

LOVE WILL GUIDE US
A Tapestry of Faith Program for Children
Grades 2-3



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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THE PROGRAM

Inside each raindrop swims the sun.

Inside each flower breathes the moon.

Inside me dwell ten million stars,

One for each of my ancestors:

The elk, the raven, the mouse, the man,

The flower, the coyote, the lion, the fish.

Ten million different stars am I,

But only one spirit, connecting all. — Nancy Wood, "Ten Million Stars," used with permission

As Unitarian Universalists, we are intentional in turning to a diversity of sources as we seek to discover truth and make meaning in our lives.

Drawing on the wisdom of the ages as expressed in many different traditions and cultures, along with our own direct experiences, we engage theological questions about the origins of life, the meaning of death, and what it means to be human.

In this program, participants learn to seek guidance in life through the lens of our Unitarian Universalist Sources, with an emphasis on love. Together we ask: questions such as, "Where did we come from?" "What is our relationship to the Earth and other creatures?" "How can we respond with love, even in bad situations?" "What happens when you die?" Sessions apply wisdom from our Sources to help participants answer these questions. Participants will learn that asking questions is valued in Unitarian Universalism, even as they begin to shape their own answers.

All sessions highlight love as a central aspect of Unitarian Universalism. Using the night sky and the North Star as metaphors, participants are "guided to love." As they explore the night sky, participants learn to recognize and name the Unitarian Universalist Sources, as expressed in children's language:

- The sense of wonder we all share.
- People of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.
- The ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions.
- Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves.
- The use of reason and the discoveries of science.

- The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.
- Our seventh Source: Examples of faithful belief and action from our Unitarian and Universalist heritage.

All sessions include guided discussion, reflection, hands-on activities, and self-expression to engage participants with various learning styles. Sessions that rely heavily on verbal learning also offer alternate activities geared toward more active learners. Many activities suggest adaptations to address different abilities and learning styles. Craft each session using activities you think will best suit the children in the group.

Ritual and repetition are important aspects of this program: sharing opening words, a chalice-lighting, centering in silence before hearing a story, and singing. You may also choose to add a ritual of sharing joys and concerns (Alternate Activity 1 in each session). Young children love ritual, and these spiritual activities form an important element of the program.

GOALS

This program will:

- Strengthen participants' Unitarian Universalist identity through exploration of the seven Sources
- Emphasize love as the guiding force in Unitarian Universalist faith
- Address important theological questions in a simple yet honest way, providing participants with the opportunity and language to formulate their own ideas and beliefs
- Introduce world religions at a basic level and cultivate respect for world religions and theological diversity
- Promote a spiritual orientation of curiosity, awe, wonder and gratitude
- Teach participants to recognize and implement concrete actions grounded in love
- Foster a learning community where everyone is welcomed and honored—a community in which diversity is embraced, justice is practiced, and children learn, grow, and have fun together.

LEADERS

A team of two or more adults should lead Love Will Guide Us. Having two leaders present at all times helps ensure child safety and optimum conditions for learning. While one leader implements an activity, the other can focus on logistics and children's engagement, behavior, and safety. A collaborative teaching style is preferred. It may be useful for one leader on a team to take primary responsibility for Faith in Action activities, most of which occur outside regular session time.

Ideally, leaders will be familiar with the Unitarian Universalist Sources, although they can certainly learn along with the group. Leaders should be able to affirm diverse beliefs and perspectives in the group. Moral integrity and flexibility of thought are important.

Several sessions call for the group to participate in the life of the congregation through worship, service or a community gathering. At least one leader should be familiar with the congregation's practices, rituals and calendar.

Finally, leaders should enjoy stories. To be comfortable telling a story, rather than reading it aloud, is desirable, though certainly not a requirement for effective leadership.

PARTICIPANTS

Love Will Guide Us is for children in second and third grade. You may find it useful to think about the developmental norms for this age group. Not all children arrive at each developmental stage at the same time, but knowing what to expect overall from seven-, eight-, and nine-year-olds can be quite helpful, especially to first-time leaders.

In *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005), Tracey L. Hurd discusses developmental characteristics of school-age children. She notes that by age seven, children's learning disabilities and behavioral or psychological issues may have appeared and been identified. Individual learning styles and strengths may also be apparent. Children who need glasses often get their first pair around this age.

In a section on moral development, Hurd notes that the typical child in this age group is "passionately interested" in moral issues:

She seeks what is fair and right... By developing games with rules, playing sports, or creating or belonging to clubs, the school-age child practices figuring out what is fair...

This play is practice for more generalized moral decision making.

In general, children in second or third grade are:

- Able to use gross and fine motor skills, which are almost fully developed
- Influenced by media images and messages; beginning to compare themselves to norms perceived as desirable
- Engaging in logical thinking based on "concrete operational" thinking
- Practicing cognitive skills of acquiring, storing, and retrieving information
- Developing their individual learning style, which may be auditory visual, sensory, and/or kinesthetic
- Showing their domain-specific intelligence, which may be verbal/linguistic, musical/rhythmic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and/or naturalist
- Finding self-esteem in their knowledge and their student identity
- Engaging peers; learning through mutual friendships
- Able to comprehend the perspectives of others
- Likely to engage in gender-segregated play
- Interested in their own racial, ethnic, and gender identity, and seeking affirmation of these identities from peers
- Learning and negotiating early understandings of social scripts about sexuality
- Aware of and able to apply the Golden Rule (treating others as they wish to be treated)
- Energized by developing rules for play or work that ensure fairness
- Interested in personal moral issues and able to wrestle with moral dilemmas in relationships
- Aware of societal moral issues
- Interested in helping to solve community and world problems
- Showing interest in concrete aspects of faith and religion

- "Doing" religion or spirituality by participating in rituals, practices, and traditions.

Hurd offers a variety of strategies that speak to these developmental considerations and may help you shape your sessions effectively. You can:

- Provide for children's overall physical needs, including nutrition, exercise, and rest
- Allow children to be active; avoid extended times of sitting and listening
- Provide time for play and hands-on activities
- Present challenges that promote children's use of their thinking skills
- Support different learning styles
- Encourage problem-solving and discussion; allow children opportunities to experience others' perspectives through role play
- Support children's natural impulse toward rule making and peer-to-peer negotiation of what is fair
- Allow time with like-identity peers; support or facilitate mixed-peer time, as well
- Intervene appropriately against exclusion or bullying, yet affirm children's need to work out relational complexities as a part of their moral development
- Recognize the unique needs that attend the identity development of children who may be multiracial, multiethnic, or transgender and/or belong to a minority in another way
- Offer children many ways to contribute to the community
- Give opportunities to "do" religion and be part of a faith community
- Welcome large spiritual questions; encourage questioning of religion
- Support self-esteem; affirm the child's developing body and identity
- Support the whole child as an individual and as a member of the group
- Provide encouragement and love.

INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

By adapting activities or using alternate activities, you can make every session inclusive of children with a range of physical and cognitive abilities, learning styles, food allergies, and other needs or limitations. As you plan sessions, be aware of activities that might

pose difficulties for children who are differently abled. All spaces, indoor and outdoor, need to be accessible to participants and leaders. 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 1 includes multiple activities that involve a variety of seeds. Make sure all the children can eat any ingredients in any food you plan to provide. An activity in Session 10 includes live animals, which may be problematic for a child with allergies.

Each session mixes active and quiet, expressive and listening, whole group and individual activities. As you recognize different learning styles among participants, let this information guide your plan of each session. Substitute alternate activities for core activities if you feel they better suit the group.

Every session references a Fidget Basket—a basket of manipulable objects, such as pipe cleaners or clay, which can keep restless hands and minds busy. Make fidget objects available when you feel that some or all of the children may have difficulty sitting through longer periods of listening or discussion. Find more information in the Before You Start section of this Introduction and in Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects.

Including All Participants notes specific concerns and/or suggests adaptations to make an activity fully inclusive. You are encouraged to devise your own adaptations as needed. As the leader, you know best how to provide a fully inclusive learning experience for the group. If you have questions about the accessibility or adaptability of a particular activity, please ask your religious educator for advice. A helpful resource now out of print but available at no charge on the UUA website is Sally Patton's [Welcoming Children with Special Needs](https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/lfd/welcoming_children_specialneeds.pdf). (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/lfd/welcoming_children_specialneeds.pdf)

FAMILIES

Families are the primary influences on the faith development of their children. As a program leader, you take on a special role: supporting parents to shape their children's Unitarian Universalist faith and moral development. By involving parents in this program, you can deepen the experience for children and their families.

Each session offers Taking It Home resources including conversation topics and other ways for families to extend the session. These may include a

family game or ritual, or links to informative and/or interactive websites. Exploring session topics at home can help children and parents practice the skills, personalize the concepts, and make connections among congregational life, home and family life, and life's daily challenges. Be sure to adapt each session's Taking It Home to reflect the activities you have chosen. If you have an email address for every family, you might provide Taking It Home as a group email, either before or immediately after the session. You can also print and photocopy Taking It Home to distribute at the session's Closing.

Invite families into your sessions. Adult or teen volunteers can be extremely helpful with arts-and-crafts activities. Parents who bring musicianship, storytelling, or artistic skills will foster participants' sense of connection between their family and their religious education. Faith in Action activities offer ideal opportunities to engage parents and other congregants. Find out who can enrich your long-term Faith in Action activities with their personal interests, professional networks, or simply their time.

The leader-parent relationship is very important and must be both welcoming and reassuring. When parents bring their children to 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 foster parents' commitment to becoming strong faith leaders in their own families. As a leader, you can support and inspire parents to bring intentionality and excitement to their role in their children's Unitarian Universalist faith development.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program focuses on the seven Unitarian Universalist Sources. Sessions 1-3 explore origins, including the origin of the universe and the origin of our species through evolution. The concept of "guiding" stars is introduced with a Night Sky display which includes the Big Dipper and a North Star, the steady star that always points toward love. Sessions 4-11 deepen the concept by exploring love within our communities and congregations and how we live with our human flaws, deal with death, and understand our interconnectedness with other living beings. Sessions 12-15 explore how love guides us in times of challenge to say no to evil, take action to promote love, and build trust where there is division. Session 16 teaches that love is the Golden Rule and invites participants to summarize and reflect on the overall program.

All 16 sessions follow the same structure. Between an opening and a closing ritual, participants engage in up

to five activities. The Opening includes a chalice lighting, opening words, a song, and introduces the Source for the day. If time allows, consider regularly using Sharing Joys and Concerns in your Opening to deepen connections and empathy (Alternate Activity 1 in every session). Another optional extension of the Opening adds a UU Source Constellation to the Night Sky (Alternate Activity 2 in every session). The Closing reinforces learning about the Source with a song and reading.

The sessions revolve thematically around central stories from our Unitarian Universalist Sources. You are guided to ready the children for a story in each session by sharing a story basket and leading a centering exercise. The story basket will hold items you bring, related to the story. The centering exercise requires an instrument, such as a chime, which makes a sound that gradually fades away. Before You Start, in this Introduction, further describes the story basket and centering. In the sessions, find suggestions for story-related objects.

Faith in Action time is not included in the 60-minute core session, yet Faith in Action is an important element of the overall Tapestry of Faith program. Some sessions' Faith in Action activities can be completed in one meeting; others are longer-term and require the involvement of congregants or community members outside the group.

Each session provides at least one Alternate Activity. Depending on time and the interests, abilities, and learning styles you observe in the group, you may choose to replace one or more core activities with an alternate activity or add an alternate activity to your session.

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 need meetings outside your regular session time, with different people or at another location. Before you commit to expanding or extending the program, gain support from congregational leadership and the participants' families.

How to Use This Program

The program includes an Introduction and 16 sessions.

Each session has its own Introduction, followed by a Session Plan. In each session Introduction, find:

Quotations. The quotations that introduce each session are primarily for leaders, though at times you may wish to read one aloud to the group as an entry point to a session. Exploring a quotation together can

help co-leaders feel grounded in the ideas and activities. These quotations are also included in Taking It Home for families to consider.

Goals. Reviewing the goals will help you understand the desired outcomes for the session and connect its content and methodologies with the four strands of the Tapestry of Faith religious education programs: ethical development, spiritual development, Unitarian Universalist identity development and faith development.

Learning Objectives. These show how participants will learn and grow as a result of the experience of the session. As you plan, apply your knowledge of the particular group of children, the time and space you have available, and your own strengths and interests as a leader to determine the most important and achievable learning objectives for the session. Choose activities that will serve them best.

Session-at-a-Glance. This table lists the session activities in a suggested order for a 60-minute session and provides an estimated time for completing each activity. The table includes all the core activities from the Opening through the Closing. The table also shows the Faith in Action activity for the session (though you will need additional time beyond the core 60-minute session to include a Faith in Action activity). The Session-at-a-Glance table also presents Alternate Activities with their estimated times.

Spiritual Preparation. Taking five or ten minutes to center yourself within the session's purpose and content will support and free you to be present with participants and provide the best possible learning experience. Each session offers a short Spiritual Preparation exercise to focus you on your own life and Unitarian Universalist faith. Calling forth your own experiences and beliefs will prepare you to bring the topic to the group in an authentic manner. We believe that teaching is a spiritual practice.

Session Plan

Following the Session Introduction, the Session Plan presents every element of the session in detail in the sequence established in the Session-at-a-Glance table. The materials and preparation needed and a step-by-step description are provided for each core activity, Faith in Action, and alternate activity. Additionally, the Session Plan provides Taking It Home with activities for families; Stories, Handouts, and Leader Resources for all session activities; and Find Out More with resources for leaders and parents to explore session topics further.

