of conscience in distinguishing right from wrong. This one will help them appreciate conscience as reflection and expression of deepest spiritual self.

Like our ideas about spirituality and God, our ideas of soul and self are personal, sometimes, even private. Through your own modeling, help participants to see and honor the rights of others to keep some thoughts to themselves. But also accept and welcome the openness that some youth may offer as you encourage all to look deep into themselves and matters of the spirit. Sixth graders are typically at the edge of a growth period that will greatly expand their ability to delve into the

philosophical and the abstract. Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong can help make them ready for and open to that process.

GOALS

This session will:

- Enlarge participants' understanding of spirituality
- Explore the concept and inner reality of soul
- Consider the role of conscience and moral advisors in distinguishing between right and wrong
- Present two stories, one about God's nature and one about knowing self.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider the nature of soul and conscience
- Experience a spiritual moment based in music
- Consider the relative importance of possible spiritual and moral advisors.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: The Youth and the Guru – A Play	17
Activity 2: A Spiritual Moment in Music	10
Activity 3: Putting Your Advisors in Order	10
Activity 4: Stories and Discussion – Hide-and-Go-Seek and Know Yourself	14
Faith in Action: Personal Sole Search	10
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Ethics Play	15
Alternate Activity 2: Making Moral Compasses	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, explore your own ideas about spirituality and soul. Can you summarize your spirituality in a few words? Is it

important to do so or not? What about your ideas of soul—is that a helpful concept for you?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe

deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- A picture frame with blank photo
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the blank photograph on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the program by playing different versions of the song. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us to see and to know our deepest, most spiritual selves, the place of soul and conscience.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

Ask the youth to go around the room and say on a scale of 1 to 10 how virtuous they have been in the last week. Explain that a 1 means they did a lot wrong this week, and a 10 means they were perfect and they did not do even one thing wrong. Avoid sounding too serious about this; you do not want the youth to feel they have stumbled into a confession booth or that you will be reporting scores to parents right after the session. To keep things light, you might suggest they think about what Santa might have said if he had been watching and judging them during the week. Assure the group you will not be asking for details of wrongs committed.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: THE YOUTH AND THE GURU – A PLAY (17 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, "[The Youth and the Guru](#) (included in this document) "
- Hanging nametags
- A picture frame with blank photo from Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how to divide up and assign actor parts.
- Make a copy of the script for each actor and each leader.
- Label name tags with the roles in the play.
- Determine what part of your meeting space will make the best stage.

Description of Activity

Participants perform "The Youth and the Guru." The play speaks of spirituality, soul, and conscience, and helps introduce all four curriculum sessions that focus on spiritual development.

"The Youth and the Guru" uses six actors. If you have fewer than six participants, let individuals play more than one part. If you have more than six, stop the play from time to time and reassign some parts to new people. The nametags are important to help actors as well as any audience keep track of who is who. The tags should be large enough for you to see at a distance. Actors playing more than one part should hold up the appropriate nametag when they read.

After the reading, ask participants what they think "The Youth and the Guru" is telling them about right and wrong. Do they ever think about having a soul, or what it is? Affirm or clarify that the soul is the deepest part of yourself, your human spirit. Do they think the conscience is part of the soul? What do they think of the quotation the Guru offers from Jean-Jacques Rousseau: "Conscience is the voice of the soul." Offer a definition of conscience as an internal sense of right and wrong. If conscience is connected to the soul, does this mean that deciding between right and wrong is a spiritual act?

NOTE: Some sixth graders will find these ideas heavy to digest. Lead them as deep as they are willing and able to go, then break off and do something different. Even minimal discussion will give the group the lighter ideas of the play to remember and consider when the session is over.

Point out the framed blank "photo" and ask them what they think it shows. Given the context of the play, some will probably guess that is supposed to "show" the soul. Can they see an image? (No.) But is there something there other than paper? That is up to them to decide.

Including All Participants

Quietly coach any participants with limited reading ability when they stumble over words. The play works fine with or without motion.

ACTIVITY 2: A SPIRITUAL MOMENT IN MUSIC (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Music player
- Recording of one or two pieces of music that you find spiritual; see Find Out More for suggestions

Preparation for Activity

- Decide what music you will use.
- Decide how best to have youth seated to experience spiritual music.

Description of Activity

Participants seek spiritual connections to music.

Begin by speaking of spiritual moments, with ideas like these:

We all experience spiritual moments from time to time. Those are moments when we feel deeply connected to something much larger than ourselves. We need to have these moments because they can help feed our spiritual center—our soul and our conscience. All that is required for this to happen is for us to be silent and open to the possibility of experiencing something new and deep. You might have such a moment when you are outside on a summer night looking up at the stars; when you are walking through a forest; looking at a great piece of art; or worshiping, either with your congregation or at home. Or you might experience such a moment when you listen to music.

I will play music that some people find spiritual. While it is playing, try to experience the music on all levels. This means deep listening. It means hearing the music much differently than we hear the band at a football game or the music in a store or the music at a dance when we are thinking about our partners and the people watching us and a thousand other things. It means settling down and letting the music fill us so full that it seems to carry us away. That's a spiritual moment. And it is not always easy to have but it is always rewarding. So let's try it now.

Play a piece of music that you find spiritual. One possibility is the "Om Namaha Shivaya" by Robert Gass and Wings of Song (see Find Out More). Jazz or world music will also work, as will many different works of classical music, such as the choral section of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. (Use a German-language version and play the chorus singing the "Ode to Joy" in the final movement.) It is best to use music that appeals to you and to avoid music that has understandable words. "Om Namaha Shivaya," a Sanskrit chant of Indian origin, has words that youth will not recognize. Some say they cannot really be translated into English. Others say they mean, "I bow to Shiva, or God, or inner self, or mystery." Another translation is: "Lead us Lord to source of thy enlightenment."

Do not be reluctant to play classical or jazz music for youth. Some will resist it, but others experiencing it for the first time may be suddenly opened to a completely new world.

If you have time, you might play two pieces of music and ask youth which felt most spiritual for them. For example, play the two versions of "Om Namaha Shivaya" listed in Find Out More.

Whatever music you choose, approach its use seriously and quietly, and ask youth to do the same. Remind them that listening to such music is a profound spiritual experience for some people. It may not work that way for them but they will not know unless they really try and let the music enter them. You might add that music which touches them might not touch their friend, and vice versa. Ask the youth to sit quietly in a relaxed position (or to lie on the floor if this will work with your group without too much disruption), then to close their eyes and let the music enter them.

Start the music at a low volume, and gradually bring it up until it fills the whole room. Let it continue at that setting for several minutes, then gradually decrease it again. As it ends, allow silence to settle upon the group before quietly asking what youth experienced.

If youth did not find this experience spiritual, ask if they think other types of music would work better for them. Discuss situations where they felt profoundly affected by music. Ask also if anybody wants to share other ways that they experience spirituality.

Including All Participants

If your group includes participants with limited hearing ability, ascertain in advance how they usually experience music. Do not assume that even the limited experience of sound and beat will have no meaning for them. However, if you have youth who cannot be touched by music, consider introducing the practice of silent meditation instead of using the music. (Guided meditation is introduced in Session 10, Right and Wrong Together.)

ACTIVITY 3: PUTTING YOUR ADVISORS IN ORDER (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Spiritual and Ethical Advisors](#) (included in this document)
- Masking tape

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how to divide the group into smaller groups of two to four participants. Using Leader Resource 2, Spiritual and Ethical Advisors, create sets of cards for each small group. Each set should have a card for each advisor listed on the leader resource, including two that say, "Who else?"

Description of Activity

This activity leads youth to consider what advisors can best help them decide between right and wrong actions.

Begin with ideas like these:

Conscience comes from our deepest, spiritual self and it is often a good guide, even the best guide, to what is right and wrong. However, sometimes our conscience has trouble making decisions, too. First, it tells us one thing, then it tells us another, and we have trouble knowing just what to do. In some situations, it seems that no matter how we act, we are going to hurt somebody. Maybe we help one friend but by doing so we make another friend angry. How are we supposed to know what to do? In such situations, we might need to get advice from somebody else. Fortunately, a lot of people may be willing to help us decide what to do. Unfortunately, they may disagree with each other and some of them might not even have very good ideas. In cases like that, it helps to know which advisors we should listen to most closely.

Point out that youth are not the only people who sometimes need spiritual and ethical advisors. Thoughtful adults need them, too. Sometimes the best decision you can make about solving a problem is where to get help and advice.

Divide the group into smaller groups and give each one a stack of cards or papers with the names of spiritual and ethical advisors. These cards will be made from Leader Resource 2, Spiritual and Ethical Advisors. That resource lists nine potential advisors and includes two more entries that say "Who else?" These allow the youth to think of and add some other potential advisors. Explain that a spiritual advisor is somebody who helps another person grow in spiritual ways. A spiritual advisor could help you see how your faith can help you make good decisions. A minister is an example of a spiritual advisor. An ethical advisor can help you talk about right and wrong in different ways that might have less to do with religion. A school counselor might be a good ethical advisor.

Explain that the small groups should each take its stack of advisor names and put it in order from most helpful advisor to least helpful advisor. If they want, they can add some other advisors to the "Who Else?" cards. Putting the cards in order will be challenging because some youth might have very helpful school counselors and teachers and others might not. Some youth might be home schooled, so they have no experience with school personnel. Each group should talk and just do the best they can to order the cards the way they think

will work for most youth. If the group cannot decide between two cards, it can put them just about together. There is not a right or wrong way to do this. The point is not to make all the lists identical but to think about the possibilities.

Explain that when the groups have made their decisions, they should each take a long strip of masking tape and lay it upside down on a table or the floor. It should be long enough so that they can lay out their cards, in order, one after the other with the back of each card against the sticky side of the tape. This way the cards will stay in place while the groups compare their ideas.

Typically, in prioritizing activities like this, youth settle in groups on the floor or stand or sit around tables so they can line up the cards to read them and shuffle them around to try different orders.

Let the activity proceed. When all have their cards in order on tape, ask everyone to stand and walk around to see what each group decided. If you have time, you might let each group state some of the reasons for its choices.

Summarize the activity with words like these:

Here is another case where we all have to make our own decisions. We have to decide when we need help and where we should go to get it. For many of us, parents will be best. For others, it may be school counselors or friends we can trust. We know that adults are not the only people in the world with good ideas, but they do sometimes have experiences and knowledge that can be very helpful to youth.

Including All Participants

Plan workspaces for this activity so that all will be able to assist with moving the cards around. This may mean using tables and chairs so the youth themselves do not need to move.

ACTIVITY 4: STORIES – HIDE-AND-GO-SEEK AND KNOW YOURSELF (14 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Hide-and-Go-Seek](#)" (included in this document) , and Story 2, "[Know Yourself](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the stories.
- Photocopy Stories 1, "Hide-and-Go-Seek," and 2, "Know Yourself," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Share two stories about conscience.

Announce that today you will be sharing two very short stories instead of a single longer one. Tell or read "Hide-and-Go-Seek," a wonderfully succinct way to express the mystery of God's possible presence. Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

Ask youth for their reactions. Note that people often mean different things when they use the word "God." In fact, some people might want to use words other than "God" in this story. How would youth feel about the story if the word "wisdom" replaced the word "God"? What about "love" or "mystery"? Can they suggest other terms? Ask also if ideas about God, wisdom, love, and mystery are spiritual ideas. In other words, do they help us understand our connections with our inner selves, with others, and with the universe?

Tell or read the story "Know Yourself." Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it. Explain that the opening words are a traditional opening for Muslim stories. Another common translation of it is: "Once there was and twice there wasn't...." The opening means that the story is simply a story, not a historical report.

Ask for youth reactions. Do they think the generous man was a spiritual man? Was his conscience strong? What do they think the Guru in the play from Activity 1 would have thought of this man—that he was good, or foolish?

Ask also if stories like these can help people develop their spirituality. What about their understanding of soul and conscience, of right and wrong?

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: PERSONAL SOLE SEARCH (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- 8.5" x 11" paper, one sheet for each youth
- Pencils
- Music player and background music

Description of Activity

This activity returns to the subjects of the opening play—spirituality, soul, and conscience—and asks youth to explore their own inner selves in the days ahead.

Say that for youth to put their Faith into Action successfully, they must know their faith. This means in part that they must know themselves as spiritual beings. They must understand their consciences fully. In other words, they must successfully search their own souls. This activity will help them do that by using soles with an "e" instead of souls with a "u."

Ask the youth each to take off one shoe. Distribute paper and a pencil to each, and ask that they draw their own sole with an "e" by tracing around it on the paper. They may include heels and toes if they wish (and if they have room) but the only part they need is the sole.

Then say you are going to give the youth two or three minutes to think and explore their souls with a "u" while you play some quiet music. Before they begin, they should remember some of what the Guru in the play said about feeding the soul with spiritual materials and about developing conscience. As the music plays, they should decide on one to three things they should do to further develop their own understanding of souls, spirituality, and conscience. Maybe they will decide they should meditate or experience music more often. Maybe they should talk with somebody about how to solve a problem involving right or wrong. Maybe they will commit to attending worship services with their families or reading about spiritual matters. They should decide on these things by themselves, without paying attention to one another's ideas. When they are done, they should write down their ideas on their paper soles.

When individual youth have finished writing, ask them to sit quietly so others can do the same. When all are ready, tell them to fold up their papers so they're small enough to place in their shoes. Tell them to place them inside their shoes, on the soles, and to put their shoes back on. This way nobody but them will see the paper and they will be reminded of what they said when they remove their shoes later.

Ask them to act on what they wrote in the days ahead. See if they can think more deeply about spirituality,

understand their souls better, and develop their consciences more before your next session of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong. At that session, you will ask how they made out, and they can tell the group as much or as little as they like.

Including All Participants

Assist any youth with limited mobility as necessary in making a sole drawing.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? Do you believe your youth are developing a basic understanding of the meaning and depth of spirituality? Are they comfortable with the idea of soul as a concept rather than as a physical presence in the body? Are they taking the idea of "Faith in Action" seriously?

Look ahead at Session 10. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

The spiritual journey is the process of learning to know oneself and becoming self-aware. We learn to love ourselves as the sacred beings that we are, and discover in that love that we are connected to all that exists; thus we develop compassion and strength.

— Elisa Davy Pearmain

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We did a play about lost kids who were soul-searching and found a guru who spoke about conscience and soul and spirituality. We listened to spiritual music, talked about how important different advisors are to us, and we heard two stories, one about God hiding in people and the other about knowing ourselves. For Faith in Action we used our soles with an "e" to think about our souls with a "u."

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- Souls. Do people in your family think about their souls? Worry about feeding them with spiritual ideas? What are some of their favorite "soul foods"?
- Your consciences. Are they strong enough? Do they feel too strong sometimes? Do you ever stop yourself from doing fun things because your conscience says not to?

- Advisors. Who outside your family do you and others think make good advisors?
- This quote is often attributed to C. S. Lewis: "You do not have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body." What does this mean? Does it change the way you think about your soul? Is it useful?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Talking about what you can do as a family to make the world a better place. Maybe you can choose a section of highway, or another piece of public land, to keep clean. What else can you do?
- Deciding which of your family decisions involve ethical choices. In other words, decide together as a family when a decision involves right and wrong. Is choosing which TV show to watch ever an ethical decision, or does that not matter? What about deciding whether to go along on a trip to buy groceries?
- Sharing what your consciences say. The next time your family needs to make an ethical decision, take a moment to sit quietly together and then let everybody say what their conscience is telling them to do.

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and think about soul. What is it like? How would you describe it to a friend? If you are journaling, write your description of it and list some of the ways you feed your soul.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Does your family enjoy playing board games? The next time you play, look for situations that involve decisions. Examine how family members make those decisions. For example, in playing Sorry, if you have to decide which player to bump back to Home, how do you make that decision? Do you choose the player closest to winning, the one who has been bumped the least, anyone but your younger sibling, or the one who will benefit you most?

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Spin the radio dial, or, if your radio has a scan button, let it go from one station to the next while everybody listens for spiritual sounds. Let anybody say, "stop" when they hear something that sounds spiritual to them and stop the search so you can all listen for a moment before moving on. Do you all agree on which music is spiritual?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role name tags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game, ask what role conscience played in participants' decisions. Did they have a sense of what they should do deep inside?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MAKING MORAL COMPASSES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- 8.5" x 11" paper and pencil for each participant
- A directional compass
- Drawing compasses, plates, or other tools for making circles
- Rulers or other straight-edged tools
- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Think about what people need to know to make good, ethical decisions.

Description of Activity

In this activity, youth make paper compasses showing some of the things people need to know to make good, ethical decisions.

Explain the general process, then conduct a brainstorming session and list some of the things people need to know to make moral or ethical decisions. (You might need to explain that "morality" means the "state of being good." A "moral decision" is the right decision and a "moral act" is the right thing to do.) Possibilities for the list include, but are not limited to: the difference between right and wrong, truth, what your conscience says, what your faith or religion says, how the Golden Rule works, and what the law says. If you will have time for participants to write eight things on their compasses, try to make the list longer than eight items. If time is short and you will ask participants to choose just four items for their compasses, try to have at least six items on the list.

Show the youth your directional compass, and remind them of how it works. The arrow points automatically to the north, making it possible to know how to move in any direction of interest.

Say that they will now each draw a moral compass. At the top, instead of north, they should write something like "moral choice," "ethical decision," or "right thing to do." For the other directions, they can pick from your brainstormed list the items they think are most important. Tell the group whether they should put four or eight directions on their compasses. Also, explain what tools you have provided for drawing circles and lines. Note that the terms they choose might take up too much space to fit easily around their paper circles, so they might need to make up and use abbreviations for the "directions" they choose. They might also write their entries perpendicular to the circumference of their circle, along imaginary lines coming out from the center. Each participant should write her/his own name or initials at the bottom of his/her page.

When all have completed their compasses, either ask each of them to explain theirs to the group or place them around the room so all can walk around and look at them. Consider whether to leave them on display or to let youth take them with them at the end of the session.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 9: STORY: HIDE-AND-GO-SEEK

Doorways to the Soul, Elisa Davy Pearmain, p. vii. "Hide and Seek," Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press. Copyright (C) 1998. Used by Permission for this one time use. No reprints or use permitted. All Rights Reserved

Once upon a time when the earth was new, the Creator decided that she wanted to play a game of hide-and-go-seek.

It was at about this same time that the Creator's angels were having a meeting. They were afraid that people might try to kidnap or monopolize God, and so they decided that she had to be hidden in a safe place, a place where all people would be able to find her if they searched, but where none could own her exclusively. So they sent out angel scouts to find this perfect place....

Meanwhile, the Creator had already found her hiding place—the safest, fairest, and warmest place to hide, and yet the most difficult to find—inside each and every human heart.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 9: STORY: KNOW YOURSELF

Retold by Sarah Conover and Freda Crane. From *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents* (Boston: Skinner House, 2010).

Kan ya ma kan: there was and there was not a man known far and wide for his generosity. One day, sitting with his friends sipping coffee in the village square, a poor woman approached him with a small request for money to feed her child.

"Of course!" he replied, and without hesitation plucked coin after coin out of his pocket, piling them into the woman's hand until they spilled on the ground.

Overwhelmed with this show of kindness, the woman began to weep. She bowed her head in gratitude. "May Allah bless you, Sir. You have saved my child's life." She carefully placed the coins in a small cloth sack. Glancing up a last time, she thanked him with a frail half-smile.

When she was out of earshot, the man's friends probed him with questions: "Why did you give her so much money?" asked one.

"That was foolish. Don't you think she will tell all her friends?" asked another.

"A line of beggars will be at your door tomorrow morning!" warned a third.

"Just yesterday, you gave your zakaat, your charity," said a fourth. "You weren't obliged to give her any. Why did you do it?"

The generous man kept silent until their indignation ran its course. At last they quieted down.

"While such a poor woman may be pleased with just a little money from me," said the generous man, "I couldn't have been." He looked from friend to friend. "Unless I give her what I am able to, I won't be happy. She may not know me, but I know myself."

And the group of men, thoughtful and contrite, said no more about it.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 9: LEADER RESOURCE 1: THE YOUTH AND THE GURU - A PLAY

Props needed: Hanging name tags with character names

A hand-held GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver, real or fake

Long-haired wig for Guru

Characters

Narrator

First UU Youth

Second UU Youth

Third UU Youth

Fourth UU Youth

Guru

Scene

The entrance to a high mountain cave. As the play opens, the Narrator is alone on stage.

NARRATOR: Some UU youth are on a weekend retreat. Their leader, Ms. Digdeep, has divided them into groups of four and told them to spend the afternoon soul-searching. The four youth in one group have taken the instructions literally and headed off to look for souls, but they have gotten badly lost. Now they have climbed a mountain so they can look around and see where they are.

(The four UU youth appear. The fourth UU youth is carrying the GPS receiver.)

FIRST UU YOUTH: Hey, look at that!

SECOND UU YOUTH: I can't look at anything. I'm too hungry.

THIRD UU YOUTH: It's a cave! And there's a doorbell.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: Let's ring it. Maybe somebody's home and can tell us where we are.

FIRST UU YOUTH: I got it. (Reaches out to ring doorbell.)

SECOND UU YOUTH: I hear footsteps.

THIRD UU YOUTH: And where there are footsteps, there are soles. Maybe our sole-search is over.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: How dumb can you get?

THIRD UU YOUTH: That was a joke!

SECOND UU YOUTH: How can you joke when I'm so hungry?

NARRATOR: After another anxious moment, a long-haired Guru comes out of the cave.

(Guru appears.)

GURU: Hey, guys, what are you doing up here?

FIRST UU YOUTH: We were on a soul search and then we got lost.

THIRD UU YOUTH: After somebody, and I won't say who, dropped the GPS into that stream back there.

SECOND UU YOUTH: It wasn't my fault! It was karma. And who cares? It doesn't much matter now that we're starving to death.

THIRD UU YOUTH: Do you have any food?

GURU: Food for your body or food for your soul?

FOURTH UU YOUTH: Let's start with our bodies.

GURU: How about peanut-butter sandwiches?

FIRST UU YOUTH: Wow! That's great!

SECOND UU YOUTH: (Wailing.) Nooooo! I'm allergic!

GURU: Not to worry. For you I have avocado and tofu on whole wheat with Grey Poupon mustard.

SECOND UU YOUTH: Can I have ketchup instead?

GURU: Sure. You guys wash up while I get the food.

NARRATOR: The guru and the youth have eaten. By the way, don't worry about me. Nobody ever feeds narrators in plays like this. The youth have all flossed their teeth, at the insistence of the guru, and they are staying in the cave while they digest their food.

GURU: Thanks for staying, guys. I don't see many real, live people up here. I usually can talk only by e-mail.

THIRD UU YOUTH: You have a computer in your cave?

GURU: Of course. I'm a modern guru. I've got a Bluetooth connection, too.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: I guess we have to stay until we figure out how to leave.

FIRST UU YOUTH: Besides, the view up here is terrific. You can see forever.

SECOND UU YOUTH: Maybe you can help us with our soul searching.

GURU: You seem to need it. You are truly lost souls.

THIRD UU YOUTH: Yeah. Lost souls looking for souls.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: So, do you have any souls hidden away in that cave?

GURU: My friends, you don't have to climb a mountain and dig around in caves to find souls.

FIRST UU YOUTH: So where are they? We sure didn't see any on the trail back there.

SECOND UU YOUTH: Or in the stream where I was looking. All I saw was my reflection.

THIRD UU YOUTH: And then the GPS you dropped, gurgling away in the water, until you pulled it out.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: Never mind. (To Guru.) So tell us about souls, Most Esteemed Guru.

GURU: I thought you'd never ask. You don't need to climb mountains to find souls because your souls with a "u" are inside you as much as the soles with an "e" are on your feet.

FIRST UU YOUTH: (Scrunching eyes shut.) I can't see a soul in there even with my eyes closed.

SECOND UU YOUTH: And I can't feel a soul even when I stand real still.

GURU: You can't see the wind, either, but it is there. Souls can't be seen. But they are as hungry as bodies. If you feed them, you will know that they are there.

THIRD UU YOUTH: I just fed mine a half a peanut-butter sandwich.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: I hope my soul doesn't like raw carrots, 'cause I sure don't.

NARRATOR: The Guru sighs.

GURU: (Sighs.)

NARRATOR: It is obvious that the Guru has a lot of guru-ing to do

GURU: You can't feed souls with peanut butter and carrots. Food feeds the body. Spirituality feeds the soul.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: You mean like deep thoughts? And reading?

FIRST UU YOUTH: And music and art, and stuff?

SECOND UU YOUTH: And like nature? And meditation?

GURU: You are all right. Maybe you've been paying attention to Ms. Digdeep after all. You feed your soul by tapping the mystery.

THIRD UU YOUTH: Tapping the mystery? I don't think I understand.