Adaptation to include all participants should always be part of your planning process. Under Including All

Participants, many activities suggest specific modifications to make the activity manageable and meaningful for children with particular limitations or needs.

[Online](#), you can move among a session's elements: Opening, Closing, Activity 4, Story, etc. Each element occupies its own web page. You can click on "Print This Page" at any time.

Click on "Download Entire Program" or "Download Workshop" to have a user-friendly document on your computer to customize using your own word processing program. Once you decide which activities you will use, format and print only the materials you need.

You can "go green" to distribute Taking It Home and other communications to parents: Download and adapt these documents, then use email to distribute to all children's families.

MATERIALS

- Name tags
- Markers or crayons

LEADER GUIDELINES

Be ready to talk privately with a child who describes a home situation that suggests a safety concern. Speak to your religious educator to ensure compliance with your congregation and state safety policies.

As children learn what it means for actions to express faith and beliefs, some may feel shame or guilt for times when they believe they have acted in ways that are not loving. Throughout the program, remember to speak about good choices versus bad choices, rather than good people and bad people. Frequently assure the group that everyone makes mistakes, and our faith encourages us to make things right again and try to make better choices in the future.

Aim to create a learning environment that reflects a community guided by love. Communicate that everyone is welcomed and honored. Treat everyone fairly. Identify and praise actions you witness in the group that reflect love. Encourage children to resolve any conflicts by thinking about how they might be guided by love. Seek opportunities to help participants learn experientially to apply the program concepts to their own lives and choices.

IMPLEMENTATION

You can implement Love Will Guide Us with any model your congregation uses for religious education. Use the chart below for long-range planning and be sure to read each session thoroughly.

Session	Story	Source	Source Star for Night Sky Display	Supplies and Preparation Required
1: Love is Like a Seed	The Everything Seed		Big Dipper & The North Star	<p>Make Night Sky display.</p> <p>Decorate room.</p> <p>Collect seeds native to your area, e.g., maple seed pods, pine cones, acorns, poppy seeds, sesame seeds, beans, avocado pits, pumpkin seeds, flower seed mixes, cactus seeds, sunflower seeds.</p> <p>Optional: Get a copy of the picture book <i>The Everything Seed</i> by Carole Martignacco.</p> <p>Learn Opening and Closing readings and songs.</p>
2: Awesome Love	We Got Here Together	1 - The sense of wonder we all share	We learn from Our Sense of Wonder	<p>Decide whether to incorporate Alternate Activity, UU Source Constellations, into this and future Openings.</p> <p>Plan ahead for worm bins (Faith in Action).</p>
3: We Love to Discover	Dinosaur Bones in New Jersey	5 - The use of reason and the discoveries of science	We learn from Reason and Science	
4: Love in Our Congregations	Meet Jesus	4 - Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves	We learn from Jewish and Christian Teachings	Photos and directories from congregation's archives (Faith in Action).
5: We Are Loved, Flaws and All	The Scratched Diamond	1 - The sense of wonder we all share	We learn from Our Sense of Wonder	<p>Unfinished wooden boxes; gemstones.</p> <p>Geodes (alternate activity).</p> <p>Learn "How Could Anyone" song (alternate activity).</p>
6: Love Is Eternal	Why Death Is Like a Banana Tree	6 - The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life	We learn from the Harmony of Nature	Send letter to parents about ritual of remembrance.
7: Give Love	Give Yourself (Ralph Waldo Emerson)	2 – People of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair	We learn from Wise People	Learn song "Magic Penny" (alternate activity).

8: Love Is Accepting	The Strong Man Who Cried	4 - Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves	We learn from Jewish and Christian Teachings	Large scarves and dress-up clothes.
9: Love of Learning	For the Love of Stars (Cecilia Payne)	5 - The use of reason and the discoveries of science	We learn from Reason and Science	Obtain a 2 1/2-gallon aquarium. Plan ahead for Planetarium visit (Faith in Action).
10: Love for All Creatures	The Cat	3 - The ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions	We learn from World Religions	Make arrangements for a live animal encounter.
11: Overflowing Love and Gratitude	The Rebirth of the Sun	6 - The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life	We learn from the Harmony of Nature	Obtain candle-making supplies (Alternate Activity).
12: From Anger to Love	Anger	3 - The ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions	We learn from World Religions	Invite an adult volunteer; obtain old clothes that can be marked up, and fabric markers.
13: Responding with Love	The Dervish in the Ditch	3 - The ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions	We learn from World Religions	Find "peppy" instrumental music.
15: Love in Action	Harriet's Freedom Journeys (Harriet Tubman)	2 - People of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair	We learn from Wise People	Obtain a ladle, preferably wooden. Learn the song "Follow the Drinking Gourd."
16: Love Is the Golden Rule	Love Is the Golden Rule	Review all of the Sources.		Gather items to represent each of the Unitarian Universalist Sources.

Generally, the sequence of sessions (and within sessions, the sequence of activities) is designed to activate prior knowledge, pique interest, engage children in experiential learning, and help them process and apply observations and new knowledge. You may use all the sessions in sequence, or select or reorder sessions. Combine and adapt the activities in each session to best suit the group. You know best how to shape this program to fit your congregation's religious education model, the culture of your congregation, the children in the group, and the time and space you have.

Learning is reinforced by activities that create bonds across generations. This program offers many ways to connect with the larger congregation. Talk with your minister or religious educator about ways to integrate

the program into multigenerational experiences. For example, could the congregation might have a monthly focus on the Sources, use stories or music in worship, or arrange a pulpit swap with leaders of other faiths. Most Faith in Action activities are designed to engage participants with the larger congregation.

Session 2 calls for composting worm bins. It is advisable to have an expert visit the class. Consider taking orders in advance, as a fundraiser.

Session 7 includes giving the gift of time to a younger group in your congregation. Coordinate this in advance with your religious educator and other religious education leaders.

Session 10 includes interaction with live animals as part of the session. Determine whether there are any

policies in place to prevent bringing in live animals or allergies that can prevent participation.

Session 16 asks children to find items to symbolize each of the seven Unitarian Universalist Sources. Collect and save items as you go through the program.

Plan to go outdoors. The Faith in Action activities for Sessions 1, 6, and 10 include creating a garden, visiting a cemetery, and creating a backyard habitat. Games suggested in some sessions would work well outdoors, depending on weather and the availability of a suitable location. Identify outdoor locations well in advance, obtain permissions you need to take participants there, and arrange for additional adults to accompany the group. Make sure you will not disturb others in the outdoor space at the time you plan to go there. Check ahead for insect nests or poisonous plants to avoid.

Within the sessions, you will find adaptation suggestions. Feel free to add your own. Choose what you feel is best for the space, time, and group. Remember, you are the best guide for these young learners.

BEFORE YOU START

As soon as your program is scheduled, prepare a calendar with the dates for each session and additional meetings. The more co-leaders and parent volunteers a program includes, the more useful a calendar will be. Post the calendar in your shared meeting space, and duplicate it for each adult participant.

Use the calendar as a to-do list. Once you know which activities you will include in each session, carefully read the activities' materials and preparation sections. Put advance preparations on the calendar and, if possible, assign them.

Obtain any materials that your religious education program does not keep in your supply closets. Some materials may be difficult to find at the last minute or in the quantity you need. Activities often suggest online sources.

For sessions with activities that need assistance from the congregation or community, write yourself reminders to contact the appropriate people well in advance. Confirm their visits shortly before the session date.

Communication to families can powerfully boost the program's impact. Note and assign on your calendar the tasks of downloading, customizing, and distribution of Taking It Home for each session. If the group will go off-site for a Faith in Action activity or

beyond the grounds of your congregational meeting place, note and assign the distribution and collection of permission forms. Mark dates to email or hand out reminders or requests to parents.

If different leaders will lead different sessions, make sure to assign responsibilities as appropriate for distributing permission forms, requests for volunteers, and other communications to parents. Note assignments of these tasks on the calendar. Designate one person to keep the calendar up to date. If someone on the leadership team has the expertise to create a shared electronic calendar, take advantage!

Make name tags for participants and leaders before the first session. Keep extra materials to make additional name tags for newcomers or guests.

To lead a session, you may need to download, customize, print, and/or photocopy materials from the Love Will Guide Us program on the [Tapestry of Faith website](http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry) (www.uua.org/re/tapestry). These materials may include a script or story text; handouts for participants; Taking It Home for parents/caregivers; and leader resources such as arts-and-crafts templates, recipes, or scenarios to use in role plays. Gather all the materials you need before the day of the session. Allow yourself time to become familiar with the materials and prepare completely for the session.

The Love Will Guide Us Night Sky

This program utilizes a metaphor of being "guided to love" as by stars in the night sky. Make and display the Love Will Guide Us Night Sky before the first session to establish the metaphor and create a concrete, visual learning atmosphere. You can make a Night Sky as elaborate or as simple as you wish. Find guidance in Session 1, Opening.

UU Source Stars

As the program progresses, you will add Source Stars to your Night Sky during each Closing. Source Stars begin with "We learn from...;" the completed phrase summarizes the Source of the day.

UU Source Constellations

To take our metaphor a step further, Alternate Activity 2 in each session expands the guiding night sky with "constellations" created specifically to illustrate each Source. Stars in each constellation connect—as in dot-to-dot coloring sheets—to create an image symbolic of the Source. For example, stick people represent "the prophetic words of people" and an infinity sign represents "humanist teachings." Each session includes a Handout (only stars) and a Leader

Resource which shows how to connect the stars to create the image (an answer sheet).

Do not use this Alternate when revisiting a Source previously explored. Instead, take an opportunity to point out that Source's constellation.

If you use the Source constellations throughout the program, your Night Sky will include nine panels with stars (one for each of the Sources, a Big Dipper, and a North Star), along with the UU Source Stars. Encourage everyone who enters the room to notice the Night Sky!

Story Basket and Centering

Each session includes instructions to fill a basket with objects related to the central story and pass the objects around to the group to focus participants' attention and build curiosity about the story. Obtain a basket large enough to accommodate items of different sizes and shapes, yet light enough for participants to hold.

The story basket should also have room for a sound-making instrument such as a chime, rain stick, bell, or small drum. You may want to have both a soft and a loud sound instrument. A calming sound that lingers and fades is part of the centering activity that transitions the group from exploring the story basket to listening to or participating in your storytelling. At other times, you will need a sound-making instrument to start and stop the action during a game.

Love Will Guide Us Music

It is suggested you open each session by singing "Love Will Guide Us," Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, and close each session by singing "Our Sources," lyrics and music by Kathleen Tracy, commissioned for this program. Familiarize yourself with these songs. Lyrics for both songs are provided in the sessions and you can listen to a [music clip](http://img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) of "Our Sources." Consider including parents and caregivers in the Closing and have them learn and sing along with participants.

"Our Sources" reinforces the metaphor of the night sky. When you sing this song in a session, you may choose to emphasize the particular phrase for the Source highlighted:

Our Sources

The sense of wonder we all share (Direct experience)

Lives that remind us to be kind and fair (Deeds of people from long ago and today).

Like starlight beacons in the night

They point the way to love

Wisdom from teachers all over the world (World religions)

Love that reaches out to others in turn (Jewish and Christian teachings)

Like starlight beacons in the night

They point the way to love.

(BRIDGE)

O shine down mystery

The path may be different for you and me.

Let's walk together as we learn and grow

And sing about the things we know.

We can use our minds to see what's true (Humanist teachings)

And feel the circle of life we're connected to (Earth-based teachings)

These are things that we believe

And they point the way to love.

These are things that we believe

And they point the way to love.

Fidget Objects

The idea of providing children with pipe cleaners or other quiet, manipulable objects to use during sedentary, listening-oriented group activities comes from Sally Patton, author and advocate for children with special needs. It is a simple, inexpensive way to include and welcome children who find it difficult to sit still or who learn better while moving. In Tapestry of Faith programs, we suggest a basket of fidget objects. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects, for detailed guidance.

Fidget objects may especially benefit children who are kinesthetic learners, have been diagnosed with ADD or ADHD, or simply tend to be physically restless or highly social during religious school. Get to know the particular children. Decide whether you wish to make fidget objects available for the duration of a session or to limit access, e.g., bringing the basket out only for activities, such as storytelling, that require children to sit still for a prolonged period of time.

Many stories and listening-based activities in this program require children's full engagement and active participation. At these times, it may be best not to introduce fidget objects unless there is a child who cannot attend otherwise.

Requirements for Your Meeting Space

Work with your religious education team and congregational leaders to ensure that the program has an adequate meeting space. Multiple activities occur in each session: lighting the chalice, sitting in a circle for a story or sharing, stand-up role plays, group games and hands-on projects for which children need to sit together at work tables and share arts-and-crafts materials. For some activities, having a water source nearby will be helpful. The ideal meeting space is spacious, with multiple areas that include a carpeted space for storytelling; an open space large enough for cooperative group games; and child-size tables and chairs. Identify a wall space to post the Night Sky for the duration of the program. You will need other wall space or a sturdy easel for posting newsprint and writing on it.

PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES

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

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalism 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 people 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;

Faithful words, beliefs, and actions of Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists that have shaped our Unitarian Universalist faith heritage.

RESOURCES

Find Unitarian Universalist stories in *A Lamp in Every Corner: Our Unitarian Universalist Storybook* by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004) and *Stories in Faith: Exploring Our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources Through Wisdom Tales* by Gail Forsyth-Vail (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2007). Another book with a variety of stories and guidance on using storytelling is *Once Upon a Time: Storytelling to Teach Character and Prevent Bullying* by Elisa Pearmain (Greensboro, NC: Character Development Group, 2006).

Raising Resilient Children by Robert Coles and Sam Goldstein (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 2001) gives guidance on developing social conscience in children.

These books, available from InSpirit, the UUA's [online bookstore](http://www.uuabookstore.org) (www.uuabookstore.org), offer information, reflection, and guidance that may help leaders prepare to teach Love Will Guide Us: *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* by Tracey Hurd (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2007) and *The Gift of Faith: Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children*, Second Edition by Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2003).

Now out-of-print, *Welcoming Children with Special Needs: A Guidebook for Faith Communities* by Sally Patton (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2004) is available at no charge [online](#).

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:

Susan Lawrence, Managing Editor
Lifespan Faith Engagement Office
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:

Susan Lawrence, Managing Editor
Lifespan Faith Engagement Office
Unitarian Universalist Association
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210-1409
religiuseducation@uua.org

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

SESSION 1: LOVE IS LIKE A SEED

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Love is the vital essence that pervades and permeates, from the center to the circumference, the graduating circles of all thought and action. Love is the talisman of human weal and woe—the open sesame to every soul. — Elizabeth Cady Stanton, women's civil rights activist in a speech given in 1860

This session introduces love as an unseen, guiding force unfolding in the universe, and introduces the Sources of our Unitarian Universalist faith, with an emphasis on love.

The story, "The Everything Seed," describes the origins of the universe as a single seed which contained within itself everything our universe needed, including love. Together participants ponder how love emerged, unfolded, and calls to people of faith.

Finally, this session establishes routines, rituals, and expectations for the program; and the group creates a behavior covenant together.

Several activities in this session require seeds. You will need a large seed such as an avocado pit or acorn for Activity 1, Pass the Seed Name Game and Activity 3, Story – The Everything Seed. The children use seeds in Activity 4, Universe Seed Art. They will need seeds to plant if you do the Faith in Action activity, Creating a Love Will Guide Us Garden, or Alternate Activity 2, Planting Mystery Seeds.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the themes, rituals, and format of Love Will Guide Us
- Introduce the seven Sources of Unitarian Universalist faith in simple language
- Explore love as an unfolding, guiding force in Unitarian Universalism
- Welcome children and begin to create community.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn chalice-lighting words and opening and closing songs to use in each session

- Learn about the Sources of our Unitarian Universalist beliefs
- Connect a story about the beginnings of the universe with our higher calling to love
- Portray love unfolding in the universe, by making a seed art project.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	7
Activity 1: Pass the Seed Name Game	8
Activity 2: Group Behavior Covenant	5
Activity 3: Story – The Everything Seed	15
Activity 4: Universe Seed Art	15
Faith in Action: Creating a Love Will Guide Us Garden	
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: Planting Mystery Seeds	20
Alternate Activity 3: Everything Seed Guided Meditation	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Read this session's story, "The Everything Seed." Imagine you are holding a seed in your hands—a seed that contains a universe. Reflect on the idea that love is also contained in this seed. Close your eyes and imagine love unfolding in our universe, filling our hearts and spirits with a shining light. How you can tend this light, so it will grow and flourish in your life and shine out from you to touch those around you?

SESSION PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Markers or crayons

Preparation for Activity

- Set up tables and chairs.
- Place name tags and markers on the tables.

Description of Activity

This activity is appropriate when participants do not arrive in a group but arrive individually before the session begins.

Welcome participants and invite them to sit down and write and decorate their name tags. A second co-leader should greet new parents and explain the plans for the day.

Including All Participants

This is an excellent time for co-leaders to notice the abilities and temperament of each child. Note how they respond to you. Are they shy and reticent? Are they anxious and jumpy? Invite a parent to share any concerns and pertinent information, including information about children's allergies. Do you have a sign-in sheet? While the children settle in with the Opening activity, co-leaders should review the names of the children attending and share any issues that may need special attention during the session.

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#)
- Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Large, black cloth or paper for Night Sky display
- Leader Resource 1, [The North Star](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [The Big Dipper](#) (included in this document)
- Push pins, tape, or sticky tack

- Leader Resource 3, [The Sources of Our Unitarian Universalist Beliefs](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "Love Will Guide Us" and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Create a paper or fabric Night Sky. The Night Sky will serve as a background to which you will attach—over the course of the program—a paper, cut-out North Star (Leader Resource 1); a Big Dipper (Leader Resource 2); up to 16 Source Stars (provided as a leader resource in each session), and (optional) one 8 1/2x11 UU Source Constellation each time you do the alternate activity provided in sessions 2-16. There are many possibilities for creating a Night Sky display to suit your meeting space. You can attach black fabric or paper to a wall or bulletin board. For a more portable sky, paint a large sheet of foam core or use fabric to make a Night Sky that rolls up. Display the Night Sky in a space where it can remain for the duration of the program or where you can easily re-post it each time the group meets.
- Print out Leader Resource 1, The North Star and Leader Resource 2, The Big Dipper on white or yellow paper. Cut out the star and the constellation. Attach them to the Night Sky, positioning the North Star so it lines up with the two stars at the end of the Big Dipper's bowl.
- Use Leader Resource 3, The Sources of Our Unitarian Universalist Beliefs, to make a poster for the meeting space. A simple way is to download the leader resource, then cut and paste the text of the seven Sources into a new document on your computer and format a one-page poster. Or, display the words of the Sources with pictures to represent each Source. Illustrations help children remember concepts.
- Copy Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, save paper by writing the words on newsprint to post for the duration of the program.
- Copy Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a

sheet of newsprint, and post. The children will sing "Love Will Guide Us" at each Opening.

- Plan to collect and store Handouts 1 and 2 (or the newsprint sheets) for re-use in future sessions.
- Optional: Plan to play the tune of "Love Will Guide Us" for the group. If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](#). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

This activity establishes the program's opening ritual and introduces the Night Sky display.

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Indicate the Night Sky display. Say, in your own words:

Have you ever looked up and seen the stars in the night sky? When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, Greeks and Romans, Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other peoples all around the world named constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. But if we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see a saucepan?

Ask participants what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

For Unitarian Universalists, our Sources guide us, like stars in the Night Sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe—just like ancient peoples used the stars.

We will learn about all the Sources on our UU Sources poster. And we will learn about something else that guides us: love. Love is always there, like the North Star. It can always help us know where we are. Love helps guide us, as Unitarian Universalists, to make the right choices and decisions.

Indicate the Night Sky display.

Love will be our North Star as we build a Night Sky together. Each time we meet, we will add stars to our Night Sky as we discover the Sources that guide Unitarian Universalists, just as the stars have guided seekers and travelers for thousands of years.

Distribute Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics or indicate the lyrics you have posted. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts or newsprint for re-use.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take time to teach the opening words and the song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

We highly recommend using an LED chalice to avoid a fire hazard and include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: PASS THE SEED NAME GAME (8 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A large seed such as a lima bean, avocado pit, or acorn

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a standing circle. Show them the seed you are holding and say:

This seed can grow into anything you imagine—something tiny like a violet or enormous like an oak tree. The only thing it can't turn into is something that has to be built, like an airplane. We are going to pass the seed around the circle. When you have the seed you will tell us your name and then without words you will use your hands and body to show us what you imagine the seed growing into by acting it out. The person next to you will try to guess what it is with help from the group.

Go first, to model. State your name and then pretend to stretch the air around the seed, making the shape the seed will turn into. Use your body to become the

item, for example, use your arms as branches if you are a tree. To show an apple, pretend to cup it in your hand and bite it. When the next person guesses what your seed grew into, pass the seed to that person for their turn.

Continue until all have had a turn. Briefly process the activity by asking participants to consider how amazing it is that tiny objects, seeds, grow into bigger, fully formed trees, fruits, plants, and flowers.

Including All Participants

If the group includes visually impaired children, adapt the activity by describing aloud what is being acted out.

ACTIVITY 2: GROUP BEHAVIOR COVENANT (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write "Covenant" at the top of a sheet of newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

Creating a covenant empowers the children to take responsibility for their individual and collective behavior, and helps create a safe place for learning.

Indicate the newsprint you have posted and ask if anyone knows what a covenant is. Affirm that it is a promise. Explain that the group will list some promises everyone will make to help create a positive learning environment where everybody is cared for and safe and where we are guided by love. Ask:

- What will help this group be a place where everyone feels safe, everyone feels welcome, and everyone is able to learn and have fun?
- What should we promise to do, or not to do?

Write suggestions on newsprint. If you need to prompt the group, suggest listening to one another other, including everybody in activities, sharing, taking turns, helping one another, keeping our hands to ourselves, or being kind. Whenever possible, help participants reframe "don'ts" such as "don't insult others," "don't hit," or "don't lie" as their opposite, desirable behaviors such as "use kind words," "respect each other's need for safety," or "be honest." When all the ideas are on newsprint, have the group, including co-leaders, choose the most important promises. These should include listening to one another, keeping our hands to ourselves, and including everybody.

Have everyone sign their name on the covenant, including co-leaders, and post it in the room. As new children or adults join the group they should sign the covenant, too. You can say:

When you sign the covenant, it means you agree to promise the rest of us that you will follow it.

Assure participants that if anyone in the group ever feels that the promises in the covenant are being broken, they can talk to a leader, who will make sure the matter is addressed.

Note: Keep this exercise brief. If children are not engaging in the process, be sure the most important rules are included and then move on to the next activity.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY – THE EVERYTHING SEED (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "The Everything Seed" or a copy of the book *The Everything Seed* by Carole Martignacco, illustrated by Joy Troyer
- A large basket
- Objects to place in the basket that are related to the story "The Everything Seed," such as images of the universe and our galaxy, models of planets or other space objects, various types and sizes of seeds such as sunflower, pumpkin, acorn, beans, pine cone, milkweed, or poppy seeds
- A large seed, visible when held between your fingers, such as a lima bean, avocado pit, or acorn
- A chime, rain stick, or other calming sound instrument
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget Basket, see [Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story,

set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.

- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects, for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table. Briefly name the various objects.

Now remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell participants that every time you tell a story in *Love Will Guide Us*, you will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. In a calm voice, say, in your own words:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime or other instrument. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story, "The Everything Seed," which illustrates the origins of our universe with the metaphor of an unfolding seed.

Sound the rain stick to indicate the story is over. Bring back the story basket with its seeds and take one out. Take a few minutes to guide the children in a brief discussion, using these questions:

- I wonder what things were inside that Everything Seed? (Lead participants to list things in our universe.)
- How do you think love came out of the Everything Seed? How love could be inside a seed?
- What sorts of ways might our universe continue to unfold? What new things might grow out of the Everything Seed?
- Why is it important we remember that we need to love each other and everything on Earth? (Lift up the meaning of the interconnected web of life to Unitarian Universalists.)

Including All Participants

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story. Fidget objects, described in Leader Resource 4, can provide a non-disruptive outlet for a child who needs to move or who benefits from sensory stimulation.

ACTIVITY 4: UNIVERSE SEED ART (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A large quantity of seeds in a variety of shapes and sizes, for example, garden seeds, poppy seeds, sesame seeds, milkweed pods, and beans
- Trays to hold the seeds, preferably with dividers to separate the types of seeds (egg cartons would be ideal)
- Craft glue
- Sheets of oak tag or cardboard for all participants
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Place seeds in trays, divided by type of seed.
- Set trays on work tables with the craft glue and oak tag or cardboard.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a sitting circle and say in your own words:

Love is a central force in Unitarian Universalism. It is what guides us like the North Star. It's pretty amazing to think that love was part of the universe right in the very

beginning. We are going to make pictures by drawing what love looks like unfolding in the universe with a pencil and then gluing seeds on the drawing.

Move to the work area and instruct participants to draw their image of love unfolding in the universe on their oak tag paper and then glue seeds onto it. Allow children to interpret the question however they wish. Some might want to draw spirals; others might draw hearts or pictures of loving relationships. There is no right answer or image. If children are finding it difficult to create an image, you might ask:

- What do you imagine love looks like?
- What do you imagine it looks like when things come into the universe?
- How might you draw what it feels like to love?
- Can you think of a good symbol for love?

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Write the words for the sixth UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or

someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children. Say, in your own words:

Today we talked about love coming from the same seed our universe came from. We talked about how love is like the North Star in the night sky—always there to guide us. Next time we meet, we will start learning about the Sources of our Unitarian Universalist faith. Each of the Sources helps us move with love, in the direction of love, just like the constellations can help a traveler find the North Star in the night sky.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. Consider playing the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: CREATING A LOVE WILL GUIDE US GARDEN

Materials for Activity

- Seeds for plants which will grow well outdoors in your climate
- Shovels, trowels, watering cans, gardening gloves, garden stakes, and other garden tools and materials
- Sunscreen, sun hats, and bug repellent
- Optional: Weather-proof sign to label "Love Will Guide Us Garden" with the name of your congregation and the program year
- Optional: *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel (New York: HarperCollins, 1972)

Preparation for Activity

- Along with your minister, Building Committee, Social Action Committee and/or religious educator, select a site for the Love Will Guide Us Garden. Possibilities include your

congregation's property, the home of a member of your congregation who could benefit from a garden, a rooftop in an urban setting, or a community location.