GURU: The mystery is where the spiritual finds its happiness. Tap it, and that happiness will visit your soul.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: Wait a minute! Did you mention Ms. Digdeep? We didn't say anything about her, so how do you know her name?

GURU: Gurus know a lot. That's why we're paid the big bucks.

FIRST UU YOUTH: So what's in it for us if we feed our souls?

GURU: What's in it for you? Ah, this younger generation. Sometimes I fear for your souls. What's in it for you is you.

SECOND UU YOUTH: Huh?

GURU: Your soul is your deepest self. Without it you can't be you. You will just be an eating machine.

SECOND UU YOUTH: Sounds good to me. What's wrong with that?

THIRD UU YOUTH: So where is this soul? Up in my brain? Down by my appendix? Bouncing around on my heart?

GURU: It isn't any one place. The soul is everywhere and nowhere. It is through you and around you and in you. It is you.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: And what if we do feed it? What happens then?

GURU: A starving soul just sits there acting dead. A well-fed, thriving soul will center you. It will balance you. It will ground you. It will assist you. It will help you find purpose and meaning in life. Feed your soul, and it in turn will nurture you. It will feed your faith. It will fertilize your conscience, and your conscience will help you sort out right from wrong.

FIRST UU YOUTH: Oh-oh. Who needs a bigger conscience?

SECOND UU YOUTH: No way! All your conscience does is tell you "no"!

GURU: Listen closely to your soul, my friend, and sometimes it will tell you "yes." All UUs discover that. And there is the way to joy, when your conscience tells you "yes."

THIRD UU YOUTH: There you go again. How did you know we are UUs?

GURU: It says so on your name tags.

FOURTH GURU: You really are a wise one, Guru.

NARRATOR: The five talk on for an hour or so before it is time to sum things up.

FIRST UU YOUTH: So you can't see your soul?

GURU: Think of the soul as a mystery mirror. It helps you see yourself.

SECOND UU YOUTH: And you can't weigh your soul?

GURU: No, but your soul can help you bear the weight of the world.

THIRD UU YOUTH: And you can't touch your soul?

GURU: No, but your soul can help you touch others.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: So the soul isn't physical at all?

GURU: No, it is not. The soul is the name you give to the deepest part of you. The soul is a concept, an idea, a way of connecting beyond yourself to mystery and truth. You can't see it, but you can feel it and you can hear it.

FIRST UU YOUTH: Hear it? How can you hear your soul?

GURU: You listen to your conscience. "Conscience is the voice of the soul." That's a quote from the great philosopher Rousseau.

SECOND UU YOUTH: Can it tell us how to get back to Ms. Digdeep and the other kids?

GURU: No, but I can do that.

SECOND UU YOUTH: You can? How do we do it?

GURU: Use your GPS.

THIRD UU YOUTH: We already told you. We can't do that because somebody whose name I won't mention dropped it in a stream.

SECOND UU YOUTH: It wasn't my fault!

GURU: Who has it now?

FOURTH UU YOUTH: I do. It belongs to my father. He's going to be furious when he sees water dripping out of it.

GURU: Here. Let me have it. I'll be right back.

(The fourth UU youth hands the GPS receiver to the Guru, who walks off stage.)

NARRATOR: The Guru goes into the cave, leaving the youth to talk alone.

FIRST UU YOUTH: Is the Guru for real?

SECOND UU YOUTH: I don't know, but that sandwich sure was real. Good, too.

THIRD UU YOUTH: Wait until I tell my science teacher about souls.

FOURTH UU YOUTH: The other kids will think you're crazy.

THIRD UU YOUTH: That's okay. They already do.

FIRST UU YOUTH: Shhhhh. I hear the Guru coming.

NARRATOR: The Guru returns from the cave.

GURU: (Hands the GPS receiver to fourth UU youth.) Here. It's okay now.

SECOND UU YOUTH: It is? How did you do that? Did you work a miracle?

GURU: I dried it with my hair dryer.

THIRD UU YOUTH: You have a hair dryer in there?

GURU: Of course. How else could I keep this hair under control?

FOURTH UU YOUTH: Well, upon my soul!

NARRATOR: The four UU youth descend from the mountaintop. (The four youth walk off.) The Guru returns to the cave and computer. (The Guru walks off.) This play ends. (The Narrator walks off.)

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 9: LEADER RESOURCE 2: SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL ADVISORS

Police officer

Doctor

Parent

Schoolteacher

School counselor

Same-age friends

Adult friends

Minister or religious-education leaders

Brother or sister

Who else?

Who else?

FIND OUT MORE

[Management for the rest of us](http://www.mftrou.com/ethical-decision-making.html) (at www.mftrou.com/ethical-decision-making.html) lists five steps to take in ethical decision-making.

Conover, Sara, and Crane, Freda, [*Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents*](#) (at <http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1274>) (Boston: Skinner House, 2010). This is an excellent collection of stories including "Know Yourself."

Pearmain, Elisa Davy. *Doorways to the Soul: 52 Wisdom Tales from a round the World* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1998). This collection of stories comes with guidance for understanding and further exploration of story themes.

Gass, Robert and On Wings of Song, "Om Namaha Shivaya." Spring Hill Music, 1996. This is the tenth anniversary deluxe edition of a very beautiful and well-

known rendition of "Om Namaha Shivaya"; also includes a 17-minute "Om": both are highly recommended.

Gopal's Bhajan Group, "Om Namaha Shivaya," is a track included in the recording *Voices: A Compilation of the World's Greatest Choirs* Presented by Joachim-Ernst Berendt (Austin: Mesa Records, 1991). The "Om Namaha Shivaya" is an effective and spirited version; the "Voices" collection is a wonderful three-disk compilation.

Beethoven, Ludwig van, "Symphony No. 9," Deutsche Grammophone CD, 1996. This is one of many fine recordings of the work, played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra led by Herbert von Karajan.

Berendt, Joachim-Ernst Berendt. *Stimmen! Stimmen!—Der riesige Ruf*. Germany: Jaro CD, 1996. The German version of "Voices," listed above, is available from several websites including Amazon.co.uk (at amazon.co.uk/); the price in 2007 was the equivalent of about \$54.

SESSION 10: RIGHT AND WRONG TOGETHER

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

As a single, unified thing there exists in us both life and death, waking and sleeping, youth and old age, because the former things having changed are now the latter, and when those latter things change, they become the former.
— Heraclitus

Session 10 explores the ways that right and wrong often seem mixed up with each other as well as the idea that determining right and wrong often depends on circumstances and perception. This is the second in a series of four sessions focusing on spirituality.

The session begins with a discussion of two Conundrum Corner items that indicate everything is always moving, always changing. The central story and the discussion that follows demonstrate that deciding who or what is right or wrong often depends on your point of view. In small groups, youth imagine stories that show how ethical decisions often depend on circumstance. A spiritual moment presents meditation as a way to clear the mind of distractions that can prevent good decisions. Through Faith in Action, participants become better acquainted with each other and experience how mutual understanding can promote mutual respect and tolerance and acceptance of diverse ideas and actions.

By pushing gently against youth's tendency to think in absolutes, you can help participants toward more complex and abstract understanding. Use concrete examples when possible to give youth solid and familiar ground from which to view the "clouds."

GOALS

This session will:

- Provide examples of the ever-changing nature of life and matter
- Present examples of the sometimes-complex relationship between right and wrong
- Explore ways that circumstance, detail, and perception affect ideas of right and wrong
- Expose youth to meditation
- Ask youth to design new gods for the modern age.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- See that everything changes and grows

- Understand how perception affects ethical judgments
- Explore actions that can be right or wrong depending on situation, circumstance, and detail
- Learn definitions for polytheism, moral absolutism, and moral relativism
- Experience a spiritual moment based in meditation
- Optional: Find sameness and differences in themselves and other youth.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Conundrum Corner	5
Activity 2: Story and Discussion – The Brothers	5
Activity 3: Creating Right/Wrong Stories	20
Activity 4: A Spiritual Moment in Meditation	7
Activity 5: Creating Gods for Today	15
Faith in Action: You in the Other	20
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Ethics Play	15
Alternate Activity 2: Yin and Yang and Other Opposites	10
Alternate Activity 3: Swapping Stories	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, watch for ethical ambiguity and challenge in your life. How do you sort things out? Are spirituality and meditation useful tools as you attempt to move toward moral decisions?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- A digital clock, preferably one that shows seconds, and a living plant
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the clock and plant on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the practice by playing different versions of the song. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.
- Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us understand how right and wrong relate to each other.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

Ask the youth how they made out with the sole-search reminders they wrote in Session 9's Faith in Action, if that was an activity they took part in at the last gathering. If you have youth who were not at that session, describe the activity to them. Say that you would like to know if the youth thought about developing their souls or did anything else with the notes, but that you do not need the details; those are private. Youth can share them if they wish, with the group or with friends, but there is no pressure to do so.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: CONUNDRUM CORNER (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Clock and plant from Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Plan to give the group direct orders, in a sterner manner than you usually use.

Description of Activity

Introduce youth to the ideas that everything changes, that everything is always moving from one state to another.

Begin by issuing three direct commands to the group. Use words like these:

Leaders in UU religious education groups do not usually issue commands. We think our job is to help you make up your own mind what to do and how to behave, not just to follow our orders. But right now is different. Right now, I am going to give you three direct orders, and I want you to follow them immediately, without any talking and without any complaint. Just do it! Now, here are the orders: 1. STAND UP STRAIGHT. 2. CLOSE YOUR EYES. 3. STOP CHANGING.

Pause for a long moment. Then say:

Okay, you can open your eyes, sit down, and start changing again. And tell us what that was like. Could you do it? Could you stop changing?

Point out, if youth do not, that nobody can stop changing. In fact, everything is always changing. Ask youth if they agree that even rocks are changing—and that in a million years you might see a real difference. Add that even our ideas about right and wrong often change, as this session will show.

Produce the clock and plant and ask youth why they were in the Conundrum Corner. They are there as further evidence that everything is changing. The clock may seem to stay the same for a full second at a time. But actually, something is changing through that second and building to the point where it triggers the next change. The plant is growing slowly toward death, though it may contain a seed that will slowly become new life.

Ask the youth if people can ever really see what they look like. When somebody mentions a mirror, ask this:

But do you really see yourself as you are?
Doesn't it take light some time to travel? So what you see in the mirror is not who you are. It is who you used to be, a fraction of a second ago.

Help the youth apply the idea of constant change to matters of right and wrong. Offer ideas like these:

If everything is changing all the time, it is difficult to be sure about anything. If you and I are different today than we were yesterday, what seemed right to do yesterday might seem wrong to do today. As circumstances and situations change, so do our ideas of right and wrong. How we decide what is right and wrong also can depend on our perception, or our point of view. Sometimes we might change our judgments about an idea or an act just because we look at it differently.

Then move on to a story about how perception affects judgment of what is right and wrong.

Including All Participants

If you have youth who cannot stand easily for any reason, consider ordering the group to sit up straight instead of standing.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY AND DISCUSSION – THE BROTHERS (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[The Brothers](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "The Brothers," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss a story about change.

Read or tell Story 1, "The Brothers." Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

Explain that it is a Hausa tale from West Africa. The Hausa are people who live in several West African countries, including Nigeria and Niger. They speak the Hausa language. This version of the story comes from an Islamic collection called *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents* by Sarah Conover and Freda Crane. Say, if you did not do so in Session 9, that the story's opening ("Once there was and twice there wasn't.... ") is a traditional beginning for Islamic stories that helps distinguish them from history.

Ask youth for their reactions. Do they agree that life and death need each other? What if there were only one and not the other? What about right and wrong in the story? Who is right and who is wrong?

Help the group to see that Life and Death are both wrong in judging their own importance and the importance of their relationship. The only person who sees things as they really are is the spring-keeper. Because Life and Death fail to see themselves and each other clearly, their actions are unethical. They do wrong things. Early in the story they argue and compete with each other for the water that they both need. Only after the spring-keeper speaks do they see things clearly and begin to act in right ways. At the end of the story, their points of view change. They appreciate each other and comfort each other. Both are better off because they are doing the right thing.

ACTIVITY 3: CREATING RIGHT/WRONG STORIES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A divided copy or copies of Leader Resource 1, [Right and Wrong Skits](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Identify spaces where small groups of youth can meet to plan skits.

- Photocopy Leader Resource 1, Right and Wrong Skits, and cut apart the skits. Determine how many small groups (each with up to four participants) you can create. If fewer than five, decide which skits you will use.

Description of Activity

Have youth create skits exploring and explaining ways that the same action can sometimes be right and sometimes be wrong.

Say that sometimes when people ask whether or not they should do something, the answer is "it all depends." That answer may not seem very helpful, but it might be the right one.

Give the youth a hypothetical question such as this: "Should I go to the movies tonight?" Then ask what the right answer depends on. Write some of the youth's ideas on newsprint. They may include things like the questioner's age, the time the movie starts, whether there is school tomorrow, and the film's rating. Summarize the discussion with words like these:

Sometimes going to the movie is right.
Sometimes it is wrong. It all depends on lots of different things. We often need to think carefully about a situation before we know how to act.

Ask the youth to create some skits showing how right and wrong depend on a lot of different things. Divide participants into five small groups with up to four members each. Give each group an assignment from a divided copy of Leader Resource 1, Right and Wrong Skits. Ask the groups to go into separate spaces, read the instructions, and do what they say. Ask groups to keep their skits to two minutes or less.

Circulate with other leaders to assist as needed. Allow as much time as possible for groups to plan and rehearse. Give the groups a two-minute warning before bringing them together to perform for the whole group.

As the skits proceed, ask how participants can tell right from wrong. When an action is right, why is it right? When it is wrong, why is it wrong? Appropriate answers could include these: An act is wrong when it hurts somebody unnecessarily. An act is right when it fits the Golden Rule.

At the completion of the skits, introduce the idea of "moral absolutism." Say that some people are "moral absolutists." They say that some acts, like stealing, are absolutely wrong no matter what the situation is. Other people are "moral relativists." They say that right and wrong can be different in different situations: "It depends." Which do the youth think they are? Can they think of some acts that are always wrong? What are they?

Ask if youth are familiar with the saying "the end justifies the means." Ask for examples (see the Consequences Skit in Leader Resource 1, Right and Wrong Skits). How do the youth feel about this saying?

Introduce the idea of "white lies," but say that you are going to call them "lesser lies" because we live in a world where "white" and "black" are used to distinguish people with different skin color. It is wrong to describe any kind of lies in a way that sounds related to skin color. Can the youth explain what "lesser lies" are? Can they give an example? One might be trying to avoid hurting somebody's feelings by saying you cannot accept an invitation to a party when you can, but you just do not want to go. How do the youth feel about lesser lies? Can they backfire if other people find out the truth?

ACTIVITY 4: A SPIRITUAL MOMENT IN MEDITATION (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Music player
- Recording of a meditative chant such as "om." One such recording is *Om Namaha Shivaya* by Robert Gass and *On Wings of Song*. (See Find Out More.)
- Optional: Pillows to sit on

Preparation for Activity

- Consider sharing your own meditative practice.
- Have the chant cued.

Description of Activity

Remind the group, if appropriate, of the spiritual moment in music from Session 9, Spirituality and Me. Say that the group will try meditation in this session's spiritual moment.

Say that meditation and spirituality are related to right and wrong in several ways. As the youth know, making the right decision can be difficult sometimes.

Spiritual moments are those times when you feel connected to something bigger than yourself, something outside yourself—like the universe, like the great mystery, like what some people call God. Such moments are wonderful because they help us to know who we are and how we fit in. They help us to sense the great truths of life. When we do that, we begin to know how to live better, and how to do things that are right, not wrong.

Sometimes it is difficult to have spiritual moments because we are all so busy. Our

minds are so preoccupied that we cannot open ourselves to things outside our daily lives. That is why it is important to create spiritual moments for ourselves; one way to do that is to meditate.

There are many ways to meditate. One is to sit in silence, breathe deeply, and concentrate on your breath. Another is to listen deeply to special sounds. Today we are going to try meditating to a sound. You can try silent meditation on your own sometime, maybe tonight, when you can be alone in a room and your surroundings are quiet.

Explain that meditation is a way of opening yourself to the universe. It requires emptying your mind of all the daily thoughts that can get in the way, or at least not paying attention to those thoughts. Oddly enough, one way to empty the mind is to fill it with something else. Some people use a mantra: a sound they repeat over and over. Some people focus on a single word; others may gaze at a candle or something else and let that image fill her/his mind. Today you will hear the sound of monks chanting the word "om" as a way to occupy the mind and meditate. In some eastern religions, "om" is a sacred sound; some people use it at the beginning of all their prayers. (The cover of the Robert Gass recording, listed under Find Out More, states, "The sacred Sanskrit syllable Om is said to create the seed or essence of universal consciousness.")

Ask the group to prepare for meditation. Youth might sit or lie on the floor, or on cushions if you have them. They can remain in their chairs. Wherever they are, they should make themselves comfortable and relax. If they want, they can turn away from the others so they will not distract one another. Once all are prepared, play a recording of the "om" chant for several minutes. Youth may be startled by the sound at first, and some may react with a comment or a giggle. Keep the sound going and model sitting in silence. You can hope that the group will then become quiet and attentive to the sound. (See also the note about spiritual experiences in Activity 2 of Session 9, Spirituality and Me.)

When the sound ends, give the youth a moment to reenter the group, then ask how the meditation was for them. Did they get into the spirit? Or did they remain conscious of the room and people around them? Do they like the idea of meditation? Do they ever find themselves meditating when they had not intended to do it? Do they ever plan to meditate? Do other members of their family practice meditation?

Ask the youth how such meditation might help them make difficult ethical decisions. Explain that thinking carefully and deeply about a problem is important, but it is not meditation. The idea of meditation is to open your

mind, which can help you think more clearly about problems when you come back to them.

If your group experienced a spiritual moment in music in Activity 2 of Session 9, ask how that experience differed from this one. When most people listen to music, they do not try consciously to let go of daily thoughts, as they do in meditation. And with music, people generally respond to melody and rhythm quite differently from how they experience a meditative chant.

Encourage youth to try meditating however they like on their own. Mention that people meditate in many different ways, some in silence and some to music, some in private and some in groups, some while walking and some while sitting very still. Say that you will try more spiritual moments in other sessions and move on.

Including All Participants

If you have participants who will be unable to sit on the floor, do not use the pillows option. If you have youth with very limited hearing ability, consider instead meditating on a visual object, perhaps the flame of your chalice.

ACTIVITY 5: CREATING GODS FOR TODAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- White art paper, at least one sheet for each youth
- Oil pastels, such as CrayPas
- Cleanup supplies
- Music player and recorded background music
- Optional: Tacks, painter's tape, or other supplies needed to display completed artwork

Preparation for Activity

- Gather supplies and place them where youth can reach them quickly and easily.
- Decide whether and how to display completed drawings.

Description of Activity

In this activity, youth are asked to design new gods and goddesses for a contemporary system of deities that can right the world's wrongs and help the human race survive.

Note: This art activity suggests the use of oil pastels, as in Session 3, Being Good, Being Bad. Using similar supplies may save you from having to acquire additional art resources. However, if you prefer to use a different

medium, do so. Almost anything from pipe cleaners to clay to washable markers will be fine.

Remind the group that the name "Unitarianism" comes from the fact that early Unitarians believed in one, unified God. Then explain that other cultures and religions have taken different approaches:

Some people, like the Hindus, believe that there is only one god but that it has many different manifestations. This means that the god appears in many different forms. Many societies, both past and present, have believed in whole systems of multiple gods and goddesses. The ancient Greeks, for example, had gods and goddesses for things like war, hunting, wisdom, agriculture, fire, marriage, family, thunder, and love. These gods and goddesses often fought and quarreled with each other because they had very different ideas about what was right and what was wrong. "Polytheism" is the name we use for belief in and worship of more than one god. Perhaps one reason for polytheism is that people have so many different beliefs about what is important.

If we were to have a polytheistic system of new gods and goddesses for today, what would they be like? They would certainly be different from the old ones, because the world is different today. The Greeks did not have a god of electricity, for example, or a goddess of the Internet. Maybe we would want those today. To decide what gods and goddesses we should have, we need to choose what we think are the most important things in modern life, both right and wrong things. We would want to create gods and goddesses who could make wrong things into right things and others who would protect the things that are already right. Who are these gods and goddesses to be?

That is what you want the youth to tell you by drawing new gods and goddesses, or their symbols, and naming them. (The name might be simply "Goddess of the Internet," or it could be "Cyberna, Goddess of the Internet.") Say that each youth may have enough materials to create as many gods and goddesses as they want; one is fine, but more are also okay. Stress that youth can draw symbols instead of the gods and goddesses if they want. Somebody might draw a fancy cyberperson as the goddess of the Internet, for example. Somebody else might draw just a television screen to symbolize the god of television; whatever the youth do is up to them.

Tell youth how much time they have for the project. Try to reserve some time at the end for sharing and

discussion. Hand out art supplies and let the youth begin. Play quiet background music if you like.

When the drawings are finished or time is running out, ask the youth to put their supplies away and to share what they have done. Help them hang their creations for continuing display if you have space for that. Otherwise, ask them to take their works with them when the session ends.

Ask whether they think their gods and goddesses would agree about what is right and what is wrong. Have they made a god or goddess of electricity and a god or goddess of the environment? If so, would these two agree about the morality of building new power plants to supply more electricity? Point out that even the gods and goddesses in a polytheistic system would have trouble making ethical decisions. Therefore, it's not surprising that people often have a tough time, too.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: YOU IN THE OTHER (20 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity will allow youth to know one another better. Introduce it with words like these:

Our faith calls on us to treat each other in right ways. Doing that means we must all get to know each other better. Therefore, for Faith in Action today, we will each find out something more about other people in this room.

Two people meeting for the first time might think of themselves as opposites. But the more they

get to know each other, the more they see themselves as like each other. Let us see if that happens to us today.

Ask the youth to choose as partners others in the room whom they do not know well - "In other words, please do not get together with your best friend." If you have an odd number of youth, you can have one meet with a leader or form one group of three youth.

Say that in the next few minutes, each pair should discover one or two ways that they are the same and one of two ways that they are different—ways they did not know about before, and not obvious physical differences. "You may already know that one of you is taller than the other or that one of you is a girl and the other a boy. We want you to look a little deeper than that."

If possible, keep the pairs far enough apart so they will not overhear each other. Have leaders move about the room and assist any pairs who are having trouble getting started. Ask some obvious questions, such as, "Do you like sports?" to get things going.

Give a one-minute warning as appropriate and then ask the full group to reassemble. Give each pair a chance to report what it has found. If some pairs have not discovered much about each other, be reassuring: "Sometimes it takes a lot more time than we have to really get to know other people."

Then ask for comments. Have they learned more about each other? Do they agree that this is a useful approach for people who want a better, more virtuous world with less hate and less fighting? Do they agree that it is okay for people to be the same in some ways and different in other ways? Is life more interesting because people are often different?

Encourage youth to try this activity if they find themselves in the midst of a group of people who do not know each other well but who must work on a project together.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? How are the spiritual moments going? If you feel the youth have a basic appreciation of spirituality in their lives, fine. If not, think about how to vary your approach to deepen understanding in future sessions.

Look ahead at Session 11. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

As a single, unified thing there exists in us both life and death, waking and sleeping, youth and old age, because the former things having changed are now the latter, and when those latter things change, they become the former.
— Heraclitus

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We found a clock and a live plant in the Conundrum Corner, and we talked about how everything changes. We heard a story about two opposites, life and death. We talked about how different points of view and different situations change our ideas of whether something is right or wrong. We tried meditating to the sound of "om," and then made some modern gods and goddesses. For Faith in Action, we discovered more about each other so we can increase our respect for each other and treat one another better.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- Complicated ethical decisions in your lives. What are they? How do you go about making the right decisions?
- Your similarities and differences. Do members of your family look alike or different? Do you think the same way? Do you like having some things the same and some things different?
- Life and death. Do we need to have both, as the spring-keeper says in the story "The Brothers"? Would the world make any sense if we had just one and not the other?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Looking for something that is wrong but that your family can help turn into something right. Are you already doing that in some way? How? Can you do more of it?
- Sharing your difficult ethical decisions. Predict how what seems like the right thing to do might turn out to be the wrong thing to do, and vice versa.
- Looking around for things that change all the time, such as clocks and plants. Can you find anything at all that will never ever change?

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and meditate. Find a quiet space to be alone. Make yourself comfortable and empty your mind. What happens? Could you do that?

Most people cannot really empty their minds; ideas keep flitting through. But people who practice meditation enough can learn to let go of daily worries and open up their minds for a while. If you are really meditating, you cannot be angry or upset. Try filling your mind with something different and see if that helps you get a sense of peace and connection to things beyond you. Just saying one number over and over again may work. If you are journaling, write what you tried and what happened. Also write down some more mind-filling images or sounds to try.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Make up oxymorons. What are those? An oxymoron is a pair of words that seem to cancel each other out. A “modern antique” is one, because “modern” means new and “antique” means old. A “peaceful war” is another, because war and peace are opposites. What are some more? What about “a good lie”? Is that an oxymoron? Or a “bad virtue”?