- Decide what type of garden to plant (decorative or functional) and what plants you would like to grow. Possibilities include organic vegetables to donate to a local food pantry, flowers (consider including bleeding hearts), or a butterfly garden. The goal is to create a garden that reflects love. As appropriate, network with local community organizations to determine what sort of garden and plants would be most beneficial. As possible, involve the children in this decision.
- Identify one or more gardeners in your congregation who can help lead this project.
- Establish a seasonally appropriate time to do the planting and invite the congregation to join the children in planting the garden.
- Plan for the continued care of the garden including weeding, watering, and harvesting.

Description of Activity

Plant the seeds according to their instructions. Use garden stakes to label the plants. Post your "Love Will Guide Us Garden" sign.

When the group has finished planting, gather in a circle and read the story, "The Garden," in the book *Frog and Toad Together*.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these

opportunities into experiential learning for the children?

- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

Love is the vital essence that pervades and permeates, from the center to the circumference, the graduating circles of all thought and action. Love is the talisman of human weal and woe — the open sesame to every soul. — Elizabeth Cady Stanton, women's civil rights activist in a speech given in 1860

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard the story of "The Everything Seed," which describes the origins of our universe in metaphoric language. We discussed the idea that love was included in that original "everything seed" and learned that love is a guiding force for Unitarian Universalists. Participants created universe seed art representing the love and creativity within our universe.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about... theories about how the universe came into being, such as the Big Bang. Talk together about the awesome aspect of our universe's origin. Take turns naming things that were contained in the original, strange ball of matter which exploded to become our universe.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try... learning about seeds together. Dissect a seed and see what is inside. If possible, look at seeds under a microscope. Plant some seeds and watch them grow. Help your child create their own indoor or outdoor garden.

Family Adventure. Go on a walk to find as many seeds and seed holders as you can and try to identify the types of plants they will become.

Family Discovery. To learn more about seeds, watch the Scholastic video *The Magic School Bus Goes to Seed*. Or, read, *The Magic School Bus Plants Seeds: A Book About How Living Things Grow* or *The Magic School Bus Gets Planted: A Book About Photosynthesis*, both by Joanna Cole.

To hear about the universe's origin in metaphoric language, read together the book *The Everything Seed* by Carole Martignacco, illustrated by Joy Troyer (Dyeing Arts, 2015). Another book to read together is *Born with a Bang: The Universe Tells Its Cosmic Story: Book One* by Jennifer Morgan (Dawn Publications, 2002).

A Family Game. In the African game Mancala, two opponents try to collect the most seeds by taking turns dropping seeds into small cups carved into a board. The goal is to capture as many of your opponents' seeds as possible. Purchase Mancala at a toy and game store or play a version [online](http://www.lookoutnow.com/game/mancala.htm) (at www.lookoutnow.com/game/mancala.htm).

A Family Ritual. Start a yearly tradition: Plant a garden together. Create a ritual for the planting. For instance, you might read the story "The Garden," from the book *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel, or sing "The Garden Song" by David Mallett, recorded by many artists. You could gather water from rivers and lakes that you visit over the course of the year and use it to water the newly planted seeds.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Preparation for Activity)
- Two baskets to hold felt flames and felt candles
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- Make a felt candle-and-flame board: Staple or nail a large piece of felt around a wooden board or a sheet of heavy cardboard. Cut out a variety of flame shapes and a variety of candle shapes from different colors of felt.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other and place baskets near the felt board.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has

made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite participants to come forward one at a time. Of course, anyone may pass. If the children do not know each other very well yet, or a new person is visiting, have everyone say their name before they begin for the group to repeat back. As children share, model listening respectfully and without comment.

Variation

Instead of inviting participants to share joys and concerns, posit a question participants can answer briefly. For example, a question to fit this session might be "What do you like about the night sky?"

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that may arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: PLANTING MYSTERY SEEDS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Seeds for a variety of plants that have similar growing needs, preferably ones that require little care during the week, such as a hardy annual mix
- Bowl to hold loose seeds
- Window box
- Planting soil
- Organic fertilizer
- Watering can and spoons or trowels

Preparation for Activity

- Empty the seed packets into the bowl and hide any identifying information.
- Place planting supplies in your work area.

Description of Activity

Say in your own words:

We are going to plant our own everything seeds. What they will grow into will be a mystery. Just like there was love in the original everything seed, we will imagine that these seeds will unfold as love into this room and into our hearts, so that we are always guided by love when we are together. Our mystery plants will remind us to let love be our guide.

Have the participants plant the seeds in the window box and water them.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: EVERYTHING SEED GUIDED MEDITATION (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the meditation a few times so you will be comfortable leading it.

Description of Activity

Have participants sit or lie down in a comfortable position with eyes closed. Read the meditation in a gentle, calm voice. Pause where indicated to allow participants time to experience the meditation fully.

Take a few minutes to pay attention to your breath. Breathe in slowly and allow the breath to fill your lungs and make your belly rise. Breathe out slowly.

(Pause.)

Feel your body relaxing. As you breathe in and out the relaxation spreads through your body, starting with your toes and moving up through your legs into your hips and up into your chest and back and arms. Relax your face and neck. Your whole body is completely comfortable and relaxed.

(Pause.)

Now imagine that you are a seed. This seed can become anything you dream of.

(Pause.)

Imagine that you have been planted somewhere safe and warm. It is a special place and you feel loved and happy. You are filled with love in your heart.

(Pause.)

You begin to sprout and grow. What does it feel like to grow?

(Pause.)

You are changing. What is it you are becoming?

(Pause.)

What does your new body look like? What things are you able to do?

(Pause.)

Imagine yourself moving around in the safe place where you were planted. What do you do?

(Pause.)

When you are ready, imagine yourself changing again. Now you are turning back into yourself.

(Pause.)

I will count backward from 10. When I get to the number 1 you can open your eyes and rejoin the group.

10 ... 9 ... 8 ... 7 ... 6 ... 5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... 1

Invite the children to share briefly what they experienced or imagined during the meditation.

Including All Participants

Some people do not feel safe closing their eyes when they are in a group. If any participant resists, suggest they find a single point of focus to look at instead.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 1: STORY: THE EVERYTHING SEED

From *The Everything Seed* by Carole Martignacco, illustrated by Joy Troyer (Berkeley, California: Tricycle Press, 2006). Used with permission. Carole Martignacco is a poet, singer, grandmother, and former RE director. A Unitarian Universalist minister, she currently serves as minister to the UUEstrie, a congregation in Quebec's Eastern Townships, and as president of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada.

We highly recommend buying the picture book "The Everything Seed," by Carole Martignacco with gorgeous batik illustrations by Joy Troyer.

Have you ever watched
a seed grow?
Have you ever noticed
how it begins
so small,
so still,
so quiet,
like a gift wanting to be opened...
and how slowly
it wakes up,
begins to unfold,
growing
into something
larger...
and larger ...
and LARGER?
Then you know
that whatever
comes from a seed
usually ends up
looking very little like
the seed it came from...
which is also true
of the very first
seed.
Once, long, long ago,
way back before the beginning...
so long ago
there was no such thing
as time, because

there was no one there
to count it...
Everywhere was
a huge
deep
mysterious
place,
like something
waiting to happen.
There were no stars,
no Sun or Moon.
There was no place like Earth...
not a drop of water,
or a single tree,
or rock
or flower...
and no living beings anywhere.

But in that deep
waiting space
was hidden
the tiniest point
of something
no bigger than
a seed.

(Leader: Hold up a seed.)

It was not
a flower seed.

It was not an elm tree seed.

It was not a seed of corn,
although all those things
were included in the seed.

You might call it
an Everything Seed
because that
is what it became.

No one knows where that first seed came from,
or how it was planted,

or how it knew (in the way that only
seeds seem to know) how long to wait
for just the right moment
to sprout and grow.
But all at once, this tiny seed,
cradled and nourished
in the rich soil of space,
woke up,
broke open,
and began
to unfold.
Unfolding ...
Unfolding ...
and blossoming forth...
into an enormous blazing
ball of bright light...
like a great
Grandmother Sun.
And the Universe was born.
Out fluttered
the galaxies,
like a storm of snowflakes
swirling...
and gathering
into the brightest,
most blindingly beautiful
clouds of stars.
And out of those starclouds
whirled our own star,
the one we call the Sun...
and our Earth
and our Moon...
and all
the round spinning planets
we have learned how to name.
And this is
the secret of

that tiny seed:

You and I

were there

in the very beginning...

just as the idea

for each leaf

on a big oak tree

lies hidden inside an acorn

(Leader: If you have an acorn, hold it up.)

We were there

with all

the stars

and planets,

all the rocks

and oceans,

plants

and animals,

and people.

Everything

that is now,

ever was,

or ever

will be

was inside

that first

tiny seed.

So, whenever

you hold a seed

in your hand

and wonder

what it could become

imagine how you,

and all that is here,

once came from

the tiniest speck

of an Everything Seed

before it sprouted

and grew
long, long ago
in the way-back
beginning of time.
Now, if this
were an ordinary story,
it would end right here.
But this story of the Universe
keeps unfolding.
What once began
in a blazing blossom of light
continues every day.
New stars sprout open
in the deep soil
of space.
New plants and animals
appear on the Earth.
Seeds of many kinds...
are scattered
everywhere...
to help us remember.
And new people
are born
every day
with the spark
of that first light
still alive
and burning
deep inside...
Waiting...
like
the Everything Seed,
to shine
in ways
that are yet
to be known.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 1: HANDOUT 1: TEN MILLION STARS

By Nancy Wood, copyright 1973, in *Spirit Walker* (Delacorte Press, 1993). Used by permission.

Leader:

Inside each raindrop swims the sun.

Inside each flower breathes the moon.

Participants:

Inside me dwell ten million stars,

Leader:

One for each of my ancestors:

Participants:

The elk, the raven, the mouse, the man,

The flower, the coyote, the lion, the fish.

Leader:

Ten million different stars am I,

Participants:

But only one spirit connecting all.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 1: HANDOUT 2: LOVE WILL GUIDE US LYRICS

Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook. Lyrics by Sally Rogers. Used with permission.

Love will guide us, peace has tried us,

Hope inside us, will lead the way

On the road from greed to giving.

Love will guide us through the hard night.

If you cannot speak like angels,

If you cannot speak before thousands,

You can give from deep within you.

You can change the world with your love.

(Repeat first verse.)

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 1: HANDOUT 3: OUR SOURCES LYRICS

Words and music by Kathleen Tracey.

Hear the [music clip](http://img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) of Kathleen Tracey sing the song. [The Music \(PDF\)](#) can be found here. (NOTE - pdf will not load into the downloaded word version of the curriculum - you'll need to download it separately.)

The sense of wonder we all share (*Direct experience*)

Lives that remind us to be kind and fair (*Deeds of people from long ago and today*)

Like starlight beacons in the night

They point the way to love

Wisdom from teachers all over the world (*World religions*)

Love that reaches out to others in turn (*Jewish and Christian teachings*)

Like starlight beacons in the night

They point the way to love

(BRIDGE)

O shine down mystery

The path may be different for you and me

Let's walk together as we learn and grow

And sing about the things we know

We can use our minds to see what's true (*Humanist teachings*)

And feel the circle of life we're connected to (*Earth-based teachings*)

These are things that we believe

And they point the way to love

These are things that we believe

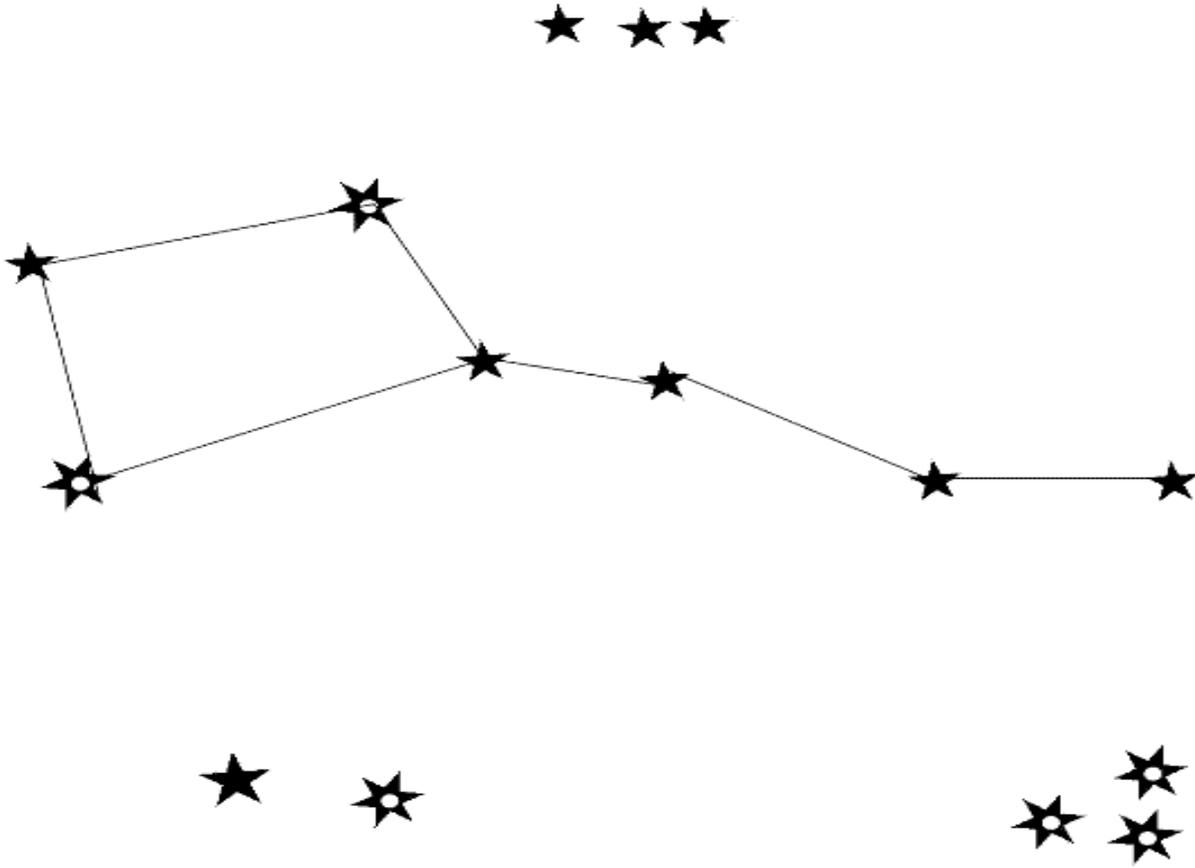
And they point the way to love

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 1: THE NORTH STAR



Love Will Guide Us, Session 1, Handout N

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 1:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: THE BIG DIPPER**



LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 3: THE SOURCES OF OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST BELIEFS

Adapted from a poster published by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the sense of wonder we all share.