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Find stories about right and wrong turning into each other. Look in newspapers and watch the television for stories of people who did the right thing that turned out wrong, or the wrong thing that came out right.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role name tags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document)).
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

Ask at the end of the game whether the ethical choices were easy to make or complicated and slippery. Did the role-players sense that what they first thought was right or wrong could easily be the opposite because of different circumstances? Were any previous Ethics Play scenarios like this?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: YIN AND YANG AND OTHER OPPOSITES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A large yin-yang symbol
- Copy of Leader Resource 2, [Yin-Yang](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Think through and try out the motions suggested.
- Enlarge a copy of Leader Resource 2, *Yin-Yang*.

Description of Activity

Yin-yang philosophy offers wonderful ways to visualize growth, change, and the interplay of life's many opposites, like right and wrong. Introduce youth to the concept of yin-yang and explore other opposites in this four-step activity:

- Show your copy of Leader Resource 2, *Yin-Yang*, and ask youth what it shows. When they have identified it as a yin-yang symbol (with your help, if necessary), explain that it shows opposites. The black represents yin and the white represents yang. The two sides also represent many other pairs of opposites. Yin is feminine and stands for dark, even numbers, the color orange, the moon, and much more. Yang is masculine and stands for light, odd numbers, azure color, the sun, and much more.
- Say that seeing yin and yang as opposites is the easy part. The harder part is understanding that the opposites are not absolutes. They work together. We cannot divide people into yin and

yang because we all have both yin and yang in us. Everybody has feminine and masculine in them. The yin-yang opposites are always in motion and are always becoming each other. Yin is becoming yang, yang is becoming yin. Life is becoming death, death is becoming life—as the story shows. Dark is becoming light, light is becoming dark. Everything is in motion toward its opposite. Note the small circles in the yin-yang symbol. The dark circle inside the yang is the seed of yin and the light circle inside the yin is the seed of yang. The seed of each is always in the other, so each is always growing into the other.

- Invite youth to brainstorm other opposites in life that have a similar interplay. The seasons might be one example.
- Ask youth to help you demonstrate this with their hands and arms. Say they should hold their upper arms tightly against their bodies. Then, while holding the fingers of each hand together, they should curl the fingers of their two hands into each other so they are cupped tightly together. Next, they should pull their hands against each other, first letting one arm be stronger to pull the other hand and arm, then letting the other be stronger to pull the other way. Doing this over and over again, moving their arms back and forth together while they pull against each other, shows how opposites are always becoming each other.
- Ask participants if they think this works with right and wrong. Are right and wrong—virtue and sin—always pulling against other, always beginning to become each other? Say that many acts are neither wholly right nor wholly wrong. That is what sometimes makes it so difficult to tell the difference between right and wrong. We are told that it is wrong to steal. Is it wrong to steal bread to save a starving person? Does doing that change stealing from wrong into right? What if giving a nice present to one friend means you hurt another friend's feelings? Does that change giving a present from right into wrong?

Optional higher-energy demonstration: If you intend to do this, have two leaders practice in advance and give a demonstration. Ask the youth to pair up with another person of about the same weight and size. (These matches do not at all need to be exact.) The pairs should stand close together, facing each other toe to toe, and then take each other's hands and slowly lean back with their toes still touching. Finally, they should

move very gently (stress this) back and forth, with the first person being pulled toward the second, then the second being pulled toward the first, over and over so they each in turn seem to be changing into the other. **(Note:** This is a trust activity and it presents a danger of falling. If you think your youth will not handle it well, skip it. Otherwise, consider having leaders act as spotters to help catch youth if they begin to fall.)

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: SWAPPING STORIES (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Ask members of your group to swap stories of times they thought they were doing something right and it turned out wrong and times they thought they were doing something wrong and it turned out right.

Lead the way with a story of your own. Model telling a story that is true and interesting without revealing names and other details that youth might not wish to hear or share.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 10: STORY: THE BROTHERS

A Hausa Tale from West Africa retold by Sarah Conover and Freda Crane. Taken with permission of the publisher from *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents* (Boston: Skinner House, 2010).

Once there was and twice there wasn't two old brothers who were inseparable travelers: one was named Life, the other Death. One time, after journeying across a desert, they came to a refreshing green oasis where they were greeted by the spring-keeper.

"Would you like some cool water to drink?" he asked them. Both the men nodded their assent. Dipping his gourd into the pool, the spring-keeper added, "It is the custom to let the elder drink first. Which one of you is the elder?"

Life spoke up first. "I am the elder," he said, stepping forward.

"No," Death contradicted, "I am the elder." And he stepped forward too, next to his brother.

Life smiled, but said, "That is impossible. Things must live before they die."

Death responded, "On the contrary, things begin in death, are born, live for a time and then return to death."

Said Life, "That's not how it works at all. All things come from the Creator, live and then die. Death began after the first creature lived and died."

Said Death, a spark in his eyes: "Death is the before and after of all life. Things arise from it and return to it therefore, death is the elder."

The two debated like this next to the spring, and had yet to drink a drop of water. Finally, they asked the spring-keeper to judge truly who the eldest was.

"Gentlemen, I cannot say," said the spring-keeper. "What you've each told me is true." He looked at the two brothers. "How can one speak of death without life? Death is like a desert until rain falls, then, all the living things sprout miraculously from the rocks and sand." He smiled. "And how can one speak of life without death, to which all things are certain to return?" The spring-keeper paused. "Neither can exist without the other: the Creator wears both those two masks. Neither of you is elder or younger."

He held out a single gourd. "Drink now, together, and go in peace."

And the two travelers took the gourd, drank their fill, and headed off in the comfort of each other's company.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 10: LEADER RESOURCE 1: RIGHT AND WRONG SKITS

Copy this page. Cut apart the different skits and assign them to groups.

Knowledge Skit

Your job as a small group is to create a skit that shows how new knowledge can change a right into a wrong or a wrong into a right. Here is an example: Many years ago, painting a house with lead-based paint was the right thing to do. Today, we know that lead-based paint causes health problems, so using it is the wrong thing to do. Make up a skit about that, or about any other way that knowledge changes what people think is right or wrong. Prepare to share the skit with the other small groups.

Consequences Skit

Your job as a small group is to create a skit that shows how the consequences of an act can change a right into a wrong or a wrong into a right. Here is an example: Breaking into a house is wrong. But if you are lost and starving in the woods, breaking into a camp could be the right thing to do. Make up a skit about that or any other way that the consequences of an act can change it from wrong to right or right to wrong. Prepare to share the skit with the other small groups.

Age Skit

Your job as a small group is to create a skit showing how a person's age can change a right into a wrong or a wrong into a right. Here is an example: Leaving a two-year-old alone at home for even a short time is morally wrong. But leaving a sixteen-year-old alone for a short time is usually acceptable. Make up a skit about that or any other way that age can change something right into something wrong or something wrong into something right. Prepare to share the skit with the other small groups.

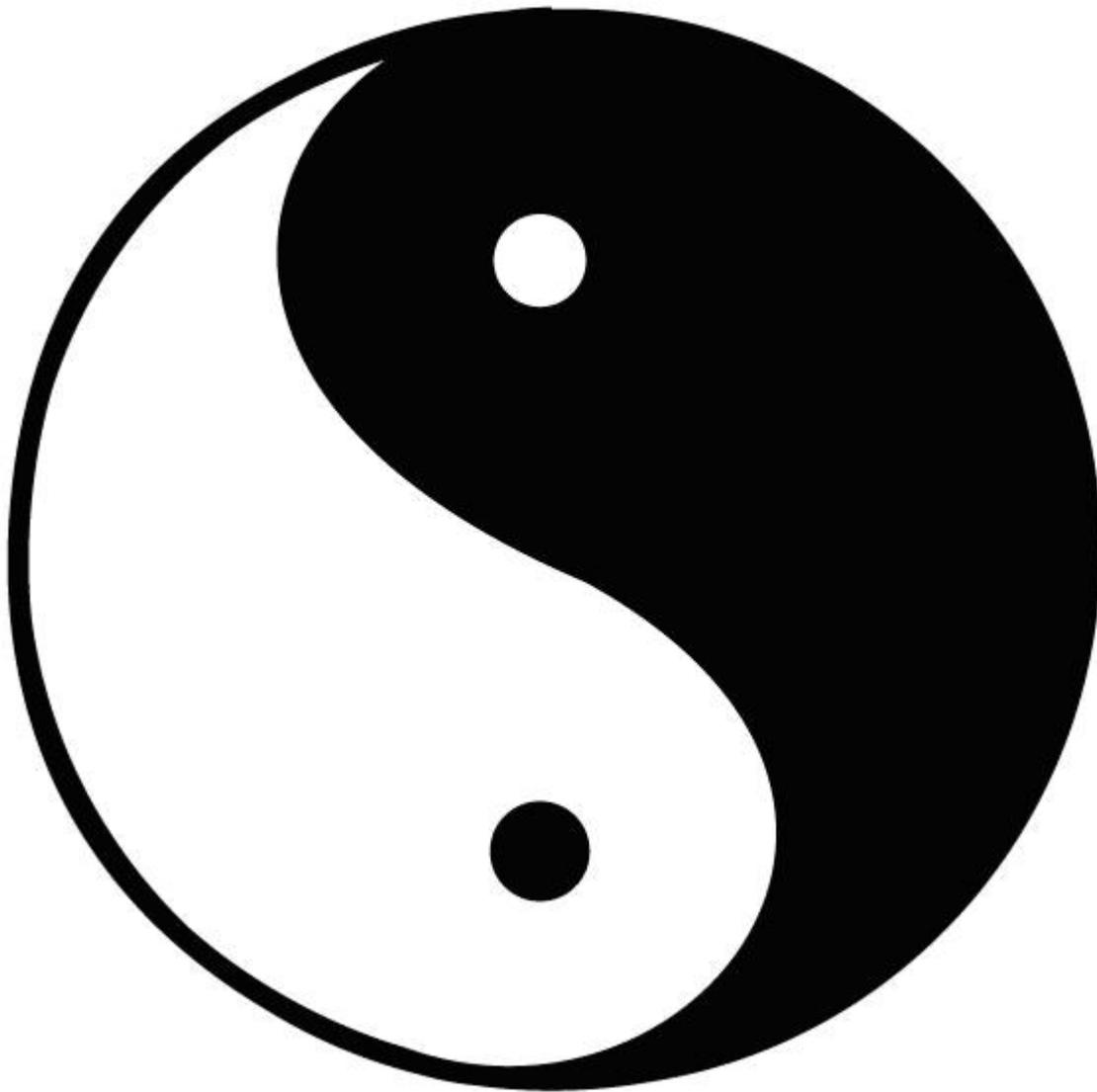
Culture Skit

Your job as a small group is to create a skit showing how different cultures can change a right into a wrong or a wrong into a right. Here is an example: In America, it is right for women to drive cars. But in some Mideast countries, it is wrong. Make up a skit about that or any other way that being in different cultures can change a right into a wrong or a wrong into a right. Prepare to share the skit with the other small groups.

Situation Skit

Your job as a small group is to create a skit showing how different situations can change a right into a wrong or a wrong into a right. Here is an example: Telling a lie is wrong. But if a kidnap victim lies to get free, then that lie is right. Make up a skit about that or any other way that a situation can change something right into something wrong or something wrong into something right. Prepare to share the skit with other small groups.

**AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 10:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: YIN-YANG**



FIND OUT MORE

Conover, Sara, and Crane, Freda. *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents* (Boston: Skinner House, 2010). This is an excellent collection of stories.

Gass, Robert and On Wings of Song. "Om Namaha Shivaya." Spring Hill Music, 1996. This is the tenth-anniversary deluxe edition of a very beautiful and well-known rendition of "Om Namaha Shivaya"; it also includes a 17-minute "Om." Both are highly recommended.

SESSION 11: RULES, RULES, RULES

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Rules are not necessarily sacred, principles are.
— Franklin D. Roosevelt

Session 11 explores the role of rules in people's lives, sixth-graders' as well as others. The session is the third of four sessions based on the theme of spiritual development.

At first glance, rules seem a simple matter. Obey them and be virtuous, disobey them and be sinful. What happens when rules bump into each other, as they so often do? That is when matters get murky, as your youth have undoubtedly found, and that is one of Session 11's subjects.

The session begins with a spiritual moment based in art depicting Moses and the Ten Commandments. Youth respond by creating their own commandments for an alien who enters their lives with no clue about how to act. The central story concerns a monk faced with conflicting rules. In Ethics Play, participants consider the rules that help them resolve daily situations. Faith in Action asks them to identify and work either against bad rules or for good ones.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the nature and variety of rules in participants' lives
- Continue the exploration of religious rules begun in Session 4
- Present a story in which rules conflict.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider the nature and impact of spiritual art
- Become acquainted with the Ten Commandments
- Identify unwritten rules in their lives

- Consider a story in which rules conflict
- Optional: Explore ways to change rules.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: A Spiritual Moment in Art	10
Activity 2: Your Own Commandments	17
Activity 3: Story and Discussion – Two Monks	10
Activity 4: Ethics Play	15
Faith in Action: Changing Rules	30
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Life and Death Role-Plays	30
Alternate Activity 2: What Can You Control?	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, explore the role of art in your own spiritual life. Is it deeply meaningful to you? Examine the visual art in your home and workplace. Did you choose art to decorate your space? Do you feel a spiritual connection with any of the art?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- A ruler
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the ruler on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the practice by playing different versions of the song. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music, or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us understand the rules in our lives.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words. Ask the youth to go around the room and identify the rule they dislike most in their lives.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: A SPIRITUAL MOMENT IN ART (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copy of art that depicts Moses and the Ten Commandments
- Picture of Earth viewed from space
- Copy of other art that feels spiritual

Preparation for Activity

- Locate and copy art of Moses and the Ten Commandments, a satellite- or astronaut-view of Earth, and/or other art that feels spiritual to you. Your local library might be a resource. Websites with photographs of art are another resource. See Find Out More for examples.

Description of Activity

This activity introduces two subjects: Moses and the Ten Commandments and the Spirituality of Art. In the first part, youth experience art depicting Moses and the Ten Commandments; in the second part, they experience other art you offer as possibly being spiritual.

Part 1: Show participants a photograph of artwork depicting Moses and the Ten Commandments. Ask them if they know the story behind the work of art; remind them of it as necessary:

The story comes from the Hebrew Bible. It says that Moses, a Great Hebrew leader, climbed Mount Sinai to speak with God. There, God gave him Ten Commandments that Moses delivered to the Hebrew people on clay tablets. Simply put, the Commandments say:

- You must have just one God.
- Do not make pictures or statues of God.
- Respect the Lord's name.

- Make Sunday a holy day.
- Love your parents.
- Do not kill.
- Do not love anybody else's husband or wife.
- Do not steal.
- Do not lie.
- Do not be jealous of what other people have.

These rules from God remain very famous today. Jewish people and Christians still honor them. Pictures of Moses and the Ten Commandments hang in many places, including churches and public buildings such as the United States Supreme Court and the Boston Public Library.

Ask the youth to look at the art you are showing them for a long, silent moment. Then ask if they think the art is impressive. What if they were at the Supreme Court or another public building and when they looked up they saw a huge statue or painting of Moses with the Ten Commandments. Would that impress them? Would it be a spiritual moment for them? Would they feel connected to the past, and to God? Does seeing these rules in impressive art make them seem more powerful than they do in writing? Acknowledge that there are issues of separation of church and state that you could discuss, but that for today's session you are talking about the Ten Commandments with regard to rules.

Part 2: Remind youth that you have been talking about methods people use to connect to their spirituality. Say that many people find some art to be spiritual. Ask if the youth have themselves experienced such moments. Point out that art does not need to be religious to feel spiritual. It might be a painting of nature or of people. If it helps people connect to something deep inside themselves or to know the great mystery of life, it is spiritual for them. [El Vendedor De Alcatraces](http://www.allposters.com/gallery.asp?startat=/getposter.asp&APNum=308624&CID=40C4D79729544A45B26B916BBD0081D8&search=&FindID=&P=&PP=&sortby=&name=&SearchID) (at www.allposters.com/gallery.asp?startat=/getposter.asp&APNum=308624&CID=40C4D79729544A45B26B916BBD0081D8&search=&FindID=&P=&PP=&sortby=&name=&SearchID)(Seller of Alcatraces) by Diego Rivera and [A Sunday on La Grande Jatte](http://www.artic.edu/artaccess/AA_Impressionist/images/seurat_lg.jpg) (at www.artic.edu/artaccess/AA_Impressionist/images/seurat_lg.jpg), 1884, by Georges Seurat are two paintings that many people think are beautiful and some even find transcendent. Artwork depicting Guan Yin, Buddhist Goddess of Mercy is another example. Here is one by Ken McCracken from the website [Science Fiction and Fantasy Art](http://www.elfwood.com/art/m/c/mccracken/guanyin.jpg) (at images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=images.elfwood.com/art/m/c/mccracken/guanyin.jpg&imgrefurl=www.elfwood.com/art/m/c/mccracken/guanyin.jpg.html&h=700&w=45

8&sz=129&hl=en&start=2&um=1&tbnid=-ICSX7Z--vgliM:&tbnh=140&tbnw=92&prev=/images%3Fq).

Say that there are no rules about what makes a work of art spiritual - "If seeing a piece of art gives you a sense of deep connection to your inner self, to others, to the universe, or to the mystery that some people know as God, then it is spiritual for you, even if it does not seem spiritual to somebody else."

Show other works of art that you consider spiritual and give youth a long, quiet moment to look at each work before responding to it. Choose anything you like for this purpose. Perhaps your congregation has a library with works of art that strike you as spiritual. Appropriate art may also be on display in your building. For some people, views of Earth from space give a spiritual feeling. There is a link to live views from space in [Find Out More](#). Youth can also give examples of their personal experiences with art.

ACTIVITY 2: YOUR OWN COMMANDMENTS (17 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Inexpensive wooden rulers for each participant
- Permanent fine-point markers or other instruments for writing on the rulers

Preparation for Activity

- Decide on your approach to the activity and adjust the session if your group will need more time than suggested. See "Notes," below, for possible variations. Try writing on rulers in advance of the session so you can be sure your implements work.

Description of Activity

This activity asks youth to consider some of the unwritten rules in their lives, especially at their schools.

Begin by introducing the idea of unwritten rules. First, ask if youth have an idea of what you mean by unwritten rules. Share ideas like these to build understanding:

We all have written rules in our lives. In school they might be in a handbook and on wall signs or posters. Our most important written public rules are called laws. Many of them are written by Congress and state legislatures and are signed by presidents and governors. In sports, we have rule books and on streets we have signs telling us what we must do or risk punishment. However, unwritten laws and unwritten rules are not in books. They are in our

minds. They are what we understand about how we are supposed to behave with certain groups, in certain places, and at certain times. In some families, for example, people always sit in the same places at the dinner table. If a visitor takes one of those places without knowing, somebody might feel a little uncomfortable. There is no written rule about this. That is just the way things are. The right thing to do when you visit such a house is wait until somebody in the family tells you where to sit.

Ask the youth about other places where there are unwritten rules. What are some of the rules? Are there unwritten rules about how kids behave with each other? Do the behavior rules change when parents or teachers come into the room?

Now set up the activity: Ask youth to imagine that an alien has just arrived at their house in a puff of smoke. The alien came in looking like a small green being from Mars, but then, with another puff of smoke, transformed into a human of their age and gender. Now all the youth and their aliens are great friends. Your alien will start going to school with you next week and you are sure it will learn the official school rules by reading your handbook. However, the alien needs to know about some of the unwritten rules, too. What will you say about those?

Divide the youth into smaller groups of two or three. Position the groups far enough apart so they can work independently. Give each group enough wooden rulers and writing implements for all participants and then ask them to write unwritten rules of behavior at their schools. They should come up with as many rules as they have members in their group. Say they should write all the rules on newsprint first, so they can change them until all members are comfortable with them. Then each member should write one rule on her or his ruler.

If groups need help getting started, ask some leading questions:

Are their cliques in your schools and unwritten rules about them? Are different types of kids treated differently? Did you ever get in trouble or feel uncomfortable because you did something one way before you understood that everybody else does it another way? Should you always do things the way other people do them? Should you always follow the same rules about how to treat each other?

When all the groups have finished, have them gather again and share their (formerly) unwritten rules. Do they agree on what the rules are? Are they good rules? Silly rules? Bad rules? Can they change them?

If nobody has yet talked about an unwritten rule that youth should never "tell on" their friends, even if the friends do something really wrong, talk about it now. Do the youth in your group have experience with such a rule? Is it a good one? Can it be dangerous? Is it a rule the youth would be willing to break? If so, under what circumstances?

Conclude by saying that unwritten rules are one reason that life can be so complicated. Rules that disagree with each other are another. That is what this session's central story involves.

Notes: (1) Permanent markers will work well for writing on most wooden rulers, but if you think your group is so active that ink may wind up on clothing or work surfaces, use washable markers instead. Whatever you decide, try writing on a ruler in advance of the session. (2) Reviewing their own lives and extracting unwritten rules can be a challenge for sixth graders. If they seem to be struggling, consider changing the instructions and asking for "the most important rules in your school (congregation, or family), whether they are written or unwritten." (3) You can energize the activity by asking the groups to act out their rules so that others can guess what they are. This approach will increase the time required, though.

Including All Participants

Plan workspaces and locate supplies so that youth with limited mobility have equal access.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY AND DISCUSSION – TWO MONKS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Two Monks](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "Two Monks," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Participants consider what happens when two rules conflict with each other.

Ask the youth if they have ever had problems because two of the rules in their life bumped into each other. Then tell or read the story, which comes from the Zen Buddhist tradition. Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

At the conclusion of the story, remark that one of the rules the second monk was supposed to follow was his vow to stay away from women. What was the other rule? (One possibility is the Golden Rule. The monk felt he should treat the woman as he would want to be treated in the same situation. Another is simply "Be nice to other people," "Be helpful," or "Be a gentleman.") Ask whether this other rule is written or unwritten. Is it important even if it is not a written law?

Ask how youth resolve problems that result when two rules conflict. How can people know the right way to act and avoid the wrong way? Should they decide on their own?

Point out the ruler in the Conundrum Corner. Ask the youth to identify two reasons why the ruler is there. Some will probably state the obvious quickly, that a ruler is a ruler and you have been talking about rules. This is especially likely if you have used rulers in Activity 2. (The youth also might say, fairly in this regard, that the presence of the ruler is a weak pun.) The group may have more trouble identifying the second reason. Offer, if they do not, that a ruler measures things. "People with an ethical or other problem sometimes talk about taking a 'measured response to it.' We all have to measure the probable results of our actions very carefully. That's one way we try to do the right thing and stay out of trouble."

Suggest that the group think about both measured responses and unwritten rules during Ethics Play, which is coming up next.

ACTIVITY 4: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role nametags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document)).
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game, ask whether the ethical choices involved rules that disagreed with each other. Were some of the rules unwritten? What were they? Does the group think the solution reached was a reasonable and measured response to the problem?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and relight it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: CHANGING RULES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster board and washable markers

Or

- Letter-writing supplies: paper, pens, envelopes, and stamps
- Names and addresses of state or national legislators

Preparation for Activity

- Decide on your approach to this activity. If you choose the specific-rule option, research bicycle-helmet laws in your state; see Find Out More for information. If you think youth curfews are a good subject to introduce, research local law in advance.

Description of Activity

Ask participants to support or oppose rules that affect them. Use either the general or the specific approach.

General approach: Tell the group that their Faith in Action challenge for this session is supporting or opposing a rule that affects them. Say that you will divide them into small groups of two or three. Each group will meet separately and choose a rule that affects them that they wish to support or oppose. The rule could be a state, a national, or a local law. On the other hand, it could have something to do with a school or their congregation. It might even be an unwritten rule. Once each group has chosen a rule, they should decide whether to support or oppose it. Then they should make a poster supporting their position or write a group letter to somebody who can change the rule—whichever task you, the leader, has chosen (and obtained supplies for).

Before they set to work, remind youth of the "measured response" mentioned in Activity 3. To identify a measured response in this case, they will need to think through the consequences of what they are suggesting. If they oppose a rule, they need to think about what might happen without it. If they support a rule, what might be the consequences of keeping it (or enacting it, if it doesn't already exist in written form)? Divide the youth, and give each group the supplies it needs. If you are expecting the groups to write letters, you may need to assist them with identifying appropriate recipients. If the youth are concerned with a state law, for example, they will need the name and address of a local legislator to write. If you expect the group to make posters, help them decide who their best audience is and where to place their posters.

Specific approach: If you wish to save time by limiting the effort to a single rule, consider bicycle-helmet laws and ask each group to make a poster or to write a letter as described for the general approach. The groups will need to know the law in their area. In the state of Maine, for example, everybody under the age of sixteen is required to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. If they do not, their parents may have to pay a \$25 fine (See Find Out More for a website that summarizes state laws pertaining to bicycle helmets.). Another possibility is a youth curfew in your area. Before introducing that idea, you should find out from local authorities whether there is a curfew and, if so, what it covers. School dress codes are another possibility. For example, can boys wear earrings? Can anyone display any body piercing they choose? Are there any limitations about slogans on t-shirts? You may also find interesting issues in the news. This activity will work best if youth are invested in the outcomes.

When the groups have completed their posters or letters, ask them to reassemble and share with one another what they have done. Help them determine whether and where to place their posters and whether and how to mail their letters.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? Have youth accepted and become engaged with Faith in Action? Is there something the group might do to follow up on today's Faith in Action issues?

Look ahead at Session 12. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

Rules are not necessarily sacred, principles are.
— Franklin D. Roosevelt

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We talked about the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments and saw art related to it. We thought about whether art sometimes makes us feel spiritual, and then about some unwritten rules in our lives. Our central story was "Two Monks." The story led to a discussion about what to do when rules disagree with each other. We did Ethics Play, and ended by deciding how to oppose or support some rules that affect us.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- What Franklin D. Roosevelt meant in the above quote. Which are most important for UUs—rules (like laws) or the UU Principles; or are they equal?
- Rules at home. Does everybody think the family rules are good ones? Do any of them ever conflict? What if a kid stays out too late in order to help a friend?
- Our unwritten rules. Do we ever follow rules at home that visitors would not know about? Do we know each other so well that we know when to support each other and when to leave each other alone, in ways that a visitor would not understand?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Looking for a rule your family could help oppose or support. It might be in your community, your school, your state, or your country.

- Watching for rules that bump into each other. Do family members sometimes have disagreements because they think they should be following different rules?
- Talking about unwritten rules. Do you sometimes think you have to behave in a certain way, even though nobody ever says so? What is it? Talk about it.

MYSTERY AND ME

Take some personal quiet time and meditate. Think about the rules in your life. Where do they come from? When you think a rule might be bad, can your faith help you know what to do? If you are journaling, write down some of your ideas.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Make up silly rules for the family. That might help you see what your real rules are, even the unwritten ones. Then you can talk about them and see if they all make sense.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Find stories about following unwritten rules. Watch for this in television programs and in newspapers.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: LIFE AND DEATH ROLE PLAYS (30 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Youth role-play situations involving living things that people often feel free to kill.

Remind the group that one of the Ten Commandments says, in biblical language, "Thou shalt not kill." What does this mean? Does it mean that people should never fight wars, no matter what? Does it mean we shouldn't execute prisoners convicted of crimes? After youth share their ideas, say that some translations of the Bible give the commandment as "You shall not murder." Does that change what the youth think?

What about the ethics of killing plants, animals, and insects? The seventh UU Principle says we should have respect for the "interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Are plants, animals, and insects

part of that web? What would they say about the commandment?

Ask the youth to divide into groups of two to four and create role plays in which plants, animals, and insects argue for their lives. Youth can create their own situations if they like, or use one of these:

- A mosquito says it should be allowed to live even if it does bite people. After all, it did not design itself that way.
- A cow says it does not want to be hamburger.
- A lettuce leaf wants to live out its natural days enjoying the sun.
- A rat has babies that need their parents.
- An ear of corn wants its kernels used as seeds, not as food for you.
- A rose does not want you to pick it for a bouquet.

When the groups have planned their role plays, let each in turn perform for the others. Ask if the plays have convinced anybody to change their ideas about such killing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: WHAT CAN YOU CONTROL? (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional for higher-energy approach: Large paper outline of a human figure, sticky notes, and pencils or pens

Preparation for Activity

- Decide on the best approach for your group.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Ask participants to identify what human characteristics need to be covered by rules. In other words, what characteristics lead people to commit wrong acts?

Brainstorm their ideas, making two lists: things that cannot or do not need to be controlled, such as breathing, and things that should be controlled, such as fists that can hit people. Once you have two lists of a dozen or so such items, ask for comments and discussion. Does everybody agree with the ideas on each list? Who should control the things that need to be controlled—individuals, the government, or some other entity? Who does control them? Should we or can we have rules to prevent absolutely everything that people

can do wrong? Can we or should we have rules that require people to do everything they can possibly do that is right?

Consider sparking the conversation with some ideas that will engage youth: the question of hairstyles, for example. Should schools control the length or color of students' hair? What if dangerous gang members are all dying their hair the same color?

Conclude by summarizing the ideas the youth have offered.

Higher-energy option: Enliven this activity by placing a large outline of a human figure where all youth can reach it and asking them to offer ideas by writing them on sticky notes and attaching them to the outline.

Including All Participants

If you use the higher-energy approach, be sure that your human outline is located where all can reach it.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 11: STORY: TWO MONKS

A Zen Buddhist tale, retold by Jessica York.

Two monks set out on a journey, one young, the other older and wiser. It was after the rains and the road was very muddy. At one point in their journey, they encountered a young woman standing before a large mud puddle. The younger monk passed her by, but the older monk offered to lift the young lady and carry her over the puddle. She thankfully accepted his offer and he carried her easily to the other side and put her down. Then the two monks continued on their way.

The farther they walked, the more the older monk noticed a change in the younger monk's behavior. He did not speak and he seemed angry. Finally, the young monk stopped in the middle of the road and confronted the older monk.

"Why did you carry that woman across the road? You know, as holy men, we are forbidden to touch any women, much less one so young and pretty!"

The older monk replied, "It is true that I broke a vow in touching the young woman. However, I put her down back on the road. Why are you still carrying her?"

FIND OUT MORE

[Art Unframed](http://www.artunframed.com) (at www.artunframed.com) shows great works of art, including [Moses with the Ten Commandments](#) (at www.artunframed.com/images/artmis37/champaigne95.jpg) by Phillipe de Champaigne; [El Vendedor De Alcatraces \(Seller of Alcatraces\)](#) (at imagecache2.allposters.com/images/pic/NYG/30956~El-Vendedor-de-Alcatraces-Posters.jpg) by Diego Rivera; and [A Sunday on La Grande Jatte, 1884](#) (at www.artic.edu/artaccess/AA_Impressionist/images/seurat_lg.jpg) by Georges Seurat. You could also find examples of statues and paintings in the Buddhist or Hindu tradition from Google Images.

Guan Yin, Buddhist Goddess of Mercy by Ken McCracken from the website [Science Fiction and Fantasy Art](#) (at images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=images.elfwood.com/art/m/c/mccracken/guanyin.jpg&imgrefurl=www.elfwood

[.com/art/m/c/mccracken/guanyin.jpg.html&h=700&w=458&sz=129&hl=en&start=2&um=1&tbnid=-ICSX7Z--vgliM:&tbnh=140&tbnw=92&prev=/images%3Fq](http://www.elfwood.com/art/m/c/mccracken/guanyin.jpg.html&h=700&w=458&sz=129&hl=en&start=2&um=1&tbnid=-ICSX7Z--vgliM:&tbnh=140&tbnw=92&prev=/images%3Fq)).

[John Singer Sargent Virtual Gallery](#) (at www.jssgallery.org) includes [two side-by-side images](#) (at www.jssgallery.org/Other_Artists/Michelangelo/MosesJux.html) of Moses, one by Michelangelo from the [church of San Pietro in Rome](#), the other by John Singer Sargent and from the Boston Public Library.

"[View the Earth from Space](#) (at www.latrobe.edu.au/crcss/view_earth.html)"; an Internet site that gives live views of the earth from a number of satellites.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "[Traffic Safety Facts: Laws](#) (at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/search?q=traffic+safety+facts+bicycle+helmet>)" summarizes state laws about bicyclists wearing helmets.

SESSION 12: HUMAN AND DIVINE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

To err is human, to forgive divine.

— Alexander Pope

To understand everything is to forgive everything.

— Hindu Prince Gautama Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism

Session 12 focuses on forgiveness. It explores such religious ideas as redemption and salvation: concepts that are meaningful for many UUs and helpful for youth to understand more fully other faith communities. This is the final session in a series of four based on the theme of spiritual development.

The session begins with the above quotation from Alexander Pope, and then uses stories of Prometheus and Jesus to present two attitudes toward forgiveness. Participants visit a quiet part of the building and then reflect on how place can influence their own spiritual thoughts and understanding. Activity 4, Matching in Motion helps youth remember and understand some religious terms. A series of wall-to-wall questions invites youth to respond to work they have done in Session 9-12 on spiritual development. In Faith in Action, youth consider offering forgiveness to somebody in their own lives.

Language about forgiveness and salvation is thick and may not come easily to sixth graders; do not force it. Give what they can accept and move on. If youth are attentive and interested, take whatever time you need to be sure they understand the theological concepts you present — especially in Activity 1, which introduces original sin, redemption and communion, and talks about salvation in the course of discussing the two stories. Remember to plan tight, but present loose. If discussion is rich, consider using more time for it.

GOALS

This session will:

- Expose participants to key theological terms involving sin
- Enrich participants' Unitarian Universalist faith with traditional stories
- Encourage youth to consider the role of forgiveness in their own lives
- Supply tools to use for the practice of forgiving

- Optional: Allow youth to practice forgiving themselves and others
- Optional: Look at the program's theme song in greater depth.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Examine their experiences with and feelings about forgiveness
- Identify steps to take in the acts of forgiving and of asking for forgiveness
- Hear two stories important in Western culture
- Define salvation, redemption, original sin, "being saved," and communion
- Experience spiritual space
- Recap and complete the spiritual development segment of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong
- Optional: Expand their understanding of the song "Amazing Grace"
- Optional: Consider offering forgiveness to people in their lives.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Stories and Discussion – Zeus Punishes and Jesus Forgives	20
Activity 2: Spiritual Moment in Space	15
Activity 3: Matching in Motion	7
Activity 4: Wall-to-Wall Questions	10
Faith in Action: I Forgive	20
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Ethics Play	15
Alternate Activity 2: Theme Song Revisited	7
Alternate Activity 3: Divinity Quote	5

Alternate Activity 4: Responding to Ideas about Forgiveness 10

Alternate Activity 5: Story and Discussion – Casting the First Stone 5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, explore your own ideas of forgiveness, redemption, and salvation. Remember and revisit physical spaces that you find spiritual. See Activity 2 to remind yourself how the term "spirituality" is used in the context of this curriculum. If "spirituality" is not a word that resonates for you, you might think in terms of "connection." As always in

Unitarian Universalist religious education, it is important for leaders to allow children and youth their own responses to and understanding of concepts that may not speak to all adults.

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- Leader Resource 1, [Church Sign](#) (included in this document)
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place Leader Resource 1, Church Sign, on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Have your recording of "Amazing Grace" ready to play. Though you may not have played the theme song for the past several sessions, you might play it today if you are doing Alternate Activity 2, Theme Song Revisited.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us find the way to forgive others and ourselves for doing wrong.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

If your group recently did Session 11, Rules, Rules, Rules, ask whether any of them have acted on the idea suggested by Faith in Action: that they work to change rules in their lives. Then say that in this session they will talk about forgiveness. Ask whether any of them have ever said that they forgave somebody when they really did not want to forgive. Do not press for details, but accept any brief explanations the youth offer.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: STORIES AND DISCUSSION – ZEUS PUNISHES AND JESUS FORGIVES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Zeus Punishes](#)" (included in this document) , and Story 2, "[Jesus Forgives](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the stories.
- Photocopy Story 1, "Zeus Punishes," and Story 2, "Jesus Forgives," one for each participant.
- This activity introduces religious concepts that many youth may have heard but might not understand. Make sure you leave enough time for questions. If you feel uncomfortable answering questions about the concepts in this activity, consider asking a Christian from your congregation to help present this activity.

Description of Activity

Participants hear two stories about forgiveness and discuss forgiveness in a religious context.

Share the Alexander Pope quote, "To err is human, to forgive divine." Yet, not all the gods are forgiving, according to stories told by people who have believed in those gods.

Mention that the God of Hebrew scriptures often punished people instead of forgiving them. That is the basis of the Noah story. When people sinned, God grew angry and sent a great flood to drown them. The Greek myths mention many angry, unforgiving gods and

goddesses. The story of Prometheus tells what happened when Zeus grew angry with him. (Remind the group that Zeus was the ruler of all the gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus and that he had asked Prometheus to create humans; see also the story of Pandora's Box in Session 2, Activity 2.)

Tell or read the story of Prometheus. Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it. Mention that hundreds of years after condemning Prometheus, Zeus bargained with other gods and finally agreed to free Prometheus. Other gods are more forgiving than that, and the God of the Christian Bible is an example.

Draw attention to the Conundrum Corner and ask your youth what they think the Trinity Church sign means. Explain, if the group does not, that the sign ("1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given") reminds people of the Christian story of Jesus on the cross. The sign was photographed in 2007 outside a small Christian church in Gray, Maine. Ask the group to tell you the story of Jesus' crucifixion as best they can.

Tell or read a brief version of the story if you think it will be helpful. See Story 2, "Jesus Forgives."

Explain that many Christians today still believe that Jesus "died for our sins"; he died to save human sinners. By his death, he opened the door to human salvation and eternal life. People who confess their sins and repent — that is, people who say they are sorry and feel remorse for what they have done, and ask for God's forgiveness can gain eternal salvation. God will forgive them, and they will go to heaven.

Mention that the idea of salvation is extremely important to Christians and to some people who practice other religions as well. (Two websites listed under Find Out More describe attitudes toward salvation in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.) Connect your discussion as appropriate to ideas you may have shared in the course of Session 7, The Second U, especially during Activity 2, Speaking of Universal Salvation.

Explain also that many Christians believe in "original sin." This refers back to Adam and Eve's sin of disobedience in the Garden of Eden and the belief that all humankind now carries that sin. By being baptized, people wash this and other sins away and become Christians. From that time on, they must continue to repent and ask for forgiveness whenever they sin in order to remain in God's good graces and be saved for eternal life. Another religious word for this belief is "redemption," the idea that people can be saved through Jesus' sacrifice. Most Unitarian Universalists do not believe in original sin. UUs do not believe people are born perfect, either. We believe that humans are born

with a capacity for good and a capacity for evil. The choices we make in life will bring us closer to one state or the other. Whether or not you believe in original sin, it is important for youth to understand Christian ideas that may be meaningful to some of the people they know outside their own congregations.

Mention that "original sin," "salvation," "redemption," and "sin" are all religious terms. We use the word "forgive" outside of a religious context, but it also is part of a famous Christian prayer known as the "Lord's Prayer." One version includes these lines: "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us."

You might also tell the group about the Christian practice of communion. Communion is a religious rite or ceremony in which Christians eat a small piece of bread that represents the body of Jesus Christ and drink a small amount of wine or grape juice that represents the blood of Jesus Christ. Through communion, people remember the sacrifice and death of Jesus and celebrate the idea that their own redemption (or salvation) is possible because of it.

ACTIVITY 2: SPIRITUAL MOMENT IN SPACE (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a spiritual space your group can visit conveniently. If you intend to visit your congregation's sanctuary while a service is in progress, speak with the service leaders in advance about how to be present without being interruptive. Other possible spaces include a fire circle, a labyrinth, a garden, or some outdoor space. If your congregation is located near a park or another space that might work well for this activity, consider dedicating more time for a planned visit. If you will be taking youth off the grounds, consult with the religious educator for information about whether permission slips and adult chaperones are needed.

Description of Activity

This activity gives youth a chance to move around as they experience a space-based approach to spiritual feeling.

Lead in to the activity by asking whether participants think that listening to religious stories is spiritual. You might remind them that spirituality is the sense of connection to our deepest selves as well as beyond our selves, to others, to the world, and to the great mystery. Some people think of spirituality as a sense of connection to God and some do feel spiritual when they hear religious stories.

Other people may feel spiritual when they see great art, hear great music, or meditate (as youth may have experienced in Sessions 9 through 11). Still others feel spiritual when they are in certain spaces. These might be spaces in nature or they might be museums, concert halls, houses of worship, or any number of other kinds of spaces. In fact, most churches and temples are designed to be spiritual places. Ask the youth if they think this is true of their own congregational home. If so, where in the building do they feel most spiritual? If not, what could someone do to make the building more spiritual?

Lead the youth on a walk to a part of the building that some people feel is spiritual: your sanctuary, perhaps, or a chapel or a quiet place on the church grounds. Ask participants to sit or stand quietly, in a meditative way. If you expect others to be using the space when you visit, be sure to ask the youth in advance to behave in a way that is not disruptive. Say they should behave well enough so that nobody will have to forgive them later. Stay in the space for at least several minutes.

Return to your meeting room and with a brief discussion tie your visit to the themes of the session. You might ask:

- Are spiritual spaces places that people might visit when they are troubled by their own mistakes or by some wrong things that other people have done? How could a quiet visit to a spiritual space help them forgive themselves and others?
- Do you know of any famous spiritual places? Examples could be famous cathedrals, like Notre Dame, or shrines, gravesites, and places where important events took place, like Appomattox.
- Where else have you experienced a spiritual connection to place?

Including All Participants

Choose a spiritual space accessible to all your participants.

ACTIVITY 3: MATCHING IN MOTION (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Definitions](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Write the twelve terms on separate name tags. Do the same for the twelve definitions. For a version that you can keep for reuse, write them on hanging name tags or card stock with string attached so they can be worn around the neck. For a quick, disposable version, write them on sticky notes or stick-on name tags that will adhere to clothing.

Description of Activity

This activity uses a matching game to reinforce youth understanding of twelve terms related to ideas such as forgiveness and salvation.

Each youth should wear at least one of the name tags you prepared from the terms and definitions. If you use them all, you will have enough for twenty-four participants. If your group is smaller than that, cut back on the number of terms and definitions, let youth wear more than one, or consider doing the activity twice (either now or on another day) in order to use more of them. If your group has more than twenty-four youth, consider dividing it into two parts and giving each smaller group a set of labels to use. If you have an uneven number of participants, have a leader join the activity by displaying a label and passively waiting for the appropriate youth to join him/her.

Before handing out the cards, explain that this is a matching activity. Each person will wear either a term or a definition. When you say to begin, they will move around and match themselves up so that the terms and definitions are standing or sitting in pairs.

Allow the matching to proceed. When all have paired off, take a quick look to see if all combinations are correct. If not, say that there is a mismatch and ask the youth to reconsider the pairs. Offer guidance if necessary.

Conclude by asking each pair to state its term and definition aloud. Add any information you think will be useful as they do so. Ask if there are any questions concerning the terms and definitions.

Including All Participants

Use an approach that will allow all youth to participate. Do not assume, however, that youth using crutches or wheelchairs will not wish to move around the room during this activity.

ACTIVITY 4: WALL-TO-WALL QUESTIONS (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity asks youth to move around to show their answers to some belief questions based on Sessions 9 through 12 of *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Ask the youth to help move aside any chairs or other furniture that might prevent easy motion. Explain that you are going to play wall-to-wall questions. You will ask a series of questions and you want the youth to show their answers by choosing and moving to one of two opposite walls. Say that there are only two choices for each question; standing in the middle is not an option.

Show the youth the two walls where they are to go in response to the questions. Then ask the questions from the following list, stating after each question which wall represents which answer. Give youth a chance to talk about each question and their responses before moving on to the next one.

I believe...

- That I understand what spirituality is: yes or no
- That deciding between right and wrong is a spiritual act: yes or no
- That I can usually figure out what is right and what is wrong without help: yes or no
- That I know where to get help when I have trouble making decisions: yes or no
- That I can and should control who I am and what I do: yes or no
- That I should try to forgive other people when they do wrong things: yes or no
- That other people should forgive me when I do wrong things if I say I am sorry and try hard to do better: yes or no

Including All Participants

If some of your participants have limited mobility, devise a different way for the group to make their choices known. They might use a thumbs-up for yes and a thumbs-down for no. Alternatively, you could provide everyone with two differently colored index cards: blue for yes and yellow for no, for example. Do not assume, though, that a youth using a wheelchair or crutches would not enjoy the movement of this activity as much as any other youth.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: I FORGIVE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pencils and two sheets of paper for each participant
- A paper bag or other disposable container
- Optional: Portable paper shredder

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how to dispose of participants' papers in a way that assures them their answers will not be read by others.

Description of Activity

This activity leads participants to practice forgiving themselves and others.

Introduce the activity by asking whether and why it is useful for people to forgive each other. Say that the answer might seem easy if you believe that there is a God who will let you into heaven if you are a kind and forgiving person. What if you are a humanist? (A humanist is a person whose religious ideas center on humans, instead of on God.) Why would a humanist think forgiveness is good? (A simple answer is that the world would be a less violent and more peaceful place if people practiced forgiveness more.)

Lead a brief discussion about the process of forgiveness. Imagine that one person breaks something that belongs to another person.

- What is necessary for forgiveness to occur?
- Does it help for the person to apologize?
- Does it help for the person to offer to replace whatever they broke?
- If those things happen, should the second person say, "I forgive you?"
- What if there is no apology and no offer to replace what was broken? Is forgiveness possible then?
- Does it matter if the person broke the object accidentally or on purpose?

Try these questions as well:

- Which is easier, forgiving yourself for a mistake or forgiving a friend for one?
- What about forgiving somebody you do not like very much?
- Which is easier, fixing some physical thing that you broke or undoing something bad that you said?
- How do you make things right when you have said something wrong?
- Are there some actions that you can never forgive?

Remind youth that we are all in the same boat: everyone in the group has done mean and hurtful things to other people and everyone has had mean and hurtful things done to them, both intentionally and unintentionally. Everyone has also done hurtful things to themselves. Therefore, we need both to forgive and to be forgiven. All humans exist in this state. It is something we all share. Being in this state does not make us evil or corrupt, it just makes us human. However, we do not have to wallow in guilt about being imperfect. There are things we can do about it.

Distribute two pieces of paper and a pencil to each participant. Say that you will ask them to write some private information on the pages, but that nobody else will see the papers. In fact, the youth can use code, initials, or any other device they want so nobody else could possibly understand what they write.

Ask the youth to sit quietly, prepared to write. Say that on the first side of the paper they should write something that they did wrong, something they might feel guilty about having done. Again, they can use code or anything else so nobody can understand what they write. Next, ask the youth to sit quietly for a moment and think about how they can forgive themselves. Ask these questions into the silence: Do they feel sorry? Have they

actually apologized? Can they keep from repeating the wrong? Have they done their best to make things right?

After the silence, tell them to write some actions they can take to forgive themselves and then to turn their papers over.

When all are ready, ask the youth to think of some way they were hurt by somebody else doing something wrong. Again, they can use code or anything else so nobody can understand what they write. Next, ask the youth to sit quietly for a moment and think about how they can forgive that other person. Ask these questions into the silence: Would they want the other person to forgive them if they did the same thing? Do they understand that nobody is perfect and that we all do wrong things? Do they understand that most people try their best to do good things? Does it matter to them whether the other person apologized and tried to fix the damage that was done? Can they forgive people who do not do that? If you cannot and do not forgive somebody, does it hurt that person? Does it hurt you?

After the silence, tell them to write some actions they can take to start forgiving the other person, and then to fold their papers.

Say that if they found they could not forgive themselves or other people for something, they should decide what else to do. Maybe they could do something more to make up for the thing they did wrong. Maybe they should talk to the other person about how they were hurt.

Allow another moment for thought. Then ask the youth to crumple up their papers and throw them in a bag that you promise to destroy without opening. If you have a paper shredder, have them feed in their papers to be destroyed one at a time.

Now ask the youth to prepare to write on the second piece of paper. This time they should draw a big heart on one side of the paper and write the word "self" inside it. On the other side, they should draw another heart and write the word "other" in it. They should fold up this paper and take it home with them.

Say you hope the youth will practice forgiving themselves and others, because it is not always easy to do that. Add the caution that sometimes, if we slip and do something really bad, or somebody does something really bad to us, then it might not be possible just to say "I forgive" and forget about whatever it was. Continue with words such as these:

Sometimes you need help understanding why you did something wrong and in making sure it will not happen again. Sometimes when another person does something wrong that hurts you,

you need to get help and talk to somebody, usually an adult you trust, to figure out what to do about it. It is also okay if you need to talk to a professional to help process your feelings. It's important to seek help from a school counselor or a professional therapist if you think you might need it. Forgiving may have to wait until the other person corrects the wrong.