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions.

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from Jewish and Christian teachings that tell us to love all others as we love ourselves.

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the use of reason and the discoveries of science.

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from faithful words and actions that shape our Unitarian and Universalist heritage.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 4: FIDGET OBJECTS

The idea for a basket of "fidget objects" to provide children during session activities comes from Sally Patton, author, workshop leader, and advocate for children with special needs.

A basket of fidget objects is a simple, inexpensive way to include and welcome children who find it difficult to sit still or who learn better while moving.

Provide a basket for fidget objects. Fill it with pipe cleaners, modeling clay, and other quiet, manipulable objects.

Introduce the fidget object basket to the group by saying that some people learn best when their hands are busy. Give an example such as someone who knits while listening to a radio program or doodles during a meeting or class. Point out the fidget object basket. Tell the children they may quietly help themselves to items they may use to keep their hands busy if this helps them to listen. However, also tell the children the fidget object basket will be put away if the items become a distraction from the story or any other group activity.

You can make the fidget object basket available for the duration of the session, or bring it out only during activities, such as hearing a story told, which require children to sit still and listen for a significant period of time.

FIND OUT MORE

Our Unitarian Universalist Sources

A book highly recommended for this program is *Our Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism* by John A. Buehrens and F. Forrest Church. Each section includes two essays on the six Sources of Unitarian Universalism.

How to Find the North Star and the Big Dipper

From an [Astronomy/Space web page posted by Jim Loy](#) (at www.jimloy.com/):

People think that the North Star is very bright. It is not. It is moderately bright, and it is surrounded by very dim stars. So, it stands out, a little. But, the main clue to where the North Star is, is the Big Dipper...

The North Star is at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper. It is hard to find the Little Dipper, without first finding the North Star. Normally, you find the Big Dipper, and then sight along the two stars at the end of the bowl of the Big Dipper, and the North Star is almost in line with those two stars (but not exactly).

Once you have found the North Star a few times, it becomes easy to find.

The North Star is not exactly North. It is a little less than one degree from being directly over the Earth's North Pole. One degree may not seem like much. But, the apparent diameter of the moon is about a half degree.

Different Cultures, Same Sky, Different Constellations

Stars in the night sky are visible to everyone on Earth, yet different cultures have named the patterns they can see according to their own archetypes and beliefs. An astronomy FAQ on the [College of Saint](#)

[Benedict and Saint John's University](#) (at www.csbsju.edu/) website says:

The Big Dipper is ...part of a larger pattern known to the Greeks as Ursa Major, the Great Bear. The seven stars of the Big Dipper have inspired many stories, perhaps because they are bright and located so near the north celestial pole, around which the stars rotate during the course of the night. But not everyone calls it a Dipper. The British call it a Plough. In Southern France, it is a Saucepan. The Skidi Pawnee Indians saw a stretcher on which a sick man was carried. To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw. Hindu sky lore called it the Seven Rishis, or Wise Men. To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull. The ancient Chinese thought of it as a special chariot for the Emperor of the Heaven or some other celestial bureaucrat. For the Micmac Indians of Canada's Maritime Provinces, along with several other North American Indian tribes, the bowl of the Big Dipper was a bear, and the stars in the handle represented hunters tracking the bear. And in the 19th century, the Big Dipper became a symbol of freedom for [people escaping slavery] who "followed the Drinking Gourd" to the northern states.

The Big Bang and the Universe

A good book for children that tells about the Big Bang is *Born with a Bang: The Universe Tells Its Cosmic Story: Book One* by Jennifer Morgan (Dawn Publications, 2002).

Reflections on the Nature of God, edited by Michael Reagan (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2004), combines inspiring pictures of the universe with reflections on the nature of God from a variety of religious perspectives.

SESSION 2: AWESOME LOVE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*I want to be a dogfish
and catch a leaping catfish
with whiskers as long as the stream.
And I want to be
the rain trickling down on the world
telling it it's springtime. — Noah Frank, Grade
2, Lakeshore Elementary School, California*

This session explores the first Unitarian Universalist Source, "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." Of all the Sources, this may be the hardest for young children to grasp, yet it defines us distinctly as Unitarian Universalists. This Source is rooted in Transcendentalism, most notably in the thinking of Henry David Thoreau, who taught us to live in harmony with nature, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, who taught us we can directly experience the awe, wonder, and mystery in nature.

The story in this session is a meditation on how we are part of the natural evolution of life.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the first Source of Unitarian Universalism, the sense of wonder we all share
- Guide participants to discover the awe and wonder of nature and to experience themselves as part of nature.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Articulate the first Source of Unitarian Universalism in their own words
- Experience and express the awe and wonder of nature
- Replicate a soothing sound from nature by creating rain sticks.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	7
Activity 1: Rain Sticks	15
Activity 2: Story – We Got Here Together	15
Activity 3: Our Nature Story	15
Faith In Action: Worm Bin	
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Sources Constellation	10
Alternate Activity 3: Bubble Sculpture	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Read the poem below. Then, consider for a moment the vastness of the universe and all the events that occurred for the earth to form, the oceans to fill, the sky to look blue, and the grass to grow. Set aside the equations and graphs, calculations and theories, gods and goddesses, and all the vast array of explanations for life. Transcend the explanations and instead, allow life to just ... be. Give in to the wonder. Allow yourself to see the world with fresh eyes, the eyes of a child, without bias or expectations.

O Mystery

O mystery beyond my understanding,
Voice in my heart answering to the earth,
And light of distant stars!
O wonder of the spring, leading the seasons on:
The dewdrops sparking on the web at sunrise,

And unseen life, moving in depths and shallows of the
brook,

Trembling in raindrops at the edge of eaves,

Whisper to me of secrets I would know.

O Power that flows through me and all that is,

Light of stars, pulsating in the atoms in my heart,

Whether you are mind and spirit

Or energy transcending human thought

I cannot know, and yet I feel

That out of pain and sorrow and the toil

Through which creation springs from human hands

A force works toward the victory of life, even through
the stars.

Here on the earth winter yields slowly, strikes again,
and hard,

And lovely buds, advance guards of the spring, suffer
harsh death,

And pity moves the heart.

Yet life keeps pulsing on.

The stars still shine, the sun rises again,

New buds burst forth, and life still presses on.

O mystery!

I life my eyes in wonder and in awe! — Robert T.
Weston, *Seasons of the Soul*, 1963

SESSION PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Markers or crayons

Preparation for Activity

- Set up tables and chairs.
- Place name tags and markers on the tables.

Description of Activity

This activity is appropriate when participants do not arrive in a group but arrive individually before the session begins.

Welcome children. Invite them to sit down and write and decorate their name tags. A second adult should greet new parents and explain the plans for the day.

Including All Participants

This is an excellent time for co-leaders to notice the abilities and temperament of each child. Note how they respond to you. Are they shy and reticent? Are they anxious and jumpy? Invite a parent to share any concerns and pertinent information, including information about children's allergies. Do you have a sign-in sheet? As the children settle in, co-leaders should review the names of the children attending and share any issues that may need special attention during the session.

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.

- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Referring to the Night Sky display, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other people all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about the sense of wonder we all share.

Have you ever been awestruck by the color of the sky? Or the smell of a flower? Maybe just how much you love your mom or dad or how much they love you. Maybe it's the way you feel about your dog or cat. Maybe the feeling of running is awesome to you, or swimming, or maybe reading a story.

Today we are talking about times that are awesome and wonderful. Times when we feel glad to be alive and a part of nature. We think it's important to learn from a sense of wonder—things that we can't explain.

Distribute Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics or indicate the lyrics you have posted. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts or newsprint for re-use.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and the song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid a fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: RAIN STICKS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Cardboard paper-towel tubes
- Paper grocery bags
- Aluminum foil
- Glue sticks or tape; pencils, crayons, and markers; stickers

- Dried beans, unpopped popcorn, or uncooked rice or tiny pasta

Preparation for Activity

- Make a sample rain stick:
 - Trace the end of a cardboard tube on a piece of grocery bag paper. Draw a second, larger circle around that circle. Connect the two circles with "spoke" lines. Then, cut out the larger circle and cut along the spokes. Repeat to make a cover for the other end of the tube.
 - Cut two pieces of aluminum foil, each 6 inches wide and half the length of the tube. Scrunch each strip of foil into a long, thin, snake-like shape. Then, twist it into a spring shape.
 - Glue a paper circle to one end of the tube, to cover the bottom opening.
 - Insert the aluminum foil springs into the tube.
 - Pour dried beans into the tube, about 1/10 full.
 - Glue the other paper circle to the top of the tube to seal the rain stick.
 - Decorate the tube.
- Make two paper circles and two aluminum foil strips for each cardboard tube.
- Set out materials at work tables.
- Optional: Before participants arrive, with plenty of time for glue to dry, glue one circle to each tube to cover the bottom opening.

Description of Activity

Show participants the rain stick you have made and invite them to make their own rain sticks. Demonstrate and help them:

1. Take a circle and, folding up the spokes, glue it to the bottom of the tube.
2. Scrunch two strips of foil into long, thin, snake-like shapes.
3. Twist each foil strip into a spring shape.
4. Insert the foil springs into the tube.
5. Pour dried beans into the tube until it is about 1/10 full.
6. Glue on the second paper circle to cover the top.

7. Decorate the tube with crayons, markers, and stickers.

Before they seal their rain sticks, invite the children to experiment to see how different amounts and different types of seeds and beans change the sound.

When everyone is finished, have participants sit in a circle with their rain sticks. Say, in your own words:

Today we will hear a story of one person's imagination of how the world started. The story doesn't answer any questions, but it may make you wonder. Do you wonder how we got here? Did we come from God? Or did we come here some other way? Maybe some of us came from ocean. Or maybe we came from the sky. Let's listen!

Invite participants, one at a time, to turn their rain sticks over once. As the rain sticks sound, one after the other, the sound of "rain" will grow louder and then fade.

Ask participants if they can hear the "rain" in their tubes. If your group is active, you may want to collect rain sticks before the beginning of the story so the noise is not disruptive.

Including All Participants

Have a co-leader partner with any child who lacks the dexterity to make a rain stick on their own.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – WE GOT HERE TOGETHER (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[We Got Here Together](#) (included in this document) "
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story—items which are beautiful, small, and appealing for children to hold, such as a snow globe; a photo of an unusual sea creature, like a sea cucumber; a blown glass piece with bubbles trapped inside; a toy fish
- A rain stick, or another instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see Session 1, [Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the rain stick in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- If you will make a centering table as a focal point for story objects, set up the box or table you will use next to your storytelling area. Place the decorative cloth on the table.
- Read the story a few times.
- Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

The story is a child-friendly example of the mystery and wonder of creation and is intended to be magical.

Invite children to gather for the story. Show them the storytelling basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will sit on the table after the children pass them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one, e.g., "I wonder how this works?"

As the items come back to you, display them on the table and say, in your own words:

Today we are exploring the mystery and wonder that is around us each and every day. There are many things we find amazing and wonderful, like stars in the night sky, or a new kitten or a tiny baby, or the sunrise or sunset, rainbows, or lightning, or other things that we just have to stop and look or listen or touch because they're just so... awesome! Do you like that word? It's a great word to use for the Source we are going to explore today. This is the first Source and it says that Unitarian Universalists believe in the sense of wonder we all share. Awesome wonder!

Before you begin, consider turning the lights down. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, they can hold the props while you read the story.

Remove the rain stick (or other sound instrument) from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use an instrument to help them get their ears, minds, and bodies ready to listen. Invite everyone to sit and close their eyes if they are comfortable. Tell them that closing their eyes will help them focus on just listening.

In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice. Then, say:

When I turn the rain stick over, listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Use the rain stick. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story. Read or tell the story slowly, like a meditation. Use the rain stick again to indicate that the story is over.

Then, ask:

- Can you imagine you were the bubble?
- Can you imagine you were the raindrop?
- What did the story make you think of?
- Can you imagine the different parts of nature that are connected?
- The raindrop and bubble are traveling in different directions, one up and one down. Both are important to nature. How do you imagine something in nature to be?
- Do you ever think about how a snowflake travels? How about sand? Where does sand come from and go to?
- How do you fit in with nature?