Remind the youth of the question in the Opening: Have any of them ever said they were forgiving somebody when they really did not want to? If so, was that a time when the other person did not correct the wrong that was done? Ask if the youth agree that actions speak louder than words when it comes to forgiveness. Does it help to say you forgive somebody and then continue to be angry with them for whatever they did? Although it can be hard to tell someone that you cannot yet forgive him or her, if you are not honest about how you feel, your resentment can grow and fester. That is not good for you or the other person. Admitting to hurt feelings is a necessary step toward reconciliation.

If participants are inclined to discuss this topic further, including real-life situations they have encountered, let them do so if the leaders feel comfortable with it. Keep the focus on the usefulness and the actions of forgiveness. If someone should disclose an incident involving possible abuse, make sure you take action. See the Introduction for information on mandated reporting and safe congregations.

Including All Participants

Ensure that comfortable writing surfaces are available and easy to use by all participants.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? Do youth have a basic understanding of some of the difficult ideas connected with spirituality? Do they also understand that spirituality is as simple as sitting and looking up at the stars with wonder? If not, how can you help them to such understanding?

Look ahead at Session 13. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

To err is human, to forgive divine.
— Alexander Pope

To understand everything is to forgive everything
— Hindu Prince Gautama Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We talked about forgiveness, beginning with a quotation that says it is human to err and divine to forgive. Then we heard two stories, one about an angry god, the other about Jesus asking God to forgive the people who crucified him. We spent some time in a spiritual space and we did some wall-to-wall questions. During Faith in Action, we made decisions about forgiving ourselves and other people.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- Forgiveness at home. Are you quick to forgive each other, or do you hold grudges?
- Not talking. In some families, people get so angry that they stop talking to one another. Does that happen to you? How much good does it do?
- Salvation. What are your thoughts about salvation?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Saying, "I'm sorry" more often. In every family, people sometimes bother each other, even when they do not mean to. Will saying, "I'm sorry" more often result in somebody else saying "I forgive you" more often?
- Looking for movies and television shows where forgiveness is an issue. Could the characters solve some problems just by saying, "I'm sorry," and "I forgive"?
- Switching mental gears. The next time somebody does something wrong that hurts you, turn off your anger and turn on your understanding. Why did the wrong thing happen? Does understanding it make it easier to forgive the person who did it? Does the Siddhartha quote seem true?

MYSTERY AND ME

Are you having trouble forgiving yourself for something you did that was wrong? Do you understand why it happened? Does solving that mystery make it easier to forgive yourself? If you are keeping a journal, write some of your thoughts about forgiving yourself. If you have nothing to forgive yourself for, write a big "good going" in your journal.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

The next time you and another family member get angry at each other, see how fast you can turn the anger into laughter. Who can say something funny first?

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Find a space that everybody in your family finds spiritual. Enjoy it together as often as possible.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role nametags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

Ask at the end of the game whether anybody made decisions that might result in somebody having to forgive them.

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THEME SONG REVISITED (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, [Singing the Living Tradition](#) (at

www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565)

- Music player
- Recording of "Amazing Grace," preferably one that includes lyrics

Preparation for Activity

- Have your recording of "Amazing Grace" ready to play. See the Introduction for a list of versions.

Description of Activity

Help your group connect this session's ideas to the curriculum's theme song, "Amazing Grace."

Play a minute or two of the song and ask participants to say what they think the words mean. Remind the group as appropriate of any discussion you had during Activity 2: Meeting the Theme Song, in Session 4: Telling Right from Wrong.

Distribute copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and ask participants to turn to Hymn 205. Remind the group, as appropriate, of what you discussed during Session 4. Then ask them to think about verses 2 through 4. Use the following questions to derive meaning from those verses:

- What do you think the word "home" refers to at the end of the third verse? (Heaven is a good guess.)
- Where do you think you might be for ten thousand years and still have at least as many more years to go? (Heaven, again.)
- Repeat the idea from Session 4 that some people think of "grace" as a gift given by God. What does that gift seem to be, according to the song? What is the "Amazing Grace"? (Possibly God's forgiveness and acceptance proven by salvation and eternal life.)
- Have the discussions and the activities the group has done since Session 4 helped you understand the lyrics better or in a different way?
- Why do you think so many people feel a deep connection with this hymn?
- Two versions of this hymn are included in *Singing the Living Tradition*. What connection do you think UUs, both Christian and non-Christian UUs, feel with the lyrics of this hymn?
- Why do you think this program's title is Amazing Grace?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: DIVINITY QUOTE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and washable markers

Preparation for Activity

- Write and display on newsprint the Alexander Pope quotation at the beginning of the session.

Description of Activity

Point out the Alexander Pope quotation you have written on newsprint. "To err is human, to forgive divine." Ask your youth what they think of it. Have they heard it before? Do they agree with it? What does "err" mean? Could you replace it with something else, such as "make mistakes," or the religious word "sin"? What does "divine" mean? (It is related to "deity," which means a god. One definition of "divine" is "godlike"; another is "heavenly.")

Ask participants to apply the quote to their own lives. When somebody forgives them, is that somebody acting like a god? Do they themselves feel godlike when they forgive somebody else? Or is forgiving just a good, human thing to do? Can the youth think of a way to rewrite the Golden Rule using the word "forgive"? (See Session 4, Activity 4. One possible revision is: "Forgive other people the way you would want them to forgive you in the same situation.")

Ask participants if they ever have had to forgive themselves for doing something wrong. If forgiving other people is divine, what about forgiving yourself; is that divine, too?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: RESPONDING TO IDEAS ABOUT FORGIVENESS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, [Singing the Living Tradition](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565)

Preparation for Activity

- Reading 477 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

Description of Activity

Share a few brief quotations about forgiveness.

Ask for simple but active responses with instructions like these:

If you agree with this quotation, stand up; if you disagree with this quotation, stand on your chair.

Read each of the following quotations in turn. Let youth respond actively to each, and then give reasons for their responses. Ask at the end of each discussion whether anybody's ideas and reactions have changed.

It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.

— Mother Teresa

To understand everything is to forgive everything.

— Commonly attributed to Hindu Prince Gautama Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, but also sometimes attributed to other sources.

To understand is not only to pardon, but in the end to love.

— Walter Lippman

If I do not forgive everyone, I shall be untrue to myself.

— Albert Schweitzer

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was you.

— Unknown

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

— Mohandas Gandhi

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

Forgive your enemies, but never forget their names.

— John F. Kennedy

The supreme sin is not to be able to forgive yourself.

— Waldo Frank

End the discussion by asking one or more volunteers to read Reading 477 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You might try it as a responsive reading, with leaders reading "Forgive us" and "Forbid that we" while participants finish each verse. Everyone should then read the last verse together.

Including All Participants

Give instructions for active responses that all participants can comfortably follow. Do not ask youth to stand if even one in the group cannot.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 5: STORY AND DISCUSSION – CAST THE FIRST STONE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 3, "[Cast the First Stone](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 3, "Cast the First Stone," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Share the Christian scripture story of Jesus inviting people without sin to "cast the first stone."

As an introduction, or in discussion following the story, make the point that it is often easier for people to forgive others if they first admit that they, too, have done wrong things; that they, too, have made mistakes. Consider also reminding the group of the opening quotation: "To err is human, to forgive divine." In the story, Jesus assumes that nobody is perfect, that everybody in the group is a sinner. He, too, believed that "to err is human."

Tell or read the story. Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it. After hearing the story, ask the group the following questions:

- Why do you think Jesus was looking at the ground during this incident? (One possible answer: so people could admit their sins without fearing his condemnation.)
- Why did the oldest people leave first? (Possible answers: they were the wisest; or, having lived longer, they had experienced more sin.)
- The woman could have run away when only Jesus was left. Why do you think she stayed? (One possible answer: she was repentant of her sin and willing to receive punishment.)

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 12: STORY: CAST THE FIRST STONE

Adapted from Christian scripture, John 8: 2-11, *New Revised Standard Version*.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

At dawn, he appeared in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.

The scribes and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in sin [adultery]. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of sin [committing adultery]. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now

what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again, he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 12: STORY: JESUS FORGIVES

Adapted from Christian scripture, Luke 23, *New Revised Standard Version*.

An angry crowd demanded that Jesus be put to death. Pilate decided to grant their demand, and he surrendered Jesus to the will of the crowd.

The crowd grabbed Simon and made him carry the cross behind Jesus. Two women wept for Jesus, who turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

Two other men, both criminals, were led out with Jesus to be executed. A crowd moved the three men to the place of execution, nailed them to crosses, and raised them to die by crucifixion. People sneered at Jesus and shouted that he should save himself if he was the son of God, but Jesus cried out to his God.

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

And there he died.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 12: STORY: ZEUS PUNISHES

Zeus was not big on forgiving. He was the chief god on Mount Olympus, and what he said went. When the other gods and goddesses obeyed, fine. When they disobeyed, he threw thunderbolts around and thought up some very nasty punishments.

You might guess that the other gods and goddesses, knowing this, would stay out of trouble. Often they did, but not always. One example is the case of Prometheus.

Prometheus was a minor god who had a big job that Zeus had given him—creating humans to live on the earth while his brother, Epimetheus, created other forms of life. Prometheus did fine work, making humans in the image of the gods, but he took too long. By the time he finished, Epimetheus had already passed out most of the gifts that Zeus had given them both to share with all living beings. So animals had more physical skills, like jumping, running, and smelling, than people did. Some also had wonderful fur coats to keep them warm during the winter when people were shivering in their thin skins.

This bothered Prometheus. He felt sorry for the people and wanted them at least to have the gift of fire to help them through the long, cold nights. He asked Zeus for coals from the sacred hearth on Mount Olympus. "No," said Zeus. Fire was for gods and goddesses only; people should never have it.

Prometheus took it anyway. He snuck up to the top of Olympus, stole coals from the fire, and carried them down to earth and its people. Human life changed for the better. People were more comfortable and less afraid at night. Animals respected the fire and did not attack people who were near it.

Zeus was not pleased, but he held his temper because he saw that people were using some of their fire to prepare offerings of fresh meat for the gods. Then Prometheus went too far.

He noticed that people were working hard for their food, but they were burning the best of it for the gods. He showed them how to trick Zeus by offering him a choice of two gifts. One looked terrible but had the good meat in it. The other looked great but had only bones, gristle, and fat in it. Zeus chose the second, and when he realized what had happened, he was furious. Zeus sent thunderbolts flying around the sky, and he had Prometheus dragged to the top of the Caucasus Mountains and tied up in heavy, unbreakable chains.

As a god, Prometheus was immortal. He could not die, but he could suffer great pain, and he did. Every day an eagle flew down from the sky, tore out Prometheus's liver, and ate it. Every night the liver grew back, ready for the eagle's return in the morning for another meal. This continued for hundreds of years.

Zeus punished the people on earth another way. He gave them Pandora, along with a very special box—but that is another story.

**AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 12:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: CHURCH SIGN**

Photograph of a sign outside the Trinity Church in Gray, Maine.



AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 12: LEADER RESOURCE 2: DEFINITIONS

Terms are on the left and their definitions are on the right. Write each term on a separate hanging name tag. Do the same for each definition. During the matching game described in Activity 3: Matching in Motion, participants should align themselves to match terms and definitions as given here.

Baptism	Religious ceremony that washes sins away
Confession	Admitting guilt
Eternity	Forever and ever
Ethics	Study of right and wrong
Faith	Spiritual and religious belief
Forgiveness	Excusing somebody for doing something wrong
Grace	Undeserved gift from God or the divine
Salvation	Delivered from sin and hell to goodness and heaven
Spirituality	Sense of deep, important connection
Sin	A wrong act
Temptation	Urge to do something wrong
Virtue	Being good

FIND OUT MORE

Valea, Ernest. "[Salvation and eternal life in world religions](http://www.comparativereligion.com/salvation.html)" (at www.comparativereligion.com/salvation.html); an

examination of religious approaches to salvation on a comparative religion website.

D'Aulaire, Ingri, and Edgar Parin. *Book of Greek Myths*. (New York: Delacorte Press, 1962). An illustrated book of Greek myths, including "Prometheus."

SESSION 13: BAD GUYS, GOOD GUYS

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The great hope of society is individual character.
— William Ellery Channing

This session is the first of four that focuses on ethical development, using the Cherokee story of the two wolves inside us to ask whether people are basically bad or good. The session continues with a series of up-and-down questions that introduce the concept of character and then ask youth to talk about building good character. The Ethics Play activity asks youth to practice making ethical decisions. The Faith in Action segment asks youth to nurture their better "environmental wolf."

GOALS

This session will:

- Ask participants to consider whether humans are basically bad or good, sinful or virtuous
- Explore the ethics of character development
- Examine environmentalism as an ethical choice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Hear a story about the bad and good in everybody
- Consider whether bad thoughts are damaging to a person's character
- Differentiate between bad and good character
- Practice making ethical decisions
- Optional: Consider the ethics of environmental choices
- Optional: Discuss the implications of psychological and physiological brain differences for ethical decision-making
- Optional: Hear a story about putting beliefs into action

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story and Discussion – Two Wolves: A Cherokee Tale	7
Activity 2: Up-and-Down Questions	10
Activity 3: Building Character Puzzles	20
Activity 4: Ethics Play	15
Faith in Action: Our Environmental Wolves	15
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Our Hard-Wired Brains	8
Alternate Activity 2: Story – I'm Sorry	7
Alternate Activity 3: Temptation Freeze Tag	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, explore your own ideas about the basic morality of humankind. Are people bad or good at their core? Search for explanations as to why you answer that question the way you do. Is it based on experience? Is it influenced by your religion or spirituality? Is it what your family taught you as a child?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Feel the energy of sharing fill you. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- Household battery, any size from AAA to D or 1.5 volts
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the battery on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the practice by playing different versions of the song. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us explore our own characters.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

Ask the youth how many of them sometimes have dreams they remember. How many have had good dreams? How many have had bad dreams? Ask whether the good dreams have ever helped anybody and whether the bad dreams have ever hurt anybody. Accept a few comments if you like, but do not allow the session to drift away into endless descriptions of "you will never believe the dream I had last night."

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY AND DISCUSSION – TWO WOLVES: A CHEROKEE TALE (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1: ["Two Wolves: A Cherokee Tale"](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "Two Wolves: A Cherokee Tale," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

The group shares the central story of the session, which involves internal battles between right and wrong.

Tell or read Story 1, "Two Wolves: A Cherokee Tale." Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

"Two Wolves" is very short, but it has impact. After telling it, lead a discussion with questions like these:

Do you sometimes feel that you have two wolves inside of you, one bad and the other good? How do people feed these wolves?

Remind the group (or inform it, if you have not already done Session 12), that some people believe in the idea of original sin. They think that people are sinners from the moment of birth. (See Activity 2 of Session 12, Human and Divine.) Others disagree. They believe in

the basic goodness of people. Many Unitarian Universalists and humanists (see Faith in Action of Session 12, Human and Divine) feel this way. They believe that most people are the best people they know how to be, even if they are not perfect. What do your youth think? Which wolf do most people feed?

ACTIVITY 2: UP-AND-DOWN QUESTIONS (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity allows a bit of movement as participants respond to ten statements.

Give instructions like these:

I am going to read ten statements. If you agree with the statement, stand up. If you disagree, stay seated. If you halfway agree, stand halfway up. After you react to each statement, we will talk about it. Then we will all sit down and I will read the next one.

Here are the statements:

- I agree: most people have both good and bad wolves to feed.
- I myself have good and bad wolves that require feeding.
- Feeding your good wolf helps you build good character and feeding your bad wolf helps you build bad character.
- Most people can build good character if they want to do so.
- People with good character do not dream about doing bad things. (Reference the question asked in the Opening. Where do bad dreams come from? What can you do about them?)
- People can control what they dream if they really try. (Some youth may have heard of "lucid dreams." These are dreams in which the dreamers know that they are dreaming. Some experts say that people can be trained to dream lucidly and to control their lucid dreams. If youth could control their dreams, what kind of dreams would they have?)
- People can control what they think if they really try.
- If you have bad thoughts, you have bad character. (Some youth feel tortured by bad thoughts; they may equate having bad thoughts with doing bad things.)

- Bad thoughts do not matter; what counts is what you do. Introduce the idea that people are what they do, and are known for what they do, not for what they think. Consider sharing this saying: "We do as we are; we become as we do." Share also these words from Isaac Bashevis Singer: "We know what a person thinks not when he tells us what he thinks, but by his actions." (Note: Help youth to understand that occasional bad thoughts usually do not by themselves hurt anybody. However, people who have frequent bad thoughts they cannot get rid of, or thoughts that keep pushing them to act in ways they know are bad should talk to a counselor about them. For youth, a counselor could be a parent, a school counselor, a minister, or another adult friend.)
- People can control their own character if they so desire.

Ask youth what they think "character" means. You might say that "character is the real you, the qualities that make you you." Mention that an educator named Henry Huffman once said, "Character is what you do when nobody is looking." Ask how "character" and "personality" differ. Consider explaining that personality is related to character, but personality is more on the outside than character is. Personality is what people see when they first meet you. They will not understand your inner character until they know you better.

In the course of discussion, point out that people sometimes say that an individual has a "good character" or a "bad character." However, most people are not wholly bad or wholly good. They have a mix of good characteristics and not-so-good, or bad, characteristics. It is better (and easier) to evaluate peoples' actions than their characters. Still, it is good to know something about the characteristics that form their characters.

Including All Participants

If you have participants who cannot easily stand, change the way you ask the group to signal agreement. Youth might raise two hands for full agreement, one hand for partial agreement, and no hands for disagreement.

ACTIVITY 3: BUILDING CHARACTER PUZZLES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Thin poster paper or card stock for small groups
- Fine-tipped washable markers for small groups
- Scissors for small groups

- Transparent tape for small groups

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how many small groups to form and how best to form them.

Description of Activity

Small groups create puzzles to help participants describe and understand the characteristics that shape good and bad character. Conduct it in seven steps:

- Ask the group to make puzzles that show good personal characteristics and bad ones. Say that when they do this they should think about people they might know or know of—not horrible villains from movies or superheroes from comic books.
- Divide the group into smaller groups of three or four youth each. Identify half the groups as "good characteristic" groups and the other half as "bad characteristic" groups. Give each group a sheet of poster paper or light cardboard, two or three pairs of scissors, and two or three markers. Keep the groups together until you explain the next two steps.
- When the groups separate, each should create a list of twelve good characteristics in a person or twelve bad characteristics, whichever their assignment is. Four of those things should be actions (such as "helps people" or "hurts people"). Four more should be typical emotions ("happy" or "angry," for example). Four more should be adjectives, or describing words (like "friendly" or "self-centered").
- Every group should then make a jigsaw puzzle from its characteristics by writing each one once in some random spot on their sheet of card stock. The words can be written at odd angles, upside down, sideways, and diagonally. Together they should pretty much fill the card stock. **Challenging option:** The groups can cut their card stock into the shape of a wolf's head before writing the words and making a puzzle.
- Each group should then cut their card stock into about thirty or forty puzzle pieces. The puzzles they create should be fairly easy to put together. The goal is not to make a thousand pieces that would take countless hours to reassemble.
- The groups should swap their puzzles and reassemble the pieces they receive. When they finish, they can tape the pieces together so they can move the puzzles.

- Have the small groups come together and place their completed puzzles where all can see them.
- Discuss the puzzles and the lists, using these questions:
 - Can people control all their characteristics?
 - Which ones are easiest to control?
 - Should people think about building their characters into something good?
- What do adults mean when they describe an activity as "character-building"? (Often they seem to mean that the activity will be hard and not much fun, but it will make you a better person.)
- Can character building be fun?
- Do people with good character always do the right thing? Do people with bad character always do the wrong thing?
- Can you tell more about a person's character by what that person says or what that person does?

Conclude by making the point that human character is complicated. Even when we think we know someone really well, we may not. Return to an idea mentioned in Activity 1: Most UUs believe that people are the best people they can be. They do more right things than wrong things. In other words, they try to have good character, and most of them do, even if they are not perfect.

ACTIVITY 4: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role nametags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document)).
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

Ask at the end of the game which of the Star's two wolves seemed to be winning. Ask also whether what people did and said in the game reflected good character or not.

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home, one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and to speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: OUR ENVIRONMENTAL WOLVES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Paper and pencils

Description of Activity

Youth identify their good and bad environmental wolves and decide on some actions they and their families can do to feed the better wolves.

Introduce the activity by producing the battery from your Conundrum Corner. Ask youth why they think it is there. After hearing some ideas, say that it shows how the environment can be like emotions. Sometimes it is difficult to know what is good and what is bad. Ask why batteries are sometimes good and sometimes bad. (They produce electricity, which is cleaner than some other forms of energy, but when you dispose of them the wrong way, they hurt the environment; they need to be

disposed of correctly.) Ask also which are better, rechargeable or non-rechargeable batteries. (Rechargeable batteries last longer, so users do not need as many batteries. Rechargeable batteries can be recycled, but they still contain heavy metals that are bad for the environment.)

Then connect the environment with the Cherokee story of two wolves. Ask if the youth agree that it sometimes seems that we have two environmental wolves inside us, one of them good and one of them bad. Ask the youth to brainstorm (1) what feeds the good wolf and leads to healthy environmental actions, and (2) what feeds the bad wolf and leads to unhealthy environmental actions.

Consider categorizing the responses into groups such as clean water, clean air, and disposable trash. What feeds the good wolf and leads to healthy environmental actions connected with disposable trash? (Using recycled materials, buying only what you can use, avoiding overly packaged materials, such as individually wrapped cheese slices.) What feeds the bad wolf, leading to unhealthy actions? (Being lazy and throwing out trash that could be recycled, littering or tossing things out of car windows, wanting and buying more than you need.)

When your lists are long enough (several appropriate items in each category), distribute paper and pencils to the youth. Ask them to think about the lists for a moment, then each write down three or four actions they think they and their families should take to feed their healthy environmental wolves.

When all have completed their lists, ask them to take them home and discuss them with their families so that together they can do more things right and fewer things wrong for the environment.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? How did youth react to your discussions of dreams, thoughts, and emotions? Do they understand that we all sometimes have bad dreams, thoughts, and emotions? We cannot avoid that, but we can decide what to do with them.

Look ahead at Session 14. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

The great hope of society is individual character.
— William Ellery Channing

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We shared a Cherokee story and thought about the good and bad wolves inside us all. We gave some up-and-down answers to ten questions, and made some puzzles showing bad and good personal characteristics. We did Ethics Play, and for Faith in Action, we decided how to feed our good environmental wolves.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- The Cherokee legend. Does your family agree with the idea that everybody has two inner wolves, one bad and one good? How do you feed the good wolves in your family?
- Emotions. Families show their emotions in different ways. Some families seem to “wear their emotions on their sleeves.” Everybody in the family knows what everybody else is feeling just about all the time. When such families are having fun, they may laugh a lot. When they disagree, they may be loud about it. Other families are more “reserved.” People keep their feelings to themselves. What about your family? Is it one of these types or is it somewhere in between?
- Bad guys and good guys. Are people basically good or bad? Are they sinners at birth? Do they try to be the best people they can be? What do the members of your family think?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Naming your own inner animals. Maybe you do not think you have two wolves inside you. What other names could you use for your bad and good parts?
- Feeding your good environmental wolf. Talk about what you did for Faith in Action. Did you find ways you think your family should feed your good environmental wolf? Share them with your family. What do other family members think?
- Naming some terrific people you know. Most families know some really wonderful people who almost always do and say the right things and who are great to have around. Make a family list of those people. Do not start talking about the reasons some other people do not get on the list. Concentrate on the ones who do, and be glad they are in your lives.

MYSTERY AND ME

Think about your character. What parts do you like best? What parts would you like to build? Is part of your character a mystery, even to you? (If you ever say, “I don’t know why I did something,” that may be a clue about something you do not understand.) If you are journaling, write your ideas about that part. Say how you can figure out the mystery.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Play emotional freeze. Someday, when you are having a really good time with your family, freeze a picture of it in your mind. Do not spoil the time by interrupting it and talking about it. But do talk about it later. Remember how the enjoyment started so you can repeat it at another time.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Find out how to feed each other’s good emotional wolves. How can you help one another to be the best people you can be? Find some ways to help one another do their best.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: OUR HARD-WIRED BRAINS (8 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This discussion speaks of psychology and physiology and asks for comments about legal defenses based in psychology.

Begin by asking youth to define “psychology” and “physiology.” (The first may be defined simply as “the science of mental process and behavior.” The second can be defined as “the biological science that studies how a living body works physically.”)

Ask the youth whether they think psychology and physiology can explain why people think and act the way they do. If so, where does religion fit in? Can people obey the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule if the wiring in their brains tells them to be bad? What would participants say if they were judges in a case where a criminal admitted to setting buildings on fire but claimed that he had to do it because he had an abnormal brain? If they were judges, which would they rely on more, what the law says or the testimony of psychologists and physiologists who say somebody is sick in a way that makes them do bad acts? Should

these sick people go to jail? Should they be free to act badly again?