ACTIVITY 3: OUR NATURE STORY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Construction paper for all participants
- Items from nature such as leaves, rocks, sticks, pine cones, etc.
- Markers, color pencils, and crayons

Preparation for Activity

- Place items on work table(s) where all the children will be able to see and touch them.

Description of Activity

Tell participants they will have a chance to imagine their own story in nature and tell their story in words, pictures, or a combination. Indicate the items you have brought and explain they are there to help participants hold a part of nature in their hands. They can imagine something about the piece they are holding, or make a story from something else they experience as awesome in nature. Invite participants to write and/or draw on construction paper.

When they are finished, invite participants to share their stories. Ask for volunteers; allow anyone to pass.

Process with these questions:

- What were some of the things you thought of?
- Did you have any surprising ideas?
- How do you understand our connection to nature?

Make the connection to the group that as Unitarian Universalists, we lift up our connection to nature and we respect the natural world and all that is in it.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Source Star — Our Sense of Wonder](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, Source Star — Our Sense of Wonder. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Write the words for the first UU Source on newsprint, and post.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).

- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw something "awesome" in nature they talked about today. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from Our Sense of Wonder" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we talked about things we see, hear, or touch in nature that can make us feel awe and wonder. We made stories of our own experiences. Our own, personal feeling inside of awe and wonder is one of our Unitarian Universalist Sources that points us to love.

Indicate the first Source words you have posted on newsprint. Invite the children to follow along quietly as you read aloud:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the sense of wonder we all share.

Invite volunteers to give an example of what that Source means. You might ask:

- When you see or hear or touch something awesome in nature, how does that make you feel? What kind of love does that make you think of?

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: WORM BIN

Materials for Activity

- Two 8- to 10-gallon, opaque plastic storage bins with lids
- A manual (or electric) drill with 1/4- and 1/16-bits, and safety goggles
- Newspaper
- A small bucket filled with dry dirt
- Red worms, 1 lb. for each set of bins
- Water source (either a faucet or pitcher)
- Cardboard
- Scissors
- Bricks, or lengths of 1x1-inch wood

Preparation for Activity

- Determine how many worm bins you will make. One for the congregation? Will families take them home?
- Purchase worms in advance. Calculate how many worms you need. A red worm can consume about half its weight each day. For example, if your food waste averages 1/2 lb. per day, you will need 1 lb. of worms.
 - Find a local red worm "farm" or other source, or order worms online. The price of \$25-\$40 per pound may be negotiable if you purchase a large quantity.
 - Timing is essential: The worms can live only a few days in a shipping container.
- Find out if anyone in the congregation composts with worms. They may be willing to "harvest" worms for your bin!
- Arrange for someone who knows about worm bin composting to help with this activity.

Description of Activity

Composting with red worms is great for apartment dwellers or people who lack the space for a large compost. These bins are not smelly at all (they do have a smell, but it should be "earthy," not rotten) and

can easily be kept under a sink. The worm "castings" make the best soil amendment available.

This project is captivating not only for children, but also for adults. The idea that these little red worms can consume as much as they do is astounding. You may hear the word "awesome" often!

Step 1: Drill about 20, evenly spaced 1/4-inch holes in the bottoms of both bins. These holes provide drainage and allow the worms to crawl into the second bin when you are ready to harvest the castings.

Step 2: Using the 1/16 inch bit, drill ventilation holes 1 to 1 1/2 inches apart near the top of each bin, all the way around. Set one of the bins, and one of the lids, aside.

Step 3: Drill about 30 holes in one of the bin lids. (Place the lid firmly on the bin to drill.)

Step 4: Prepare bedding for the worms by shredding newspaper into 1-inch strips. Worms need bedding that is moist but not soggy. Moisten the newspaper by soaking it in water. Squeeze out the excess. Cover the bottom of one bin with 3-4 inches of moist newspaper and fluff it up. Old leaves or leaf litter can be added also. Throw in a handful of dirt for "grit" to help the worms digest their food.

Step 5: Add your worms to the bedding.

Step 6: Cut a piece of cardboard to fit over the bedding. Wet the cardboard and lay it on top of the bedding. Worms love cardboard and it will break down in a few months.

Step 7: Set the lid *without holes*, upside down, in the spot where you want your compost. Choose a well-ventilated area such as a laundry room, garage, or under the kitchen sink. The upside-down lid will catch runoff—"worm tea"—which is a great liquid fertilizer.

Step 8: Place bricks or short lengths of wood on the upside-down lid. Then set the bin with worms on the bricks.

Step 9: Feed your worms slowly at first. As the worms multiply, begin to add more food. Gently bury the food in a different section of the bin each week, under the cardboard. The worms will follow the scraps around the bin. Burying the food scraps will help keep fruit flies away. Be sure to keep the lid (with holes) on your bin to keep flies away and to keep worms from escaping.

Step 10: When the first bin is full and there are no recognizable food scraps (this is important), place new bedding material in the second bin and place the bin directly on the compost surface of the first bin. In

one or two months (patience is required) most of the worms will have moved to the second bin in search of food. Now the first bin will contain (almost) worm free "vermicompost." You can gently lift out any worms that remain and place them in the new bin, or include them in the garden with your compost.

Feeding Your Worms: What do worms like to eat? Feed your worms a vegan diet. Most things that would normally go down the garbage disposal can go into your worm bin. You will notice the worms will eat some foods faster than others. Worms have preferences just like us.

Worms LOVE	Worms HATE
bread and grains	dairy products
cereal	fats
fruits	meat
tea bags	feces
vegetables	oils

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

I want to be a dogfish

and catch a leaping catfish

with whiskers as long as the stream.

And I want to be

the rain trickling down on the world

telling it it's springtime. — Noah Frank, Grade 2, Lakeshore Elementary School, California

IN TODAY'S SESSION... Children listened to a magical, bedtime story by Kim Stafford, "We All Got Here Together," which offers a mystery-filled explanation for beginnings. Drawing on the story's bubble and rain themes, the children imagined their own story and made rain sticks. The children learned about our first Unitarian Universalist Source—in child-friendly words, "The sense of wonder we all share."

When you read the Source, it is easy to see why it needs simplification:

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.

Children heard these words:

Today we talked about things we see, hear, or touch in nature that can make us feel awe and wonder. Our own, personal feeling inside of awe and wonder is one of our Unitarian Universalist Sources that points us to love.

And we read together:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the sense of wonder we all share.

By opening children's minds to spirituality, we hope they will develop spiritual traits we cultivate in ourselves: love, compassion, and service; connection with the earth; and a sense of purpose and place in the universe.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. We used the word "awesome" to suggest the transcendence of life and how nature's wonders sometimes strike us. Consider using the word "awesome" as you share moments of awe with your child. You might ask:

- Did anything awesome and wonderful happen at school today? Something that took you by surprise and made you glad?
- Are you ever just amazed at how leaves come out on a tree every spring? Do you think that's

awesome? (Of course, you may get a very practical and scientific response to this.)

A Family Game. Play "I Spy" outdoors: One player says "I spy, with my little eye, something... (say the color of the item you are looking at)". The others guess the item. If you live in an urban setting, go to a park and try to spy items from nature as well as human-made items. If you have a backyard, try to spy items that are not usually noticed, such as a small bird—even a squirrel, a nut, or something else seen so constantly that you may take it for granted. Perhaps try to find a nest or a small hole in the ground that might be used as a burrow for a small animal. Use this game to promote awareness of awesome nature around us.

A Family Ritual. If you do not already do so, light a chalice (which can be as simple as a tea light) before your family dinner. Use simple words to set a theme for each meal. "Give thanks and praises" (Bob Marley) is a good example. Or, have children write their own.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's

sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, can connect with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite the children to come forward one at a time. Of course, anyone may pass. If the children do not know each other very well yet, or a new person is visiting, have everyone say their name before they begin for the group to repeat back. As children share, model listening respectfully and without comment.

Variation

Instead of inviting children to share joys and concerns, posit a question each child can answer briefly. For example, a question to fit this session might be "What have you seen or heard or felt that was awesome?"

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that may arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, UU Source Constellation – [Our Sense of Wonder](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – Our Sense of Wonder](#) (included in this document)

- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how you can incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Handout 1, UU Source Constellation – Our Sense of Wonder, for all participants plus one extra for the Night Sky.
- Print out Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet — Our Sense of Wonder.
- Using Leader Resource 1 as a guide, use star stickers to mark the heart-shaped constellation on one copy of the handout: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Tell participants:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask participants if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Say in your own words:

Today we are talking about the sense of wonder we all share. We are talking about times that are awesome and wonderful. Times when we feel glad to be alive and a part of nature. Have you ever been awestruck by the color of the sky? Or the smell of a flower? Maybe it's just how much you love your mom or dad or how much they love you. Maybe it's the way you feel about your dog or cat. Maybe running is awesome to you, or swimming, or maybe reading a story.

Give the children time to think. Then, distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say:

Unitarian Universalists think it's important to learn from a sense of wonder—the awesome things that we can't explain. We have a

constellation named in honor of this Source. It's shaped like a heart to show how awesome things can make us feel love. Can you find the heart constellation in our Night Sky?

Give them time to try to find the heart. As children find it, let them show it to you by tracing the heart shape with their finger on their own handout.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the heart shape by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they may take their Awe and Wonder constellations home.

Say, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn a sense of awe and wonder we all share.

Light the chalice.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: BUBBLE SCULPTURE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- **Bubble solution:** a large bowl and a spoon; and 4 1/2 cups of water, 1/2 cup of dishwashing soap (preferably Dawn), and (optional) 1/2 cup of corn syrup or glycerin
- Drinking straws, preferably paper, for all participants, plus a few extra
- Shallow trays, one for every two participants
- Newspapers and/or rags to cover floors

Preparation for Activity

- Make bubble solution: Combine water and dishwashing soap in a large bowl. Stir well, but do not shake. For stronger bubbles, add corn syrup or glycerin. You can make this solution two or three days ahead of time.
- Set trays and straws at work tables.
- Cover floor around work tables with newspapers and/or rags.
- Fill each tray with about 1/4 inch of bubble solution.

Description of Activity

If you have time, use this activity to lead into or out of Activity 2, Story – We All Got Here Together.

Invite participants to join you at a work table. Explain that bubbles are magical; that the story they will (or did) hear today has to do with bubbles and where we came from. Say, in your own words:

The story does not answer questions. The story just lets us wonder—like the bubbles make us wonder—about how we come to be.

Dip one end of a straw in the solution. Hold the straw slightly above the surface and gently blow a bubble.

Demonstrate how to blow bubbles within bubbles: Remove the straw from the bubble. Make sure the straw is wet and then gently insert it in the top of the bubble, so it enters at a 45-degree angle. Blow gently to form another bubble. Repeat to form more bubbles in bubbles. Awesome!

Ask, in your own words:

Do you wonder why a bubble can burst so easily, and yet you can insert the straw back in and still not break it? It is fragile and strong at the same time. I sit here and look at this bubble and I think, "This is awesome!"

Invite the children to experience the awesomeness of bubbles with one or two partners to make a "bubble sculpture" that has bubbles within bubbles.

Share these tips:

- If you get a lot of small bubbles instead of one big one, you are probably blowing too hard.
- Finish your bubble with a quick twist of your blowing straw, so you don't burst the bubble when you take out the straw.

This activity can get messy and slippery. Leave time for volunteers to help clean up.

Including All Participants

Children with low tolerance may get frustrated if they cannot form a bubble sculpture after a few tries. Consider having a bottle of bubble solution with a blowing wand available.

It may helpful to establish rules of behavior prior to doing this activity, such as "We blow into straws only when they are in the solution."

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 2: STORY: WE GOT HERE TOGETHER

"We Got Here Together," by Kim Stafford, is reprinted by permission of the author from *We Got Here Together*, by Kim Stafford, illustrated by Debra Frasier, published by Harcourt Brace in 1994. Copyright 1994 by Kim Stafford.

Invite children to act out the story when you read "Now you get settled into bed." Encourage them to imagine the bubble coming from the fish and turning into the sky and the rain turning into the ocean.

Now you get settled in bed, I'll tell you a story.

You get cozy, and I'll start.

Once, in the deepest ocean, there was a little fish.

That fish opened its mouth and let a bubble go.

At the same moment a cloud high over the ocean let a raindrop go.

Way down in the deep that bubble started its journey to the surface, and high in the sky that raindrop started down.

Would you be afraid? I might be afraid. But nothing can hurt a raindrop, nothing can hurt a bubble. They belong where they're going.

For a long time that bubble drifted up through the water without a thought, bumping a seal belly, bouncing off a seaweed leaf, rolling through the blue, floating toward that big ceiling of light.

And the raindrop was spinning dizzy down, sliding along the shoulder of the wind, tumbling toward that silver field of water.

They took so long, falling down and soaring up, they grew. The bubble swelled and filled with light. The raindrop gathered ready and round.

Somehow they were aimed for the exact same moment in time, and they got there together.

Then they were—what were they?

The bubble opened and was the whole sky.

The raindrop opened and was the whole ocean.

There they were—sky and ocean turning right where they belonged.

And you and I?

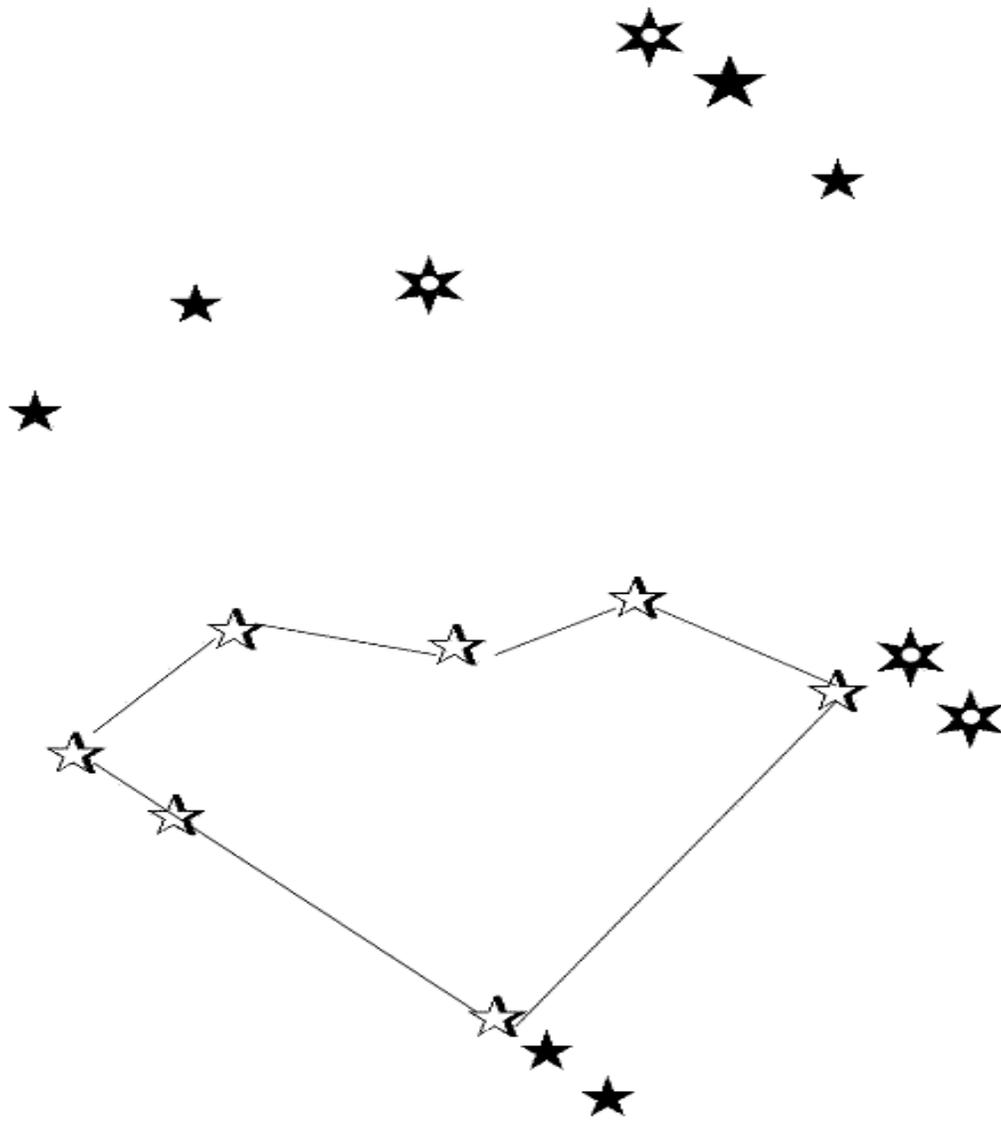
We got here together, too, didn't we? We got here safe, in the silver light, where we belong.

(Sound the rain stick to indicate the story is over.)

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 2:
HANDOUT 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION – OUR SENSE OF WONDER**



**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 2:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION ANSWER SHEET –
OUR SENSE OF WONDER**



The sense of wonder we all share.

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 2:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: SOURCE STAR – OUR SENSE OF WONDER**



FIND OUT MORE

The website [Henry Hikes](http://www.henryhikes.com/) (at www.henryhikes.com/) has adaptations of stories and reflections by Henry David Thoreau, geared toward children, along with colorful illustrations.

The [UUA Bookstore](#) offers many books on Transcendentalism, including *True Harvest: Readings from Henry David Thoreau for Every Day of the Year* (Skinner House, 2005) and *A Dream Too Wild: Emerson Meditations for Every Day of the Year* (Skinner House, 2003), both collected by Barry M. Andrews.

SESSION 3: WE LOVE TO DISCOVER

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Science and religion are two windows that people look through, trying to understand the big universe outside, trying to understand why we are here. The two windows give different views, but both look out at the same universe. Both views are one-sided, neither is complete. Both leave out essential features of the real world. And both are worthy of respect. — Freeman Dyson, physics professor emeritus at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, in a speech accepting the 2000 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion

In this session participants explore our fifth Source, which "counsels us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science." In children's language, reason means we listen to what others say, pay attention to what we ourselves see, hear, and feel, and try to figure out what is true. The story "Dinosaur Bones in New Jersey" shows how the use of reason and science led to the knowledge that the earth is older than the Bible implies, and human life much newer. Participants explore reason and science as means to answer one of the ultimate religious questions, "How did we get here?" In Activity 1, Facts, Theories, and Beliefs, participants practice discerning the difference between what can be proved true in the world and what is believed to be true. In Activity 3, Taxonomy, participants classify objects based on their commonalities. Alternate Activity 4, Who Gets Eaten? introduces the theory of natural selection in an active way. All the activities engage discovery through reasoning.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the fifth Source of Unitarian Universalism, "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"
- Strengthen a love of learning and discovery as part of our Unitarian Universalist identity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify the fifth Source of Unitarian Universalism
- Practice using reason to find answers
- Explore how science helps us research and understand our world
- Consider the theory of evolution and how it relates to facts and beliefs.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	7
Activity 1: Facts, Theories, and Beliefs	15
Activity 2: Story – Dinosaur Bones in New Jersey	13
Activity 3: Taxonomy	20
Faith In Action: Tree of Life Bulletin Board	30
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation – Reason and Science	10
Alternate Activity 3: Making Fossil Imprints	30
Alternate Activity 4: Who Gets Eaten?	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

As you center yourself, think about how you use science and reason in your own life. How has reason helped you come to conclusions about your faith. How has science helped you shape your spiritual life? Read this passage and ponder its meaning for you.

I Say It Touches Us

I say that it touches us that our blood is

sea water and our tears are salt, that the
seed of our bodies is scarcely different
from the same cells in a seaweed,
and that the stuff of our bones is like the coral.

I say that the tide rolls in on us, whether
we like it or no, and the sands of time
keep running their intended course.

I say we have to go down into the wave's trough
to find ourselves, and then ride her swell
until we can see beyond ourselves into
our neighbors eye.

I say that we shall never leave the harbor
if we do not hoist the sail.

I say that we have got to walk the waves
as well as solid ground.

I say that anyone who goes without
consciousness of this will remain
chained to a rusty anchor.

May the journey find us worthy. Amen.

— By Marni P. Harmony, in *Day of Promise: Collected
Meditations*, Kathleen Montgomery, editor (Skinner
House, 2000, 2001; copyright UUA)

SESSION PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Tree of Life Coloring Sheet](#) (included in this document)
- Markers or crayons

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Place coloring sheets (Handout 1) and crayons/markers on work tables.

Description of Activity

This activity is appropriate when participants do not arrive in a group but arrive individually before the session begins.

Welcome children as they arrive. Invite them to sit down and fill the branches of a Tree of Life coloring sheet with all the life they know of that shares Earth with us. A second co-leader should greet new parents and explain the plans for the day.

Give children time to share what they have drawn, before you begin the session.

Including All Participants

This is an excellent time for co-leaders to notice the abilities and temperament of each child. Note how they respond to you. Are they shy and reticent? Are they anxious and jumpy? Invite a parent to share any concerns and pertinent information, including information about children's allergies. Do you have a sign-in sheet? As the children settle in, co-leaders should review the names of the children attending and share any issues that may need special attention during the session.

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.
- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Referring to the Night Sky display, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other people all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a

GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind participants, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about how Unitarian Universalists use science and reason to decide what we believe about who we are and where we came from.

Has anyone here talked about evolution at school? Evolution is an idea that hundreds of thousands of years ago, human beings' ancestors were earlier animals that lived on earth before us. Who knows about Charles Darwin? Did you know he was a Universalist? He is the person who first described what he called "natural selection." The facts he discovered about nature helped him think of his theory of evolution.

Today we will hear a story about dinosaur bones. It is also a story about how reason and science help us know who we are and where we come from. When fossils of dinosaurs were found, people did not know what they were at first. Some thought they must be from animals mentioned in the Bible. People who believed in the Bible believed God created the earth, then all the animals, and then God created human life. But, the Bible does not mention any dinosaurs. Scientists began to realize the earth was a lot older than the Bible said it was, and the Bible might not have all the facts about where human beings came from.

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and the song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid a fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: FACTS, THEORIES, AND BELIEFS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [Fact, Theory, or Belief?](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Write each statement from the left-hand column of Leader Resource 2 on newsprint. Leave enough space next to each statement to write "fact," "theory," or "belief." If you like, add your own fact, theory, or belief statements. Post the newsprint.

Description of Activity

This activity engages participants to analyze how they know what they know about the world around us.

Say, in your own words:

Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution shocked some people in the 19th century. Many people believed God made the first human beings. They believed this because the Bible said so, and they believed in the Bible. When Darwin wanted to find out where human beings came from, he brought in more than beliefs. He brought in science, to find out facts, and reason, to understand what those facts might mean.

A "fact" is a piece of information we can test or prove to show it is true.

A "theory" is an explanation of facts, based on careful reasoning. It might, or might not, be true.

A "belief" is a statement of faith about what is true, even though you cannot prove it.

Explain, in your own words:

The word "theory" usually refers to science, while the word "belief" often refers to religion. A scientist is convinced a theory is correct because their reasoning tells them that theory is the best way to explain known facts. A

religious person holds a belief because they have faith it is true.

A religious belief can never be proved—or disproved. Even a theory can only be confirmed, that is, people can agree that it might be true. A theory cannot be proved. Only a fact can be proved.

Indicate the statements you have posted on newsprint. Read each statement aloud and lead the group to decide if it is a fact, a theory, or a belief.

When the list is finished, process with these questions:

- Why are facts important? (Point out that when we know it is a fact that germs cause colds, we can wash our hands and cover our sneezes to prevent germs from spreading.)
- Why are theories important, even if we cannot prove them?
- Why are beliefs important, even if we cannot prove them?

Say, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from reason and science. Science helps us know facts. We use reason to make theories about what those facts mean. Reason and science help us find out more about our world. Unitarian Universalists believe that the more we understand about our world, the better we know how to use our love. Our beliefs also help us: We cannot prove that love will guide us, but, we have faith it is so.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – DINOSAUR BONES IN NEW JERSEY (13 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Dinosaur Bones in New Jersey](#)" (included in this document) "
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story, such as a variety of animal figures, including dinosaurs, or pictures of amoeba or one-celled animals
- A rain stick, or another instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover

- Optional: Fidget basket (see Session 1, [Leader Resource 4](#), (included in this document) Fidget Objects)

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

Briefly name the various objects. Ask a wondering question about each one, such as "Is this an animal or a plant? Is this predator or prey?"

As items come back to you, display them on the table. Then say, in your own words:

I am going to share a story that tells something about the beginning of life. I'm sure you have all heard of dinosaurs. Who has heard of evolution? Evolution is how science explains how dinosaurs are connected to us. Evolution is science based on reason and a perfect way for us to explore our fifth Unitarian Universalist Source, "the use of reason and the discoveries of science." Reason is a way we think about things. An example would be,

if we see clouds in the sky, we can use reason to determine that it might rain.

Now remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. In a calm voice, say, in your own words:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime or other instrument. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story "Dinosaur Bones in New Jersey."

Use the rain stick again to indicate the story is over. Then, process with these questions:

- Did you discover something new listening to this story?
- Why do you think Mr. Hopkins didn't care much about the giant bones in his backyard?
- Why do you think his friend, Mr. Foulke, did care? What was the difference between these two men?
- Dinosaurs were quite different from us. In what ways were they the same as us—and how do you know? (Affirm that from reason and science we know dinosaurs lived on earth like we do—they breathed air, they needed food to live, etc.)
- Have you heard about evolution before? Where?

Say, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists we understand we are connected to each other and the earth by an interdependent web of life. This story is one way to see how this web began, way before we were born.

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the Fidget Basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "One person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 3: TAXONOMY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Different small objects — about 20
- A pad of sticky notes or a pile of index cards (about 20)
- Pencils
- A large sheet of poster board or newsprint, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Look in a variety of places for small objects. Wander outside and collect items such as twigs, dead bugs, parts of plants, and nuts. Include indoor objects, too, such as hair, ornaments, game pieces, erasers—whatever you can find. Choose items intentionally, taking into consideration the make-up and disposition of your group.
- Spread the small objects on a table.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What is it made of?
 - What color is it?
 - Is it edible or not edible?
 - Does it have legs?

Description of Activity

This activity gives children practice applying the use of reason to the observable world.

Tell the children they will work together to group different objects into categories. Say:

Taxonomy is the science of classifying things into related families and groups. The Swedish naturalist Carolus Linneaus created a chart of all animals and plants that was so well

organized scientists still use it today. We are going to practice taxonomy now by classifying the objects on the table.

Have participants choose an object to classify first. Have a volunteer or co-leader write the name of the object (in all caps) on a sticky note or index card and write down the group's answers to each question you have posted. For example, the answers for a PENCIL might be wood; yellow; not edible; no legs.

Set the first object aside, and ask the group to choose another object. Repeat the process, completing a sticky note for each object.