In the course of discussion, help youth to understand that:

- Psychology and physiology are both extremely complicated.
- Doctors and scientists today understand a lot about the brain and behavior, but they do not understand everything they would like to know.
- Psychology defenses have become more common in criminal cases during recent years. Defendants often argue that mental illness made them act in wrong ways. Sometimes these defendants behave so strangely that it is easy to believe what they say. Sometimes that is not the case, however, and it can be difficult for judges and jurors to decide whether mental illness caused the wrong act.
- Research shows that some people are unable to feel sympathy for other people. They do not know how to act right because they cannot understand what happens when they do wrong.
- Research also shows that an understanding of what is right is built into many people's brains. In some ways, they have built-in moral compasses that help them know how they should act.
- Research shows that even animals seem to know they should not hurt other animals. In one experiment, every time a rat was fed, its neighbor received an electric shock. Eventually the first rat stopped eating, preventing its neighbor from being shocked. (See the Shankar Vedantam article listed under Find Out More.)

Conclude by noting that although this is interesting, does it suggest that we can all blame our brains every time we do something wrong? Answer the question, if participants do not:

Of course not. Most of us have good brains and bodies that we can use to make good decisions about right and wrong. We must act as if we have free will, and do right whenever we can. If we do not, we will make the world a worse place than it is. We will also get ourselves into trouble.

Notes: Fascinating though they are, psychological theories and research are largely beyond the scope of *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*. Deciding how to use all the moral tools at their disposal is challenge enough for most sixth graders. For a related activity that introduces the evolutionary theory of

morality, see Alternate Activity 1 in Session 14, *Letting the Good Out*.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: STORY — I'M SORRY (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 2, "[I'm Sorry](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 2, "I'm Sorry," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Youth hear and discuss a story that illustrates how actions speak louder than words.

Tell or read Story 2, "I'm Sorry." Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it

Ask for reactions to the story. What do the youth think the moral is? ("Actions speak louder than words" is one possibility.)

Can the youth tell of events in their own lives when somebody stepped up and did something good while others were just talking?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: TEMPTATION FREEZE TAG (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Find a suitable space to play, preferably outdoors.

Description of Activity

This is an active illustration of the relationship between temptation and the conscience.

This high-energy activity is a variation of traditional freeze tag, in which one person who is "it" runs around and tags others inside the boundaries of a large but defined space. Anyone tagged must stop and stand in a frozen position. "It" wins when everybody has been tagged and frozen. The last person tagged acts as "it" for the next round. Most versions of freeze tag include a way to unfreeze people: if two people who are free connect their arms together around a frozen person, that person is unfrozen and allowed to continue playing until tagged again.

In this *Amazing Grace* version, the player acting as "it" is called "conscience." All other players are "temptations,"

so the conscience is always working to overcome temptations.

Lower-energy approach: Limit youth movement to walking. Set a rule that all must have at least one foot on the ground at all times.

When participants have run (or walked) enough, ask them to talk about other ways they might vary the game of tag to make it appropriate for Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong. If you have extra time available, or in a retreat setting, ask small groups to create new Amazing Grace rules for old games, then give the full group a chance to try these new variations.

Including All Participants

If you have participants with limitations that will prevent their playing this game in any form, you should skip it. If there are youth who can participate, but not at full speed, slow down everybody with the lower-energy approach.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 13: STORY: I'M SORRY

A folk tale found in many cultures.

A farmer used his horse to pull a wagon loaded with produce to sell in the market. They had been at the market for a couple of hours when the horse fell over and died. All the farmer's friends and acquaintances gathered around. They felt very sorry for the farmer, because they knew that he and his family needed the horse to run the farm and make money.

"I'm very sorry about your loss," said one friend. "I'm sorry, too," said a woman. "I'm sorry," "I'm sorry," "I'm sorry," said many, many more people for the next hour or so.

Finally, when just about everybody in the crowd had said how sorry they were, a man in the back spoke up. "I'm sorry five dollars worth," he announced.

There was silence for a moment while everybody thought. Then another voice spoke. "I'm sorry five dollars worth, too." Another voice spoke, then another, and another. Sometimes the amounts were different, but soon the whole crowd was offering money.

By the end of the day, the farmer's friends and acquaintances had helped him bury his old horse and given him enough money to buy a new one.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 13: STORY: TWO WOLVES

A Cherokee tale from the [AAA Native Arts](#) website, used with permission.

An elder Cherokee was teaching his grandchildren about life. He said to them, "A fight is going on inside me. It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves.

One wolf represents fear, anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other stands for joy, peace, love, hope, sharing, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, friendship, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.

This same fight is going on inside you, and inside every other person, too."

The children thought about it for a minute and then one child asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

FIND OUT MORE

[AAA Native Arts](http://www.aaanativearts.com) (at www.aaanativearts.com) is the website with the version of "Two Wolves" used in this session.

Vedantam, Shankar. "[If It Feels Good to Be Good, It might Be Only Natural](#)" (at pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/1278113

691.html?dids=1278113691:1278113691&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT&fmac=&date=May+28%2C+2007&author=Shankar+Vedantam+-+Washington+Post+Staff+Writer&desc=If+It+Feels+Good+to+Be+Good%2C+It+Might+Be+Only+Natural),"
published on [The Washington Post](#) (at www.washingtonpost.com) website. This is an article reporting on recent neuroscience experiments.

SESSION 14: DOING YOUR GOOD SIDE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Everyone is a moon and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody.

— Mark Twain

Session 13 discussed ethical and character conflict in terms of two inner wolves. This session examines how each of us has a "good" and a "bad" side to our character and personality and explores external barriers to right action. The session begins with the Conundrum Corner and the opening quote and continues with a story of a father and son trying always to do what others say they should. In Ethics Play, participants search for obstacles to right action. They build an obstacle course and advise others how to conquer it. They then discuss five common sayings about character and behavior. In Faith in Action, they consider the strengths on their own "good sides."

The session is the second of four that focuses on ethical development.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore how good and bad sides exist in all of us
- Consider obstacles to right action
- Focus on the problems of peer pressure
- Optional: Share techniques for anger management.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider the idea that people have two sides
- Explore the challenges of trying to please other people
- Identify obstacles that can block right action
- Understand the concept of personal integrity

- Examine how they may block their own right action.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Good Sides, Bad Sides	5
Activity 2: Story – The Honorable Joha, Mula Nasruddin Hodja, and the Famous Donkey Story	7
Activity 3: Ethics Play	15
Activity 4: Ethics Obstacle Course	20
Activity 5: Five Phrases	5
Faith in Action: Your Own Good Side	10
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Evolutionary Morality	10
Alternate Activity 2: Temper Tantrums	10
Alternate Activity 3: Ethics GPS	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, explore your own two sides. Can you identify them? How do you keep yourself on the virtuous, rightful paths you set for yourself?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- A small mirror
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the small mirror on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Set up your room as suggested in the Opening of Session 1, Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the practice by playing different versions of the song. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music, or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us to see ourselves as others do.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

Point out the mirror in the Conundrum Corner and ask youth why they think it is there. Accept some guesses, then say that its purpose is to help the youth decide which is their best side: left or right. Comment that many people like to have their picture taken from the right or left side, because they think that shows their better side. Ask the youth to show by raising their hands which is their best side. How many think their left side is? How many think the right? Say that anybody who is unsure can use the mirror after the session to find out.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: GOOD SIDES, BAD SIDES (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Introduce the session by giving its title, "Doing Your Good Side." Say that when you talked about showing your good side a moment ago, you meant "your best physical side." Add that most people really do not need to worry about their best physical side, because they look about the same on both sides. Then introduce the opening Mark Twain quote: "Every one is a moon, and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody." Ask participants what they think Twain meant. Was he referring to their physical side? Have the youth heard of somebody "showing their best side" by being on their best behavior? People sometimes say that about individuals who can be hard to get along with at some times but very nice at other times. Maybe the youth know people like that.

If further explanation will be useful, consider words like these:

Showing somebody your good side does not really mean doing anything physical. It refers to the fact that our characters are mixed. Some parts are better than other parts. Most of us have bad times when we feel or act angry or

envious. Most of us have good times when we are kind, caring, and helpful. The differences reflect different parts, or the different sides, of our characters. We ourselves may understand that we seem to have two sides. Others may see that, too.

So "showing your right side" can mean doing the right thing instead of the wrong thing, being virtuous instead of sinful. That is why the name of this session is "Doing Your Good Side," not "Showing Your Good Side."

We say that people who try hard to do their best sides have "integrity." They live up to their own ideals and show their best characteristics. They do not just know what is right; they try to do it.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — THE HONORABLE JOHA, MULA NASRUDDIN HODJA, AND THE FAMOUS DONKEY STORY (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[The Honorable Joha, Mula Nasruddin Hodja, and the Donkey Story](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "The Honorable Joha, Mula Nasruddin Hodja, and the Famous Donkey Story," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Youth hear and react to a story about trying to please everyone.

Read or tell the story "The Honorable Joha, Mula Nasruddin Hodja, and the Famous Donkey Story."

Ask for reactions. Then lead a discussion by posing a few questions:

- What caused the problems for the father, son, and donkey? (They tried to please other people.)
- Is there a difference between "peer pressure" and the situation in the story? (Yes. "Peer pressure" usually refers to kids trying to get other kids the same age to do something. However, the idea is the same. The man and boy kept doing what other people said to do instead of what they thought was right.)

- Why do people give in to peer pressure? (It can happen to adults as well as kids. Some people give in because they want to please the other people and want people to like them. Sometimes people are not sure what is right, so they do what others say to avoid making a decision.)
- Whose fault is it when somebody does something wrong because she/he gave in to peer pressure? Is it the fault of the person who gives in, the peers, or both?
- Are people showing their best side when they make decisions by trying to please others?
- Why do peers try to get other people to do what they want?
- Have participants ever gotten into trouble by giving in to peer pressure? How can they avoid it?
- Do people who always try to do what others want them to do have integrity? (No. Integrity means doing what you yourself know is best.)

Point out, if participants have not, that peer pressure and advice from other people are not always wrong. Sometimes your friends are right about what you should do. If you accept what they tell you, you should do it because you think they are right, not because you will do anything they say in order to please them.

ACTIVITY 3: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role nametags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#)). (included in this document)
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game, connect it to the themes of this session by asking what part peer pressure played. Did

the opinion of others have too much influence upon the Star? Did the Star "do his/her good side"?

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ACTIVITY 4: ETHICS OBSTACLE COURSE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Modeling or polymer clay
- Pipe cleaners
- Sheet of poster board or cardboard for each small group
- Assorted other craft materials for building obstacle courses
- Protective tarps or newspapers

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how to set up small groups so they will overhear each other as little as possible.

Description of Activity

Ask youth to create model obstacle courses showing things that often stand in the way of right or virtuous action.

Introduce the activity by saying that most people want to do the right thing, but sometimes they fail because of problems that keep them from showing and doing their good side. Peer pressure, for example, may convince some people to act in a wrong way, even though they really know they should not.

Divide the youth into small groups of three or four, and say that each group is to create a model obstacle course that shows some of the things that interfere with virtuous or right action. Point out whatever supplies you have provided, and say that each group will build its obstacle course on a sheet of poster board. The team should try to make a course with five or more obstacles.

When you announce that time is up, the groups will come back together and share their creations. Each group will then (1) give the name of the obstacle, (2) say how the obstacle works in real life, and (3) say what somebody on the obstacle course must do to overcome it. For example, the group might choose to build a mountain and call it Peer Peak. In real life, they could explain, people sometimes want so much to be popular with their peers that they do what the peers say instead

of what they think is right. The challenge for somebody on the obstacle course might be to run all the way up the mountain, stand on the top, yell, "I am my own person, and I will do what I think is right," and then run back down and go on to the next obstacle.

Have the groups take what supplies they need and find spaces to work where, if possible, they will not overhear each other's ideas.

The toughest part of this activity may be thinking of ideas. If some groups are slow getting started, you might offer some of these possibilities:

- Bully Blockade
- Devil Dungeon
- Disagreeable Ditch
- Greedy Gully
- Hunger Hollow
- Jealousy Jump
- Integrity Plunge
- Lazy Lake
- Me-First Mountain
- Peer Pothole
- Raging River
- Rumor Roadblocks
- Stupidity Sinkhole
- Temptation Tightrope
- Who-Cares Hurdles

Stop the activity when six or seven minutes are left. Have the groups come together and share their ideas. So that every group has a chance to speak, ask each of them to tell about just one obstacle at a time. Be sure the groups give special attention to the way their obstacles work in real life, so that the fun of the activity does not bury its meaning.

Including All Participants

Be sure supplies and workspaces are in convenient locations for all participants to reach.

ACTIVITY 5: FIVE PHRASES (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Lead a brief discussion based on the meaning of five phrases commonly used to describe a person's character.

Introduce and ask about the phrases with questions like these:

- Critics who write about books, movies, and plays sometimes complain that a character is "one-dimensional." What do they mean, and why are they complaining? (A one-dimensional character is somebody who seems too simplified. We see just one side of them. These characters do not seem real, because real people are complicated and have more than one side.)
- What does it mean to be "true to yourself," and how do you do that? (You are true to yourself when you show your best side and act the way you want, not the way other people say you should. One way to do that is to think carefully about your actions in advance. Saying people "are true to themselves" is another way of saying they have integrity.)
- What is a "double-dealer"? (Somebody who says one thing and does another, or says two different things to two different people.)
- What is a "principled person"? (A person who lives up to her/his own principles. Principled people are usually true to themselves; they have integrity.)
- What is a "two-faced" person? (Somebody who shows one side of their personality to some people and another side to other people.)

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home, one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and to speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: YOUR OWN GOOD SIDE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- 11" x 14" sheet of paper for each youth
- Washable markers

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare tabletops or counters so they are suitable for making silhouette drawings.

Description of Activity

In this activity, youth make silhouette drawings of their heads, identify characteristics that make people virtuous, and meditate on their own strengths.

Ask participants to work in pairs to make silhouette drawings of each other's heads. Each pair will need two sheets of paper and one or two markers. Each partner in turn should lay one side of her or his head down on paper while the other partner loosely moves a marker around the shape of the head to make a silhouette drawing. When they have finished, the youth will each have a simple drawing showing one side of their face.

Now have the pairs separate so participants can work independently. Give them instructions like these:

You have just made a drawing that shows one side of you to the world. Let us think of that as your good side. Now use a pencil or marker to write on your drawing some of the characteristics people need not just to show but to do their good side. In other words, what strengths do people need so they can act on their faith and be virtuous?

Give participants a few minutes to write. If a few are slow to begin, consider suggesting some common virtues of good people: strength, understanding, knowledge, love, ability to forgive. If most of the group seem to need some help, pause for a moment to brainstorm ideas and then have the youth continue. You may wish to point out that you are asking the youth to describe virtuous people in general. You are not asking them to write down their own virtues, even though you are sure they have many.

When the group seems to be running out of ideas, ask participants to stop writing and share aloud some of what they have written. Then lead them in a very brief meditation moment with words like this:

Let us sit in silence a moment and think about what we have written and what we have heard.

Now let us each pick a word that we think applies to us. What do other people see when you show the good side of your character?

Think how you can build on that strength.

Now think of a good characteristic that is not a personal strength, but is one you would like to strengthen. Remember, we are not born strong and virtuous. Sometimes we have to work to build up our ethical strength, just as we have to work to build up our bodies. We can shape our own characters, just as we can shape our own muscles. So what will you work on? How will you do it?

Think about this: Using and practicing the strength may help.

Take your thoughts with you as we end our time together. Carry them with you and use them to help you not just show, but also do, your right side in the days ahead.

Including All Participants

Be sure that work surfaces are convenient to use for as many participants as possible. If any participants cannot easily lay their heads on a table or counter, you can do the drawings by putting the paper on cardboard backing and holding it up to the side of their head.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? Do youth understand that showing and doing their good side is a choice that may require some effort? If not, how can you help them grasp that fact?

Look ahead at Session 15. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies.

TAKING IT HOME

Everyone is a moon and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody.
— Mark Twain

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We talked about our good sides and our bad sides. A story about a man and his son and their donkey made us think about peer pressure. We did Ethics Play and made an Ethics Obstacle Course, then talked about some common phrases that describe people's characters. For Faith in Action, we made plans to strengthen our good sides.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- Family characteristics. How are members of your families alike and different? Could outsiders tell by your looks that you are related? What about by your characters?
- Peer pressure. Does it affect your family? Do you sometimes worry about what the neighbors will think? Is it right or wrong to do that?
- The situation your group did in Ethics Play. What do family members and friends say the Star should do?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Identifying obstacles. Think about something good your family wants to do. Maybe it is a way to help the environment or improve your neighborhood. What obstacles do you face? How will you get around those obstacles?
- Making family silhouettes. Help one another trace silhouettes of your faces. Look for differences and similarities.
- Finding characters you admire. Talk about some people in the news that family members admire. What are their characters like? Do you all agree about these people?

MYSTERY AND ME

How would you describe your character? Pretend that you are a friend of yours. Think of a paragraph that friend might write describing you to somebody else. Are there any mysterious parts in your character that are hard to see or to understand? If you are journaling, write your paragraph there. If you thought about one of your character strengths in Faith in Action, write that in your journal, too, along with some ideas about how to use that strength.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Play character charades. Pick a person everybody in the family knows and try to act like that person so other people can guess who it is. You can talk in this game if you want. Try to show the character by how you say something, not what you say.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Discover something you have never noticed before about one another's characters. Talk about what you find. Does doing this help you understand each other better?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: EVOLUTIONARY MORALITY (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Acquaint yourself with the basic idea that morality has developed through evolution.

Description of Activity

This activity offers theory and discussion that will appeal to thoughtful youth who are attracted to ideas. You can challenge such youth by giving them the basic idea and asking them to fill in their own details. If your own group is not often up for serious discussion, you might just offer the basic idea and go on to something else.

The basic idea is simple enough: Some researchers say that morality evolved as a way to help humans survive. For example, people learned that some odors came from things that would be deadly to eat. They learned through time to think of those odors as disgusting. So today, children smelling that thing for the first time would call it disgusting without having any idea what it came from or what it meant.

One such researcher is Dr. Jonathan Haidt, a moral psychologist at the University of Virginia. He wrote a book about the subject called *The Happiness Hypothesis*. (See Find Out More.) He says that when people feel strongly that something is right or wrong but they cannot say why, they are making a moral judgment that developed through evolution.

If your group talked about the Golden Rule in an earlier session (see Activity 4 of Session 4: Telling Right from Wrong), remind participants that many different religions and cultures have some form of the Golden Rule. Remind them also of what the Golden Rule says: "Treat other people the way you want them to treat you in the same situation." Then challenge the youth with these questions:

- Could the Golden Rule be a product of evolution?
- Do children growing up today have a sense of the Golden Rule inside them even if no one has told them about the rule?
- How could the idea of the Golden Rule become so important to early people that it became a built-in part of everybody's morality today?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: TEMPER TANTRUMS (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity invites youth to burn off some physical steam by silently demonstrating a temper tantrum thrown by a small child. Its purpose is to introduce the topic of emotional outbursts without asking youth to talk about their own most temperamental moments. This leads to a discussion about controlling negative emotions.

Ask youth to silently act out a two-year-old's temper tantrums. Depending on available time and the size of the group, you might have them perform one at a time or all at once. Note as you begin that not all two-year-olds act out in the same way. Some may be very physical and others may just sit in some angry pose letting the world know that everything is wrong.

When all have settled down, say that having temper tantrums is normal for two-year-olds. Many little kids have them and we do not consider the children immoral or unethical. However, we expect older people to control themselves better. Nobody thinks it is right for adults to have temper tantrums. Ask the group how old most people are before they stop losing their temper frequently. Through discussion, help your youth come to understandings like these:

Many people have occasional bad moods all through their lives. In fact, it would be difficult for most people to smile all the time. Life can be hard, with all sorts of pressures; most of us occasionally feel badly until time passes, things change, and we begin to see that life is not all bad. People who get very angry or violent or who suffer from frequent mood swings should get help from a professional counselor or a doctor. If somebody's anger is hurting themselves or other people, it is time to do something about it. You can have problems and still be a virtuous person who does many good things. Nevertheless, ignoring your problems is wrong, especially if the problems hurt you or other people.

Ask participants how they go about controlling themselves. Suggest this scenario: "Imagine that you are angry at a family member and a friend shows up at the door. You do not want your friend to see you angry, so you have to change your mood immediately. How do you do it?" Say that sometimes how we feel and act is a mystery even to us. If we can solve the mystery, we can control ourselves better.

Personalize this discussion as much as you think will be appropriate and helpful for your group, but do not pry into the emotional lives of participants. You might ask if any of them sometimes have bad moments and lose their temper. Spend more time discussing how the youth have learned and are learning to control themselves.

Including All Participants

Allow all participants to act out silent temper tantrums if they wish. Do not assume that people with limited mobility will not find this activity amusing or will be unable to express themselves physically.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: ETHICS GPS (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether to do this activity in a full group or in smaller groups.

Description of Activity

Ask participants to imagine what an ethics GPS would be like and then to demonstrate how it would work.

Begin by asking whether participants are familiar with GPS, or the Global Positioning System. (Be assured that many youth will have tried GPS in school and summer programs, if not at home or in family cars.) Explain, if participants do not, that GPS uses satellites to track things on Earth: to show where they are, what speed they are traveling, and what direction they are moving. If you have GPS in your car, you tell it where you want to go by keyboarding an address or a telephone number, or, in some cases, by speaking aloud to it. The system then tells you how to get to your destination. A voice gives instructions as you drive, saying things like this: "At the next intersection turn left."

Continue by asking what an ethics GPS system would be like. Could it help people make the right choices and stay on a virtuous path?

Let the group propose its answers as a full group, if you like. Or, if the group is large, divide it into smaller groups and let each come up with answers to compare at the end of the activity.

Use a few questions like these to get things started: What sort of destination would people want to reach? Who would decide how people should move, and what they should do? What would the ethical decisions be based on?

Ask for volunteers from each small group or from the full group to act out the way their ideas would work. One youth might describe an ethical destination, say,

reaching a decision about a specific problem, such as whether to steal bread to feed a hungry child. Another youth could give GPS directions in a computer-like voice. A script might begin like this:

DECISION-MAKER: How do I reach a decision?

GPS: Ask your parent for advice.

DECISION-MAKER: My parent is not home. (Or did not have an answer.) Where do I go next?

Here are some possibilities to offer if discussion is slow to begin: For a destination, some people might select heaven; others might select a happy life or a specific work goal. People who could decide how people should move might include judges, religious leaders, or teachers. The ethical decisions could be based on the law or the Bible or some other set of rules.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 14: STORY: THE HONORABLE JOHA, MULA NASRUDDIN HODJA, AND THE FAMOUS DONKEY STORY

Retold by Sarah Conover and Freda Crane. From *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents* (Boston: Skinner House, 2010).

Kan ya ma kan: there was and there was not a time when Joha and his son set out for the market with their donkey walking along behind them. They passed several men sitting outside a shop drinking tea and heard some of their remarks.

"Look at that man! How can he be so mean as to make his child walk all the way to the market when he has a donkey the child could easily ride?" Joha immediately picked up his son and put him on the donkey's back. They continued this way for a while, until they passed several women who were also on their way to the market.

"For shame," said one woman to another. "Look at that child, riding the donkey while he makes his father walk. Doesn't he have any respect for his elders?" Right away, Joha took his son off the donkey, and got on himself. They had traveled only slightly farther, when someone else criticized the father for being so selfish—riding on the donkey while making his son walk. In response to this criticism, Joha picked up the child and placed him on the saddle directly in front of him.

Alas, this maneuver also brought forth criticism. "How mean they are to overload the donkey like that!" cried an old man to his friend.

There is only one thing to do, thought Joha in despair. He and his son dismounted. After a great deal of effort, Joha managed to heave the donkey upon his own back. Only a little way down the road, everyone was laughing at the stupid man carrying his donkey instead of riding it.

Shamefaced, Joha put down the donkey, and they continued to the market exactly as they had started—with all three walking. Some minutes later, Joha looked at his son: "So you see," he said with a wise nod, "it is clearly not possible to please all people. It is better to do what you know is right and please God."

FIND OUT MORE

Haidt, Jonathan. *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom* (New York: Basic

Books, 2006). A book that explores the evolutionary bases of morality.

Wade, Nicholas, "Is 'Do Unto Others' Written Into Our Genes?" *New York Times*, September 18, 2007. This article reviews of the ideas of Dr. Jonathan Haidt.

SESSION 15: SAVING THE WORLD

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

If I do not have love, I am nothing.
— adapted from 1 Corinthians 13:2

Does it really matter whether we do right or wrong? This session explores the question of how much impact an individual can have. The session begins with a round of Ethics Play and asks youth how much difference their decisions might make to the world. The session includes a story showing the impact of a single snowflake when it is added to the total of millions or billions more. An art activity expressing universal love suggests that even individual attitudes can have great power. A round-robin story about the consequences of a sneeze introduces and illustrates the "butterfly effect," the idea that even a butterfly's flapping wings can have great consequences. Faith in Action asks youth to think of and perform spontaneous acts of love.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the power of the individual
- Consider the nature of universal love
- Plan and practice random acts of kindness.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider the wide impact of their own ethical decisions
- Understand the power of accumulative action
- Express and encourage universal love
- Explore the butterfly effect.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Ethics Play	15
Activity 2: Story and Discussion – How Much Does a Snowflake Weigh?	7
Activity 3: Universal Love Art	20
Activity 4: Round-Robin Story	10
Faith in Action: Random Acts of Kindness	15
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Readings from the Hymnbook	10
Alternate Activity 2: Creating Challenges for Ethics Play	10
Alternate Activity 3: Action Music	10
Alternate Activity 4: Ripples and Waves	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, ask yourself what acts of yours have had consequences larger than you might have predicted. Sometimes, the reality that our actions can have far-reaching consequences can be intimidating. It can lead to inability to act. Have you ever made an important decision that resulted in consequences harmful to you or to others? How does your spirituality or your faith help you accept those consequences and continue to act as an agent for what you believe to be good in the world?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- Leader Resource 1, [Butterfly and Wave](#) (included in this document) , for Conundrum Corner
- Chalice and matches
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place Leaders Resource 1, Butterfly and Wave, on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Optional: Decide if you will continue to play "Amazing Grace" at Opening and Closing. Feel free to take a break if you feel the routine is getting old. You could also vary the practice by playing different versions of the song. If you decide to continue, have your recording ready to play.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

If playing "Amazing Grace," stop the music, or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us see how far our actions reach.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words.

Ask the youth if they can remember doing something that had greater or different results than they expected. Did those results have other results, like ripples in a pond?

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role nametags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, *Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game, connect the experience to the themes of this session by asking about unintended consequences of the decisions suggested or made. Might any actions the youth talked about have unexpected results? Allow youth to get creative in their imagining of unexpected consequences.

Note: Consider having participants use this time for making up their own new Ethics Play situations (see Alternate Activity 2).

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give

individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY AND DISCUSSION – HOW MUCH DOES A SNOWFLAKE WEIGH? (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[How Much Does a Snowflake Weigh](#) (included in this document) ?"

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "How Much Does a Snowflake Weigh?," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss a story about small actions making a big difference.

Read or tell Story 1, "How Much Does a Snowflake Weigh?" Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

Ask for reactions. Then lead a discussion by posing a few questions:

- What is the meaning of the story for us? (What we do counts. We can make a difference.)
- What are some other small things that can have a large impact when great numbers of them get together?
- Has anybody heard the saying about "the straw that broke the camel's back"? Is that the same idea?

If your youth did the Faith in Action from Session 3 called "Group Strength Applied," remind the group of that now.

ACTIVITY 3: UNIVERSAL LOVE ART (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Sample of Robert Indiana's LOVE art. Leader Resource 2, [Robert Indiana's LOVE Image](#) (included in this document) . Indiana never copyrighted the image, so you can locate many reproductions. One image on the Internet is on the website for Wichita State University's [Sculpture Garden](#) (at webs.wichita.edu/?u=mark2&p=/love/). Another is located at Answers.com (at www.answers.com/topic/robert-indiana?cat=entertainment)

- Watercolor paints and brushes, or other materials for making love art; markers and plain paper will always do, but something different might be more fun. Oil pastels such as CrayPas are easy and satisfying to use
- Tarps, newspapers, or other protective covers for work surfaces
- Optional: Music player and background music

Preparation for Activity

- Decide on your approach to the art.
- Prepare appropriate spaces, protecting them as necessary for the art supplies you have chosen.

Description of Activity

This activity introduces the idea of universal love and asks youth to create art to express that concept.

Introduce the subject with ideas like these:

If everybody in the world felt good about everybody in it, then people would be nicer to each other than they often are. They would do more right for each other, and less wrong to each other. The idea of feeling kind and positive toward everybody is called "universal love." It is a different kind of love than romantic love.

The Christian Bible speaks of love in a very famous passage from the first book of Corinthians. It says that without love, "I am nothing." It adds that even when other important things like knowledge disappear, three important things remain. They are faith, hope, and love. And "the greatest of these," the Bible says, "is love."

If your youth enjoy discussing ideas, say that many religions promote universal love. In the Christian religion, this kind of love is also called "charity" or "agape." Love is also important to Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism. A branch of Islam called Sufism is an example. Sufis say that God is universal love. The Sufi poet Rumi wrote often about love some 800 years ago. "Love is the Water of Life," he wrote. Smaller religions, too, often call for belief in universal love. One such religion, called the Temple of Love, wants to unite people of all religions in love as a first step toward world peace.

Say that many works of art also express the idea of universal love. Ask if your youth have seen such works of art. Mention that one of the most famous pieces was first created by Robert Indiana as a Christmas card in 1964. It shows the word "LOVE" with a tilted "O" and with all the letters connecting. Since 1964, that image has appeared in many places in many different forms,

including large public sculptures in Philadelphia and at least sixteen other cities. It also appeared on a postage stamp in 1973. Show the group a sample of Indiana's work. You can find photographs on the Internet of many of the statues mentioned above. A copy of the postage stamp is included in Resources.

Ask if the group believes that artwork about universal love can help spread that love. Can it help bring more right and less wrong to the world? Is creating such art a virtuous act?

Say that you will now give the youth a chance to increase universal love by creating their own works of art about it. Say they can play with the letters of the word "LOVE" as Indiana did, or paint any other image that they think expresses the idea of universal love and could help build it.

Make appropriate art supplies available. Consider playing quiet background music to help nurture creativity. See Resources for ideas.

Save several moments at the end of the activity for youth to share their creations. Place the art where it can safely dry if the medium you have chosen requires that. If possible, arrange to display the completed works for others to see.

ACTIVITY 4: ROUND-ROBIN STORY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Butterfly and Wave](#) (included in this document)

Description of Activity

Ask your group to create a story that shows how a small personal action can lead to significant results.

Begin by displaying Leader Resource 1, *Butterfly and Wave*, from the Conundrum Corner and asking participants why they think it is on display for a session discussing the consequences of our actions.

After hearing some ideas from the group, if it does not come up, introduce the concept of the "butterfly effect." That's the idea that a butterfly's flapping wings can affect the air flow just enough to cause a ripple effect that changes the weather—to create the wave in the painting or maybe even helping to create a tornado thousands of miles away. Ask how this theory relates to the story heard in Activity 2.

If it does not come up in conversation, you might point out that another way of looking at the painting is that the wave created by the butterfly might destroy the butterfly. Does this interpretation hold meaning for us in light of

what we are finding out about how human actions have affected our world? (For more on this topic, see Alternate Activity 4, *Ripples and Waves*.)

Use words attributed to the Buddha to help make the same point:

The thought manifests as the word;
The word manifests as the deed;
The deed develops into habit;
And habit hardens into character;
So watch the thought and its ways with care,
And let it spring from love
Born out of concern for all beings...

Ask the group to summarize the passage. (Even an idea can have great effect, and that effect will be good if the idea comes from love.) Note that the passage reflects the universal-love theme of the previous activity.

Ask the group to create a round-robin story based on the idea that a small action can have great effects. Explain that you will start the story with a single sentence. You will then go around the circle several times, with each participant adding one more sentence, until you have created a story that shows what wonderful results can come from one small act of kindness. If you think the pressure to create a line may trouble some youth, consider doing the activity "popcorn style," with participants offering lines as ideas occur to them. Both approaches can work well. Your choice should depend on your own careful assessment of your group's needs.

Begin the process with this sentence: "The woman was small and her bags were large so I offered to help carry them to her car." Encourage the youth to use their imaginations and have fun as they build from this beginning. (Maybe the woman tips the speaker and the speaker feels guilty to accept her money and so gives it to somebody else who.... Or maybe the story begins badly—the woman screams because she thinks someone is stealing her bags, but everything turns out okay in the end.)

This activity works well with six to eight youth. If your group is larger than that, consider having two or more small groups create stories independently of each other.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of *Taking It Home*

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from *Taking It Home* that is specific to the activities used in this session.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS (15 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Ask youth to imagine and perform random acts of kindness.

Introduce the activity by asking the group to imagine a scene like this: "You and your family are driving along in a car when you get to a tollbooth on the highway. When you pull up to the booth and start to pay, the person in the booth says this: 'You don't have to pay. The person in the car ahead of you paid for you and said to have a good day.' You have no idea who is in the car ahead of you, but you accept the gift and drive happily on down the road."

Say that the story shows a "random act of kindness," also sometimes called a "spontaneous act of kindness"—something a person does for somebody else just because they feel like doing something good and making another person smile. Ask if anything like this has ever happened to your youth. Have they ever received or performed spontaneous acts of kindness?

Tell the group you would like them to come up with some random acts of kindness and then to perform them among their own congregation. This could occur during coffee hour, if that is where the youth typically meet their families and others after their Amazing Grace session, but it could also be in the parking lot or anywhere else. It could involve other youth, children, or adults in the religious education program. The challenge is always the same: Surprise somebody and cause them to smile by doing something nice.

After you have heard some ideas, ask the youth what the results of their actions are likely to be. The round-robin story of Activity 4 should help them to see just how wide the impact of their actions could be.

Make specific plans for youth to act on their ideas (or any other good ideas that pop up). Say you will ask them what happened the next time your group meets.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the session to reflect on how it went. How was your mix of discussion and action? Have you successfully found ways to involve all youth fully in your sessions despite any limitations they might have? Are your youth excited by the idea of random acts of kindness? If not, how can you help them realize how much fun they can be?

Look ahead at Session 16. Decide who will lead which activities, and who will be responsible for which supplies. If you plan to do Alternate Activity 3: Celebration, make plans for any refreshments and activities it will include.

TAKING IT HOME

If I do not have love, I am nothing.
— adapted from 1 Corinthians 13:2

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We talked about the power of individual action and kindness. We did Ethics Play and heard a story about a single snowflake that made a big difference. We made art built on the idea of universal love, heard about the butterfly effect, and created a round-robin story. For Faith in Action, we performed random acts of kindness.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- Family experiences. Who in your family has done a random act of kindness? Who remembers a random act of kindness that someone did for them?
- The saying about the straw that broke the camel's back. Has anybody in your family ever said, "That's the last straw?" What was going on at the time?
- Universal love. Is it easy to feel a sense of love and kindness for everybody else in the whole world? Why or why not?
- The Ethics Play situation done by your Amazing Grace group. Does the family agree with what the star decided?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Some family acts of kindness. Surprise some other people by doing some random acts of kindness.
- A family round-robin story. Start with these words: "I sneezed. It was just a little sneeze, but..." Then let everybody in the family add one

sentence at a time. Keep going around and around the family until you have a whole story.

- Remembering someone you have ignored. Many people have a friend or a family member they have been meaning to call or to see or to send a letter or e-mail. What about your family? Can you think of such friends or family members? If so, stop putting them off. Get in touch. They will probably be very pleased.

MYSTERY AND ME

When did you do something that had a result you did not expect? Were the reasons for that result mysterious, or can you explain them? Was the result good or bad? If you are journaling, write the story of what you did and what you learned from it. Then meditate about it. That means to think deeply about the story to see if it tells you anything more. If your group talked about random acts of kindness for Faith in Action, write about that, too. Plan to do more random acts of kindness and write about them in your journal later.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Find some Ethics Play situations in your lives. These are situations with tough ethical choices. In other words, it is tough to know what the right thing to do is. So figure them out together. There might not be a perfect answer, but there will be a best answer.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Identify the kindest person your family knows. Who is it? Why is that person so kind? Do other people respond in kind ways to the person?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: READINGS FROM THE HYMNBOOK (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, [Singing the Living Tradition](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565)

Preparation for Activity

- Find and mark the suggested readings.

Description of Activity

Introduce your group to hymnal readings that reflect the themes of this session.

Encourage youth to explore the hymnbook for readings about love. Possible examples include: Readings 418 (love), 434 (love and service), 457 (individual impact), 471 (service), 473 (service), 560 (individual impact), 561 (individual impact), 562 (love), 601 (love and individual impact), and 638 (love).

Read or have volunteers read passages that seem most appropriate to you, and then ask for comments. Do participants see a relationship between the readings and our UU Principles? Refer back to previous discussions about Universalism and universal salvation. Remind youth (if necessary) that the Universalist belief in universal salvation is built on a strong belief in the power of love, particularly God's love. Ask youth if UUs still believe in the strong power of love. Do you have to believe in a god to believe in the power of love?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: CREATING CHALLENGES FOR ETHICS PLAY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper and pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review what your group has done to date with Ethics Play.

Description of Activity

In this activity, small groups of participants make up new Ethics Play situations. The activity assumes that your group has done Ethics Play activities from time to time, if not at every session. You might wish to do this instead of Activity 1: Ethics Play, above.

Before leading the activity, review the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1: Introducing Virtue and Sin. Remind the group of its experiences with Ethics Play, and ask youth to work in small groups to create new situations to use in Session 16. Say that the situations should be realistic for people of their age.

Divide the youth into small groups of three or four. Distribute pencil and papers so the youth can write their ideas.

Do not share the ideas aloud at this time. Instead, collect them, review them as you can for appropriateness, and save them to use during Session 16: Look at Me, World.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: ACTION MUSIC (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Recorded music and music player
- Copies of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook *Singing the Living Tradition* (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565) and its supplement, *Singing the Journey* (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=571)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify and obtain music that fits the theme of this session. The UUA Bookstore sells music CDs, including *Fire of Commitment* (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=112) by Jason Sheldon, which includes a recording of "Standing on the Side of Love" and other hymns. If you wish to use "The Impossible Dream" from *Man of La Mancha*, see Find Out More.
- If you or another leader is uncomfortable leading the group in a hymn or two, consider asking a musician to join you and do that.

Description of Activity

Introduce the group to music that reflects the themes of the session.

Invite participants to explore music from a Unitarian Universalist hymnbook and/or other popular music that talks about love or small actions having big effects. Four good possibilities from *Singing the Living Tradition* include Hymn 84, "How Far Can Reach a Smile?" (power of kindness and love), Hymn 131, "Love Will Guide Us" (changing the world with love), Hymn 157, "Step by Step the Longest March" (force of collective action), and Hymn 346, "Come, Sing a Song with Me" (small actions spreading joy). Share these songs with youth by leading the group in song, by asking somebody else to do so, or simply by reading the texts aloud.

Four good possibilities from *Singing the Journey* include Hymn 1014 "Standing on the Side of Love" (power of love to promote justice), Hymn 1021, "Lean on Me" (friendship), Hymn 1023, "Building Bridges" (reaching out to others), and Hymn 1031, "Filled with Loving Kindness" (Buddhist wish to be filled with kindness).

Many recorded songs also speak of universal love and the power of individual action. Consider looking through your own library of music for appropriate selections. See also Session 8: UUs in Action, which introduces songs

of social justice by Pete Seeger and others. "The Impossible Dream" from the musical *Man of La Mancha*, is a well-known and powerful song is a wonderful musical means to invest youth with dreams and the spirit of action.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: RIPPLES AND WAVES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Butterfly and Wave](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Art materials, including paper and drawing utensils
- Optional: CD player and background music

Preparation for Activity

- If you decide to use background music, have CD player and music ready.

Description of Activity

This activity uses the butterfly effect to talk about ecology.

Refer to Leader Resource 1, Butterfly and Wave, used in Activity 4: Round Robin Story. One way of looking at the painting is to ask if the butterfly will be crushed by the very wave its actions caused. Facilitate a discussion on how this aspect of the butterfly effect applies to ways that human action has affected the world's ecology.

Ask participants to think of an action by humans that has had greater effect than we thought possible. Examples include hunting animals to extinction, introducing non-indigenous flora and fauna to habitats, factory farms that release tons of methane gas into the atmosphere that contribute to the greenhouse effect, antibiotics that prevent a disease, but cause bacteria to morph into more virulent strains, and many others. However, there are positive effects too: efforts to introduce legislation to prevent slash/burn technique for clearing land, creating lists of endangered animals and methods to protect them, and the increase in purchasing compact fluorescent light bulbs, are a few. See Find Out More for resources on the environment.

If you wish to move this beyond discussion, present the art materials and invite participants to create their own artwork detailing a particular cause/effect. It could be modeled after the painting in Leader Resource 1 or in any style they choose. You might choose to concentrate on human actions that have positive effects. Play background music, if you wish, during the drawing. Give the group ten minutes to draw and save five minutes for sharing the artwork.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 15: STORY: HOW MUCH DOES A SNOWFLAKE WEIGH?

One Hundred Wisdom Stories from Around the World, Margaret Silf, p.29. "How Much Does a Snowflake Weigh?" Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press. Copyright (C) 2003. Used by Permission for this one time use. No reprints or use permitted. All Rights Reserved.

It was deep winter and the snow was falling steadily upon the hillside.

A tiny mouse crept out of its hole for a little break in its long winter sleep. Drowsily, the little mouse looked around and twitched its whiskers, and would have gone back to sleep inside its hole, had not a tiny voice echoed from somewhere out there in the white winter world: "Hello, little mouse. Can't you sleep?"

The mouse looked around and caught sight of a tiny bird sitting, shivering, on a bare branch just overhead. "Hello, Jenny Wren," said the mouse, pleased to find some company on this bleak day. "I just came up for a bit of air before I go back to sleep for the rest of the winter."

But it was so good to find company that for a while, the mouse and the wren sat there together, huddled beneath the lowest branches of a pine tree, watching the snow falling and enjoying a little congenial conversation.

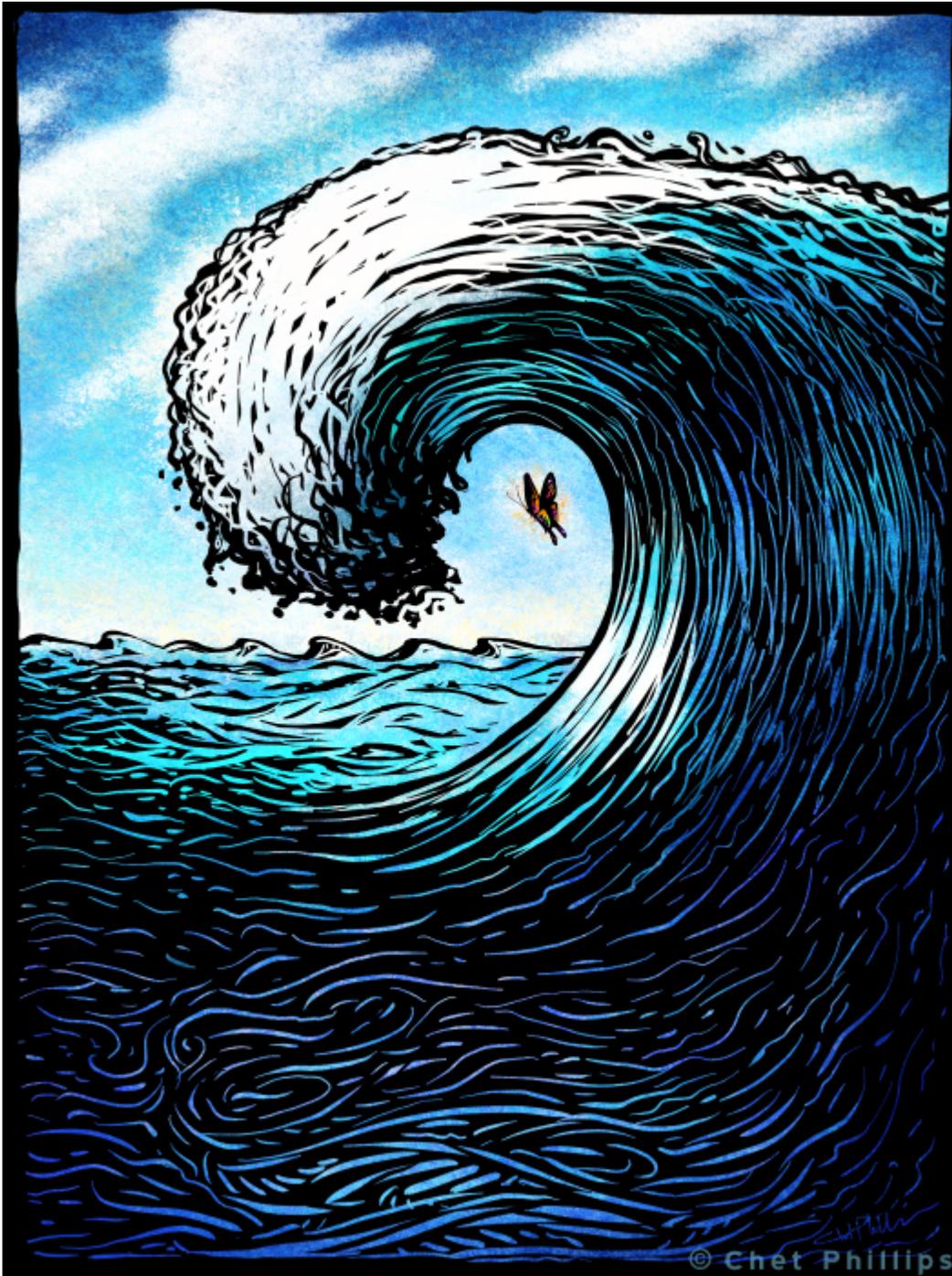
"How much do you think a snowflake weighs?" the mouse asked the wren suddenly.

"A snowflake weighs almost nothing," the wren replied. "A snowflake is so insignificant, it carries almost no weight at all. How could you possibly weigh a snowflake?"

"Oh, I disagree," said the mouse. "In fact, I can tell you that last winter, around this time, I woke up from my winter dreaming and came out here for a breath of fresh air, and because I had no companions and nothing better to do, I sat here counting the snowflakes as they fell. I watched them settling on these branches, and covering the pine needles with a blanket of whiteness. I got as far as two million, four hundred and ninety-two thousand, three hundred and fifty-nine. And then—when the very next snowflake fell and settled on the branch—the branch dropped right down to the ground and all the snow slid off it. So you see, just that one last snowflake weighed enough to make the branch sink down and all the snow slide off. So a snowflake does weigh something. It does make a difference!"

The wren, who was only a tiny, little bird herself and didn't think she had much influence on the great, big world around her, pondered for a long time over the mouse's story. "Perhaps," she thought to herself, "it really is true that just one little voice can make a difference."

**AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 15:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: BUTTERFLY AND WAVE**



This painting "Chaos" is by Chet Phillips; used with permission.

FIND OUT MORE

Johns Hopkins University's website on Chaos and Fractals has a short explanation of the [butterfly effect](http://www.pha.jhu.edu/~ldb/seminar/butterfly.html) (at www.pha.jhu.edu/~ldb/seminar/butterfly.html).

Silf, Margaret. *One Hundred Wisdom Stories from around the World* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2003).

Tom Owen-Towle is the author of "[Welcome to Unitarian Universalism: A Community of Truth, Service, Holiness and Love.](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=543)" (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=543) a pamphlet that describes Unitarian Universalism as "a community of love."

Unitarian Universalist Association. [Singing the Journey: A Supplement to "Singing the Living Tradition](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=571)" (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=571)" (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005).

Unitarian Universalist Association. [Singing the Living Tradition](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=571) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=571)

www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

Wasserman, Dale. *Man of La Mancha*. New York: MCA Records, 1965. This original Broadway recording includes Richard Kiley singing "The Impossible Dream."

Library Index has articles about the environment, including one on "[Factors that Contribute to Species Endangerment.](http://www.libraryindex.com/pages/634/Extinction-Endangered-Species-FACTORS-THAT-CONTRIBUTE-SPECIES-ENDANGERMENT.html)" (at www.libraryindex.com/pages/634/Extinction-Endangered-Species-FACTORS-THAT-CONTRIBUTE-SPECIES-ENDANGERMENT.html)

[Word Ark](http://www.heifer.org/site/c.edJRKQNiFiG/b.4172985/) (at www.heifer.org/site/c.edJRKQNiFiG/b.4172985/), the magazine of Heifer International, has an article on the carbon footprint of livestock.

[The National Resources Defense Council](http://www.nrdc.org/reference/kids.asp) (at www.nrdc.org/reference/kids.asp) offers links to dozens of websites for young people on the environment.

SESSION 16: LOOK AT ME, WORLD

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Respect yourself if you would have others respect you.
— *Baltasar Graci*

This final session of *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong* introduces the concepts of values and self-respect. It begins with a final round of Ethics Play and then asks what values make people virtuous. The story of Narcissus leads to a discussion of reasonable self-respect. The group talks about the values and respect their families share with other members of their congregation. Some wall-to-wall questions help the group review the four sessions that focused on ethical development. Faith in Action asks the group to create and sign an ethics covenant.

Note that Alternate Activity 3, Celebration suggests serving refreshments and having an amusing activity for the final group act of *Amazing Grace*. Doing this may require some extra advance planning.

GOALS

This session will:

- Illustrate the relationship between values and ethical decision making
- Examine shared UU values
- Hear and discuss a story about self-esteem
- Summarize some of the issues discussed in the program
- Complete a feedback form on *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*
- Optional: Create an ethics covenant
- Optional: Clarify the definitions of several key terms from *Amazing Grace*.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider a realistic ethical challenge
- Explore the relationship between values and virtue

- Compare narcissism and self-respect
- Understand that integrity feeds self-respect
- Affirm UU values
- Optional: Be encouraged to continue striving for virtue by way of an Ethics Covenant
- Evaluate the program.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
Opening	5
Activity 1: Ethics Play	15
Activity 2: Values and Virtues	10
Activity 3: Story and Discussion – Narcissus	10
Activity 4: Shared Values and Respect	10
Activity 5: Wall-to-Wall Questions	5
Faith in Action: Ethics Covenant	10
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Matching in Motion	10
Alternate Activity 2: Closing Celebration	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the days before you present this session, think about your own values. Which values do you believe make a person virtuous? Which values contribute to your own self-esteem?

In the moments before you present this session, with all preparations made, make a peaceful moment for yourself and for your connections with all. Breathe deeply. Know that your efforts to assist youth are themselves virtuous. Breathe deeply. Connect with what is good and true. Breathe deeply. Relax. Connect again with your leadership team, and be ready to greet your youth.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Conundrum Corner poster/banner
- A narcissus flower or a photograph of one. See Leader Resource 1, [Narcissus Flower](#) (included in this document)
- Chalice and matches
- Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Nametags and markers
- Optional: Decorative cloth for Conundrum Corner

Preparation for Activity

- Place the narcissus or a photocopy of Leader Resource 1, Narcissus Flower, on display in the Conundrum Corner.
- Have your recording of "Amazing Grace" ready to play. Since this is the last session, even if you haven't been playing the song for every session, you probably will want to play it today.
- Optional: Write chalice-lighting words on newsprint, and post.
- Optional: Prepare and post an agenda of the day's activities.

Description of Activity

Play "Amazing Grace" while participants gather. Use any version you like, bagpipe, voice, or another. As participants enter, greet them. If you have newcomers, greet them warmly and be sure they know others in the room. Give them nametags if others have them. Ask newcomers and old timers alike to look at the Conundrum Corner, but do not say anything more about it. In answer to any questions about it, say you will be talking about it later.

Stop the music, or reduce the volume to a very low background level.

Lead the group in the day's opening rituals—a chalice lighting, a moment of focusing silence, and a moment of sharing.

Light the chalice, or let a youth do so, and speak these words (asking the group to join you if you have posted them):

May this light help us understand and develop good values.

Ask the group to be silent for a moment as they reflect on the opening words and settle in for the session. End the silence by saying, "blessed be," or other appropriate words. Ask the youth to comment on the results of the random acts of kindness suggested for Faith in Action of Session 15. If the group did not do that activity, introduce the concept briefly now and challenge youth to try some random acts of kindness on their own.

Extinguish the chalice without ceremony and move the chalice table aside as necessary to allow movement in the room.

ACTIVITY 1: ETHICS PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Two dice (extra large, if possible) of different colors
- Ethics Play role nametags
- Ethics Play Scenarios (Session 1, [Leader Resources 2-7](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Masks, costumes, and wigs for roles

Preparation for Activity

- If you are or your group is new to Ethics Play, refer to the directions in Activity 4 of Session 1, Introducing Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong.

Description of Activity

Participants play a game replicating real-life situations involving ethical decisions.

At the end of the game, connect it to the themes of this session by asking participants to identify the values the various roles used to reach their decisions.

Option: Substitute the ethics challenges developed by your youth in Alternate Activity 2 of Session 15 for those on the leader resource pages. You might also use those challenges as a fun activity for Alternate Activity 3 of this session.

Including All Participants

If some participants have limited mobility, you might wish to have the group remain seated, or at least give individuals a choice between standing and sitting when they speak.

ACTIVITY 2: VALUES AND VIRTUES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Sticky notes, about five or six for each youth
- Pencils or fine-tipped washable markers
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Large outline of a human figure on newsprint

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare a large space on a wall where participants can place sticky notes. If you cannot put sticky notes directly on the wall, hang a sheet of newsprint on the wall or on an easel.

Description of Activity

In this activity, youth create the outline of a "virtuous" human figure by hanging sticky notes on which they have written personal values they consider important.

Ask the youth what the word "values" means to them. Help them understand the concept with ideas like these:

Values are personal characteristics that people think are good. Honesty and truthfulness are examples. You may go to a school where people think school spirit is a value. Boy Scouts say that loyalty and friendliness are two of twelve important character values. Other organizations often talk about different values and families have values, too.

Add that virtuous people, or people with good characters, have good values. Say that now you want the youth to create a list of values that make somebody a virtuous person.

Pass out sticky notes and pencils or markers; see below to determine the number of notes to use. Each youth should take some notes and write a different value on each one. If they are at a loss for ideas, suggest participants think of people they know who they think of as virtuous. What characteristics would they say describe that person? When they have finished, at a signal from you, they will bring the sticky notes to the wall and hang them together in the shape of a human figure.

The number of sticky notes you give each youth should depend on the size of your group and the time you have available. The more you have, the better the chances are that the group will create a good human figure, but more time will be required for writing.

Ask the youth to work separately so that the virtuous person they create will have many different values. Say that as they make the figure, they should think of cooperation as a value and work together until they get a reasonably accurate shape. If they do not have enough sticky notes to cover the full figure, they can build just an outline.

When the figure is finished, ask the group to stand back and read the notes. Are many of the words the same? Does everybody agree that the words reflect values commonly believed to be virtuous?

In the course of discussion, you might mention integrity, if youth have not already done so. One definition of integrity might be "living up to or honoring your own values." You might also add that integrity itself is a value.

Summarize the activity with words like these:

Good values make good characters. Good characters make virtuous people. Virtuous people do good things to make the world a better place. So it pays to think about our own values—what they are and whether they are making us the people we really want to be.

Option: Hang a large newsprint outline of a human figure and let participants attach their sticky notes to that.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY AND DISCUSSION – NARCISSUS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story 1, "[Narcissus](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Photocopy Story 1, "Narcissus," one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Preface this activity by pointing out the narcissus (real or photographed) in your Conundrum Corner. Ask the youth why they think it is there. You might need to name the flower for them. Accept a few guesses and then provide your own answer by reading the story. Alternately, you might ask for one or more volunteers to read it.

Explain that the story is a Greek myth. Say that there are many different versions of it. In some of them, Narcissus accidentally drowns. In others, he kills himself because he feels badly about how he treated Echo. All

the stories agree that Narcissus loved himself too much and that the narcissus flower appeared in the place where his body should have been.

Lead a discussion that introduces the concept of healthy self-love. Offer ideas and questions like these:

- The story says you should not love yourself too much. Does that mean you should hate yourself?
- Is it okay to look in the mirror and like the person you see?
- Do you attend a school or belong to an organization that talks about self-respect and self-esteem?
- Can you be a good person without self-respect or self-esteem?
- How much self-respect is healthy? (You might say that Narcissus respected himself to death.)
- How do you know when a person is self-centered?
- What are some other words for that? (egotistical, egocentric, selfish)
- Is having integrity a way to have self-respect? (In Session 14: Doing Your Good Side, integrity is defined as being true to yourself by living up to your own values.)
- Can you possibly have self-respect if you ignore your own principles?
- What can you do when somebody acts too self-centered?
- What can you do when people have no self-respect and are "down on themselves"?

You might conclude the activity by remarking that developing healthy self-respect is a challenge for some people. One way to do it is to do good things that help others. Often people who do wrong instead of right things regret it later, and then they do not feel good about themselves. You might also share a quote widely (but perhaps incorrectly) attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "When I do good, I feel good; when I do bad, I feel bad, and that is my religion."

ACTIVITY 4: SHARED VALUES AND RESPECT (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

- Optional: Copies of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook *Singing the Living Tradition* and its supplement, *Singing the Journey*
- Optional: An assortment of UUA pamphlets
- Optional: An assortment of UU World magazines
- Optional: Posted UU Principles

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how many resources you will make available and gather them. Your congregation might have UUA pamphlets; if not, you can order them from the [UUA Bookstore](http://www.uuabookstore.org/) (at www.uuabookstore.org/). You can preview them at the [UUA webpage on pamphlets](http://www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/) (at www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/).

Description of Activity

Help youth identify shared Unitarian Universalist values and understand the self- and mutual respect those values help to build.

Begin by asking why the youth and their families are members or friends of your congregation. "Why do you and your families come here? What draws you to this congregation instead of another one?"

Through further questions and discussion help the youth understand that Unitarian Universalists gather and are comfortable together because they share the same values.

Divide the youth into smaller groups of three or four participants. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and markers, and ask them to list some Unitarian Universalist values. If you think your group will benefit from some assistance, make available copies of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbooks, pamphlets, and magazines. Youth can look through them to get some ideas of what UU values are.

Allow three or four minutes for the groups to compile their lists. Then bring the full group together and ask each small group in turn to call out values for you or a co-leader to write on newsprint.

Remind the group as appropriate that one excellent example of Unitarian Universalist values is the statement of UU Principles that appears in the front of *Singing the Living Tradition* and on wall posters. Be sure that your group's lists reflect most if not all of those values.

Continue the activity with questions like these:

- Do you think all UUs share the same basic values? Is that one reason why they are in UU congregations?
- Is it important to keep company with people who share similar values?
- Do you think some people who have never thought of themselves as religious come to this congregation because it has people who share their values?
- What about you—do you share values with others in this congregation?
- Do you respect other people who share the same values?
- What about people who have different values? Can you respect them as well? Or does that depend on what their values are?
- Do your UU values have anything to do with your own self-respect?
- Is it important to you that the groups you belong to have carefully thought out their values?
- Does it matter whether the people in the group have integrity? (If they do not, they may not live up to the values they say they have.)

Help youth realize that respect for the views of others is a Unitarian Universalist value. This does not mean mindless acceptance of and respect for all ideas. Most UUs do not honor people whose values lead them to lives of violent crime. Ask participants how they would distinguish between differing values they respect and those they might actively oppose. One test might be whether the differing values cause hurt to anybody. It is one thing to respect differing ideas about the existence of God, another to respect values that cause intentional harm.

ACTIVITY 5: WALL-TO-WALL QUESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity asks youth to move around and show their answers to some belief questions based on Sessions 13 through 16 of *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Ask the youth to help move aside any chairs or other furniture that might prevent easy motion. Explain that you are going to play wall-to-wall questions. You will ask a series of questions and you want the youth to show their answers by choosing and moving to one of two opposite walls. Say that there are only two choices for each question; standing in the middle is not an option.

Show the youth the two walls where they are to go in response to the questions. Then ask the questions from the following list, stating after each question which wall represents which answer. Give youth a chance to talk about each question and their responses before moving on to the next one.

I believe...

- That peer pressure can be bad or good, depending upon what people want you to do: yes or no
- That people have both bad and good in them, and they can decide which to build up: yes or no
- That the values a person has and acts on make that person virtuous or not: yes or no
- That I have the power to make the world a better place: yes or no
- That my family, my faith, and my friends all help to shape my values: yes or no
- That kindness and love for other people are values everybody should have: yes or no

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home
- Handout 1, [Feedback Form](#) (included in this document)
- Pens or pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Create a handout from Taking It Home that is specific to the activities used in this session.
- Photocopy Handout 1, Feedback Form, one for each participant.

Description of Activity

Briefly summarize what you have done in this session. Hand out any Taking It Home activity suggestions you have prepared. If you have not already done so, return to participants any items they may have created in the course of *Amazing Grace*.

Note that this is the final session of *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*. Say you hope it has been both fun and helpful for the group, and that youth will always remember some of what they talked about and did, especially the ethics covenant they just made. Ask participants to take a few minutes to complete a feedback form on the entire program. Distribute copies

of Handout 1, Feedback Form, and pens or pencils. After a few minutes, collect the forms.

If earlier you moved your chalice from its central position, retrieve it and re-light it without fanfare. Ask the group to sit and speak these closing words with you:

As we extinguish this chalice, may its light shine within so we may see the difference between right and wrong.

FAITH IN ACTION: ETHICS COVENANT (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Posted UU Principles
- Optional: Copies of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, [Singing the Living Tradition](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565)

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how and how far to encourage youth to spread their ethics covenant in the follow-up to this activity.

Description of Activity

Ask youth to create and sign an ethics covenant.

Begin by asking the group "What do you think an Ethics Covenant might be?" If participants experienced Session 3, Alternate Activity 2, Covenant Making to create a group covenant, refer to that process. If not, explain, if necessary, that a covenant is an agreement, a mutual promise. Mention that the UU Principles are a covenant. In fact, the introduction to the Principles says, "We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalists Association, covenant to affirm and promote" the seven Principles.

Consider reminding the group what the Principles say by pointing to a poster containing them or by passing out copies of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*, in which they appear (see the three unnumbered pages before the first hymn).

Say that the group's challenge is to create an ethics covenant suitable for sixth graders. In other words, how do they think youth of their age should agree to behave?

Give one sample possibility for the covenant: "We agree to be the best people we can be."

What else? Let the youth decide. Remember that youth are covenanting "to do" something and not just to believe it (i.e., "affirm AND promote"). Try to keep the

covenant short and keep statements from getting too specific.

When they have completed the covenant, ask if everyone is comfortable signing it. If some participants are not comfortable, find out if there are specific statements that they feel do not belong in the covenant. If you sense any discomfort, do not ask the youth to sign it. If you feel that coming to a consensus on the covenant will be divisive, skip this activity.

Whether signed or unsigned, have a leader make copies for youth to take with them at the end of the session, if possible. This will probably require handwriting the ideas onto a sheet of paper and running it through a copier. If that is not possible, say that you will make copies and send them to the youth. Arrange to have the original covenant, signed or unsigned, displayed where other members of the congregation will see it in the days and weeks to come.

Ask the youth who else should get copies. Parents of the youth? Other religious-education groups in the congregation? The minister? Should the group publish it in the newsletter or share during a worship service?

Help the group decide how to distribute the covenant and then how to follow through.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Celebrate the completion of *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*.

Review the feedback forms. Consider what you would change the next time you present the curriculum. Make a record of your ideas and give a copy to your director of religious education.

Congratulate yourselves for your efforts on behalf of Unitarian Universalist youth.

TAKING IT HOME

Respect yourself if you would have others respect you.

— *Baltasar Graci*

IN TODAY'S SESSION... Today was the last session of *Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong*. We did Ethics Play, and we talked about what kind of values virtuous people have. We heard the story of Narcissus and thought about how much self-respect a person should have. We talked about how the members and friends of our congregation share their values and respect. We answered some wall-to-wall questions, and for Faith in Action, we wrote an ethics covenant. We completed a feedback form on the program.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- The Ethics Play situation done by your Amazing Grace group. Does the family agree with what the Star decided?
- What some of your family values are. Are they different from the values of some other people you know? Did the families your parents or caregivers grew up in share the same values?
- Shared values. What is one of the values the members of your family share with the congregation?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

- Building everybody's self-esteem. Let each family member tell other members why they should feel good about themselves.
- Making a family doodle. Let everybody contribute to a drawing that represents your family. Could you use it as a mark to leave whenever your family goes somewhere and does something good?
- Making up a story of how a flower got its name. It might be a flower in your house, one you grow in the garden or just any flower at all.

MYSTERY AND ME

Today you gave feedback on the program, but you might have more personal feelings that you did not get an opportunity to share. Use this time to reflect upon the experience of doing this program with your group. Did you make new friends? Did the program answer any questions you had? Did it raise new questions? How will you go about getting answers to new questions?

A FAMILY RITUAL

Talk each day about the right and wrong you have experienced. Did you each do something good you want to share? Is there somebody in the family you want to thank for a virtuous act? Is there something you wish you had not done that you need to talk about? How can you make tomorrow a better day?

A FAMILY GAME

Play values charades. Think of a value that is important to you and act it out without talking for other people to guess what it is, then have other family members do the same thing.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Find something new your family can do to help the world and build its own self-esteem at the same time. Prove

that when people do good things they feel good about themselves.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: MATCHING IN MOTION (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Terms and Definitions](#) (included in this document)
- Nametags or sticky notes and markers
- Optional: Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether to use the active or less active option.
 - Write each term and each definition from Leader Resource 2, Terms and Definitions, on a name tag. (You will have 24 nametags.) Use hanging nametags if you plan to reuse them.
 - For a less-active version: Copy Leader Resource 2, Terms and Definitions, for all participants.

Description of Activity

This activity reinforces youth understanding of twelve terms introduced at different points during Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong. The terms and their definitions can be found (in unmatched order) in Leader Resource 2. If you use them all, you will have enough for 24 participants. If your group has fewer than that, either use fewer pairs of terms and definitions, consider doing the activity twice in order to use more of them, or ask youth to wear more than one name tag. If your group has more than 24 youth, you might divide it into two parts and give each smaller group a set of labels to use. If you have an uneven number of participants, have a leader join the activity by displaying a label and passively waiting for the appropriate youth to join them.

Before handing out the name tags, explain that the youth will now do a matching activity similar to one they may have done for Session 12, Activity 4, Matching in Motion. The difference here is that they will match up with each other in silence. Each person will have either a term or a definition. When you say to begin, they will move around in silence and match themselves up so that the terms and definitions are standing or sitting in pairs. If anybody has trouble finding a partner, others can help by moving the appropriate term and definition together—but they must do this without speaking.

Allow the matching to proceed. When all have paired off, take a quick look to see if all combinations are correct. If

not, say that there is a problem and ask the youth to reconsider the pairs, again, by moving around in silence. If this process ends with another error, ask the youth to try again, this time with speaking allowed. If that, too, results in a mismatch, a leader should gently nudge participants around until they are all with the right partners.

Conclude by asking each pair to state its term and definition aloud. Add any information you think will be useful as they do so.

Less active options: You can do this activity more quickly and quietly—but with less fun—by copying

Leader Resource 2, Terms and Definitions, handing the copies and pencils to the group, and letting each participant draw lines to match up the terms and definitions. Alternately, write the terms and definitions on index cards, mix them up, and place them on a table. Then invite the group to work together to arrange the cards in pairs. If your group is large, divide it and let smaller groups do the same activity.

Here are the matches youth should create and the session number and the activity number or name where the terms were introduced (FIA stands for Faith in Action and AA stands for Alternate Activity):

Term (Session/Activity)	Definition	Example
Calling (S7/A3)	Feeling you must do or be something to be true to yourself	He felt called to teach children with special needs.
Character (S13/A2)	The real you; the qualities that make you you	The way she responded to crisis demonstrated her true character.
Conscience (S9/A1)	Voice of the soul; an internal sense of right and wrong	Although her friends thought skipping class was cool, her conscience told her it was not.
Covenant (S16/FIA)	Agreement; mutual promise	They made a covenant not to repeat any personal information shared in the group.
Faith (S1/FIA)	Spiritual and religious belief; the activity of making meaning; sense of what you trust or know to be true	He had faith that each person's effort made a difference in the world.
Golden Rule (S4/A4)	Treat others the way you want them to treat you	Sometimes she found it hard to practice the Golden Rule with her brother.
Guilt (S6/A3)	Feeling you did something wrong	After he snapped at his mother, he was aware of the uncomfortable feeling of guilt.
Moral relativity (S10/A3)	What is right depends on the situation	To some, killing a person is always wrong; to some, it depends on the situation—an example of moral relativity.
Repent (S12/A1)	To feel remorse; to say you are sorry	Yom Kippur is a special Jewish holiday that gives people an opportunity to repent for any hurt they have caused others in the past year.
Soul (S7/A2)	The deepest part of yourself; the human spirit	Making music always feeds her soul.
Trinity (S6/A1)	Idea that God is in three parts, not one	Father, Son and Holy Ghost make up the trinity in Catholic theology.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: CLOSING CELEBRATION (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Refreshments
- Optional: Other party supplies
- Optional: Supplies for activities
- Optional: Recording of "Amazing Grace" and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how much of a celebration you wish to have and what refreshments and supplies you will need. Plan ahead, especially if you will be asking youth or their families to bring refreshments.

Description of Activity

Celebrate your group's completion of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong.

Make as much of the occasion as you like, from a brief sharing of refreshments and ideas to a more active party. Consider one or two high-energy activities.

Among the possibilities are the High-Energy Rope Pull (Session 1, Alternate Activity 1) and Sins and Virtues Relay Race (Session 2, Activity 3).

Return to your youth any items they may have created in the course of Amazing Grace.

Consider playing the music "Amazing Grace" as background for your event.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 16: STORY: NARCISSUS

It is too bad that Dear Abby was not around in ancient Greece. Some of the characters in the old Greek myths could have used some good advice.

One of them was Narcissus. He was a youth of great beauty. Dazzling beauty. Wondrous beauty. Unimaginable beauty. So much beauty that people old and young fell in love with him at first sight.

Narcissus knew just how they felt, because he loved himself, too. In fact, he loved himself so much that there was no room for anybody else in his life. Not even Echo, who had such a crush on him that she followed him around, whether he wanted her to or not.

Echo was a wood nymph. She was attractive, too, but she had a big problem of her own. She could not stop talking. She repeated everything she heard and more. She seemed to talk all the time—at least until Hera got angry and stopped her. Hera was the queen of Olympus, the mountain where the gods lived, and the wife of Zeus, the head god.

Once, Hera went down from the mountain to search for Zeus. Echo stopped her and babbled on so long about practically nothing that Zeus was able to sneak off. Hera was furious, and took away Echo's power of speech.

"From now on," said Hera, "you can say nothing of your own. You can only repeat what other people say."

If you saw Echo and said, "Hello," she said, "Hello" back to you. If you asked, "How are you today," that is what she asked.

On a hot summer day, Echo followed Narcissus through the woods. They traveled so far in so much heat that Echo was not surprised when Narcissus stopped beside

a quiet forest pool. He needed a good cool drink, she thought.

Perhaps he did. But when Narcissus looked into the pool he saw looking back the most beautiful youth he had ever seen. Narcissus opened his eyes wide and stared at the youth. The youth opened his eyes wide, too, and stared back.

"Hello," said Narcissus.

"Hello," said Echo behind him. Narcissus did not see her. He thought the words came from the youth in the pool. Not understanding that the face was his own reflection, Narcissus reached down to touch it. The face disappeared.

"I love you," said Narcissus. "I love you," said Echo, as the face came back.

Narcissus reached down again. The same thing happened. "Stay for me," Narcissus said. "Stay for me," said Echo. But every time Narcissus reached out, the youth went away.

Narcissus forgot to drink. He forgot to eat. He simply sat and stared, loving, and hoping, and wanting.

"I love you," he said, again and again. "I love you," the voice came back every time.

For days this continued. Narcissus sat and stared and spoke. Echo answered. Neither of them ate or drank. Narcissus began to weaken. Then he shriveled up and died. His body disappeared, but in its place, the beautiful Narcissus flower appeared.

Echo faded away and died, too. Her body also disappeared. The only thing left was her voice. You can still hear it today, bouncing off mountains and walls, rebounding in caves and canyons.

AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 16: HANDOUT 1: FEEDBACK FORM

Please complete and return to a program leader.

My favorite part of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong was...

My least favorite part of Amazing Grace: Exploring Right and Wrong was...

I wish we had more time to...

Something that would have made this program better is...

When I started the program, I felt...

After completing the program, I feel...

Other comments:

**AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 16:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: A NARCISSUS FLOWER**



AMAZING GRACE: SESSION 16: LEADER RESOURCE 2: TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Calling	Treat others the way you want them to treat you
Character	Agreement; mutual promise
Conscience	The deepest part of yourself; the human spirit
Covenant	The real you; the qualities that make you you
Faith	Feeling you must do or be something to be true to yourself
Golden Rule	Spiritual or religious belief; the activity of making meaning; sense of what you trust or know to be true
Guilt	Everybody goes to heaven
Moral relativity	Voice of the soul; an internal sense of right and wrong
Soul	Feeling you did something wrong
Repent	What is right depends on the situation
Trinity	To feel remorse; to say you are sorry
Universal Salvation	Idea that God is in three parts, not one

FIND OUT MORE

The illustrated *Book of Greek Myths* by Ingri D'Aulaire and Edgar Parin (Delacorte Press, 1962) includes the myth of Narcissus.

See more "Kilroy Was Here" on the website of the [Ohio Historical Society](http://www.ohiohistory.org/etcetera/exhibits/kilroy/) (at www.ohiohistory.org/etcetera/exhibits/kilroy/).