As a group, arrange the notes into groupings that make sense. Start by putting the notes for all the plastic things together, the notes for red things in another group, and the notes for edible things somewhere else. The questions will begin when you sort an object, for example, that is both red and plastic. Invite the children to suggest how you can arrange the notes to show that object belongs in both groups. Keep doing this until everyone is satisfied that they are arranged in the best possible way, so that similar categories and objects are near each other. This activity requires consensus. Lively discussion may arise as to the arrangement of objects.

Follow-up with questions:

- What did you discover?
- Did you have to have a reason for placing something under a heading?
- Did reasoning help to sort things out?
- In what ways have you used reasoning in other places in your life?

Variation: Taxonomy Display

You may wish to create a display of the taxonomy the group created. Recreate the arrangement of notes on a poster. Or, match up the objects with their descriptions in a three-dimensional display. Attach the objects to the notes with tape or a glue gun. Use yarn to show similarities.

Including All Participants

Allow children to volunteer for the writing or reading roles in this activity; do not put children on the spot.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Source Star – Reason and Science](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers

- Taking It Home section
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 3, Source Star – Reason and Science. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Write the words for the fifth UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the use of reason and the discoveries of science.

- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather participants at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw an infinity sign (a figure eight, turned on its side) or a dinosaur to represent reason and science. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from Reason and Science" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we used reason and science to learn about our world, where we came from, and the things around us, as Charles Darwin and other scientists have done before us. This Source points us to love through learning about our world. Each time we meet in Love

Will Guide Us we will talk more about love and the Sources of our Unitarian Universalist faith.

Indicate the fifth Source words you have posted on newsprint. Invite the children to follow along quietly as you read aloud:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the use of reason and the discoveries of science.

Pause and invite volunteers to give an example of what that Source means.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: TREE OF LIFE BULLETIN BOARD (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Nature, science, and travel magazines that can be cut up (e.g. *National Geographic*, *Ranger Rick*)
- Scissors, including left-handed scissors
- Glue sticks or push pins
- Large sheets of green and brown construction paper

Preparation for Activity

- Collect magazines with pictures of animals that represent a wide variety, including the microscopic (one-celled animals) and the extinct (dinosaurs). You might also find and print out pictures from the Internet.
- Directly on a bulletin board that you and the children can easily reach, build a large construction paper-tree with roots, trunk, and branches.
- Set magazines and scissors at work tables.

Description of Activity

Participants combine their scientific understand of the beginnings of life with taxonomy by creating a Tree of Life bulletin board.

Invite participants to cut out pictures of animals. Be sure to include insects, small and unusual sea creatures, worms, birds, and people. Once you have a large selection, begin categorizing the animals. Ask questions such as, "Do spiders belong with insects, or should they be included with other eight-legged critters like crabs?" Let participants decide; the taxonomy need not be scientifically correct.

Once the group has determined categories, attach pictures to the tree on the bulletin board with glue sticks or push pins. Determine which pictures belong at the roots and which belong on branches.

Title the bulletin board "UUUs Love to Discover." At the bottom, attach the statement "We learn from the results of science and are guided by reason."

Including All Participants

If someone is not able to use scissors/post on the bulletin board, have them work with a partner who will cut out/post pictures they choose.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

Science and religion are two windows that people look through, trying to understand the big universe outside, trying to understand why we are here. The two windows give different views, but both look out at the same universe. Both views are one-sided, neither is complete. Both leave out essential features of the real world. And both are worthy of respect. — Freeman Dyson, physics professor emeritus at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, in a speech accepting the 2000 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion

IN TODAY'S SESSION... The children explored our fifth Unitarian Universalist Source, "the use of reason and the discoveries of science." They heard a story about how a 19th-century discovery of dinosaur bones in New Jersey helped prove the earth is older than claimed in the Bible. The group talked about how reason is a way we listen to what others say; pay attention to what we ourselves see, hear, and feel; and combine what we find to try to figure out what is true.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about... theology vs. science. Is there really a conflict between the notions of evolution and Divine Creation? Affirm for your children that Unitarian Universalism affirms science. The wisdom we gain using reason and learning from scientific discoveries is one Sources of Unitarian Universalist faith.

There are wonderful natural history museums around the country. If possible, go as a family (as opposed to a school field trip). Seek out displays that highlight evolution; pay close attention to birds and shells. Look for a timeline to help you show your children that evolution is a slow process that takes a very long time.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER.

Family Discovery. Read about [Michael Dowd and Connie Barlow](#) (at www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/2679.shtml), Unitarian Universalists who have traveled the country talking about the spirituality of evolution. Explore Michael Dowd further on his [Thank God for Evolution](#) (at thankgodforevolution.com/the-author/) website.

Books about evolution for children include:

The Tree of Life: The Wonders of Evolution by Ellen Jackson, illustrated by Judeanne Winter Wiley (Prometheus Books, 2004), the story children heard in our session today. Jackson's approach to evolution

has a spiritual quality, as do the wonderful illustrations.

Life on Earth: The Evolution by Steve Jenkins (Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2002).

Born with a Bang: The Universe Tells Our Cosmic Story by Jennifer Morgan (Dawn Publications, 2002).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites participants to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect.

You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite participants to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Variation

Instead of sharing their joys and concerns, invite children to light a candle and, if they wish, answer a question. A question to fit this session might be "What is something you learned in science (or, by using reason) that you thought was interesting?"

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION – REASON AND SCIENCE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [UU Source Constellation – Reason and Science](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – Reason and Science](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Handout 2, UU Source Constellation – Reason and Science, for all participants plus one extra.

- Print out Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – Reason and Science.
- Using Leader Resource 1 as a guide, use star stickers to mark the infinity symbol constellation on one copy of the handout: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Tell participants:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask participants if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Say in your own words:

Today we are talking about the "the use of science and reason to determine who we are and where we came from." This is our fifth UU Source.

Who knows about Charles Darwin? Did you know he was a Universalist? He is the person who first described what he called "natural selection." The facts he discovered about nature helped him think of his theory of evolution. Has anyone here talked about evolution at school?

Allow children to share the relevant information they know. Then, distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say:

We think it's important to learn from science. We use our minds to reason as we learn about our world. So, we have a constellation named in honor of this Source. It's shaped like an infinity sign, a symbol used in science. The infinity sign looks like a number eight turned on its side. Can you find it in our Night Sky?

Give them time to look for the infinity symbol. As children find it, let them show it to you by tracing the infinity shape with their finger on their own handout.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the infinity symbol by connecting the gold stars.

Tell them they make take their own Reason and Science constellations home.

Say, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from reason and science.

Light the chalice.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: MAKING FOSSIL IMPRINTS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- For fossil print clay: 1/2 cup of salt; 1 cup flour; 1/2 cup brewed coffee; 1 cup used coffee grounds (enough for four participants)
- Mixing bowl(s) and spoon(s), measuring cups
- "Fossils" to imprint such as chicken bones, twigs, seashells, acorns, and plastic toy dinosaurs (skin textures and footprints)

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether you will have participants make fossil prints, and/or hunt for and analyze fossil prints that have already been prepared. The clay should be imprinted soon after preparation. It dries in 24 hours.
- Prepare clay, multiplying quantities of the ingredients as needed to supply everyone in your group: Measure salt, flour, coffee, and grounds into a bowl. Stir together until well mixed. Turn the dough onto a large sheet of waxed paper and knead it until smooth.
- Make a fossil imprint: Break off a piece of clay large enough for the imprint you want to make. Roll it into a ball and use the heel of your hand to flatten it. Press the object(s) you wish to make a fossil imprint of firmly into the dough. Carefully remove the objects to leave the prints behind. Let your fake stone dry overnight and you have an imitation fossil!

Description of Activity

This activity replicates the way real fossil prints were created. The activity was developed by University of Michigan's [Reach Out!](http://www.reachoutmichigan.org/funexperiments/quick/fossilprint.html) (at www.reachoutmichigan.org/funexperiments/quick/fossilprint.html) project, which gives permission for anyone to use their materials but not to sell them. The Reach Out! project is dedicated to pairing mentors with children and youth.

A long time ago, plants, bugs, or animals left impressions in soft mud, which dried out and eventually became rock. Much of our knowledge

about ancient, extinct plants and animals comes from fossil prints. For example, fossil prints have shown us the texture of dinosaur skin and helped us trace the evolution of birds, since neither skin nor feathers are likely to survive as actual fossils, the way bones do.

Ask participants to identify what they have uncovered. Follow up with questions such as:

- Did you feel like a paleontologist (someone who looks for fossils)?
- Have you ever found a real fossil?

Including All Participants

Clay made with wheat products can be irritating to those with allergies. There are gluten-free clay products available.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: WHO GETS EATEN? (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Yarn, four different colors
- Scissors
- Timepiece (seconds)

Preparation for Activity

- Determine where this activity will take place. Outdoors is ideal, but not required. If inside, a large space that include other items (like toys) is preferred.
- Choose two colors of yarn that blend well with the environment where you will play this game, e.g. greens and browns for outdoors. Choose two other colors that are very bright and easy to spot.
- Cut the yarn into four-inch lengths, approximately 20 of each color. It's important that each color have the same number of pieces.
- Place the cut pieces of yarn around the space, tucking them into and around the area.

Description of Activity

This activity demonstrates natural selection by engaging participants in a scenario that requires

reasoning. The entire concept of natural selection may be difficult for young children to grasp; the main objective is to demonstrate that those individuals that blend with their environments are less likely to be caught by predators. More of the "blenders" tend to survive and therefore have an opportunity to reproduce.

Tell participants they are going on a hunt—a hunt for woolly worms. Say, in your own words:

All around the country, especially in the Northeast, we see caterpillars that are called woolly worms or woolly bears. They will become a moth, if they are not eaten. We're going to pretend that pieces of yarn are the caterpillars and you are birds! The caterpillars are all around this room. How many can you find?

IMPORTANT: Do not show them a sample! Let them discover the worms on their own.

Let them know that this is not a competition. You will collect all the woolly worms they each find. Give participants no more than 30 seconds to hunt for woolly worms. It's important that "predators" do not have enough time to catch all of the "prey". Show them the area they can search and set the timer.

Gather everyone together and collect the pieces of yarn. Have children sort them out by color. Together, count how many of each color were found.

Process the activity with these questions:

- What did we discover today?
- What would be the reason for finding more of one color and less of another? What colors of woolly worms were easy to find? What colors were difficult to find? Why?
- How does the yarn compare to real caterpillars? Why do you think it would be beneficial to blend with your environment?

Including All Participants

Participants with limited mobility can take a role in collecting, sorting, and counting the woolly worms others find.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 3: STORY: DINOSAUR BONES IN NEW JERSEY

By Gail Forsyth-Vail

About two hundred years ago, lots of people in North America and in Europe were discovering all kinds of wondrous things in the ground. They found coal to burn for fuel, iron for making machinery, nickel for creating tools and candlesticks and other useful items. They found marl, a grey, clay-like substance full of calcium carbonate, garden lime, which made wonderful fertilizer. Those who owned the pits where such items were located counted themselves lucky and hired workers to dig up those resources and bring them to market to sell.

Diggers, especially those working in marl pits, found interesting things stuck in the thick, grey substance bits of seashell, pieces of bone, and gigantic skulls that bore a resemblance to the small lizards that now ran in the fields. When they brought those curiosities home to show their children and neighbors, people were fascinated. It was clear that the marl pits had once been at the bottom of the ocean. They concluded that the skulls and bones must be left over from an ancient flood described in the Bible. The Bible story told of how all creatures, except for those in Noah's ark, had drowned. Surely such strange bones could only have come from that ancient flood!

But there were those who realized that something didn't quite fit with the flood story. They collected specimens—and wondered.

Let's move forward in time to 1839 in Haddonfield, New Jersey, William Hopkins hired workers to dig up marl in a stream bed in his backyard. As they dug, they cast aside shells and bits of bone. What was really important was removing the rich grey clay and getting to market to be sold. And then they encountered something extraordinary in the marl pit! They found a skeleton, complete except for the skull, of

a giant lizard-like creature, a creature as tall as a house! The workers told Hopkins about their discovery. "Leave it be and dig around it," was his reply.

Three years later, a scientist in England looked at the pieces of bone he had collected from marl pits in his area and came forth with an astonishing theory. He concluded that the bits of bone proved that there were once great lizards—"dinosaurs" that roamed the earth. "Impossible!" "What folly!" "You have too big an imagination!" People all over the world criticized the new idea. According to the Bible, God created all species in the same week, about six thousand years ago. Giant lizards were nowhere mentioned in the Bible, so *they must not have existed*.

The debate raged between those who thought that dinosaurs might have once roamed the earth and those who thought such an idea nonsense. Meanwhile, the skeleton remained in the marl pit in Haddonfield, New Jersey.

For twenty years, William Hopkins had a giant lizard skeleton the size of a house in a marl pit in his backyard, and he never gave it a second thought. Until one day, when he invited his friend William Foulke over for dinner. Foulke was a collector of fossils, small bits of bone and shell, and Hopkins wanted very much to impress him. He told the story of the skeleton in the backyard over dinner that night in 1858. Foulke wasted no time. He was back the next day to view the find.

There it was in the marl pit- proof of the existence of dinosaurs. It was the first nearly complete skeleton to be found anywhere on earth. Its discovery made news worldwide!

Foulke arranged for workers to remove the skeleton from the pit and to exhibit the creature—named *hadrosaurus fouldii*—at the Philadelphia Museum of Natural History.

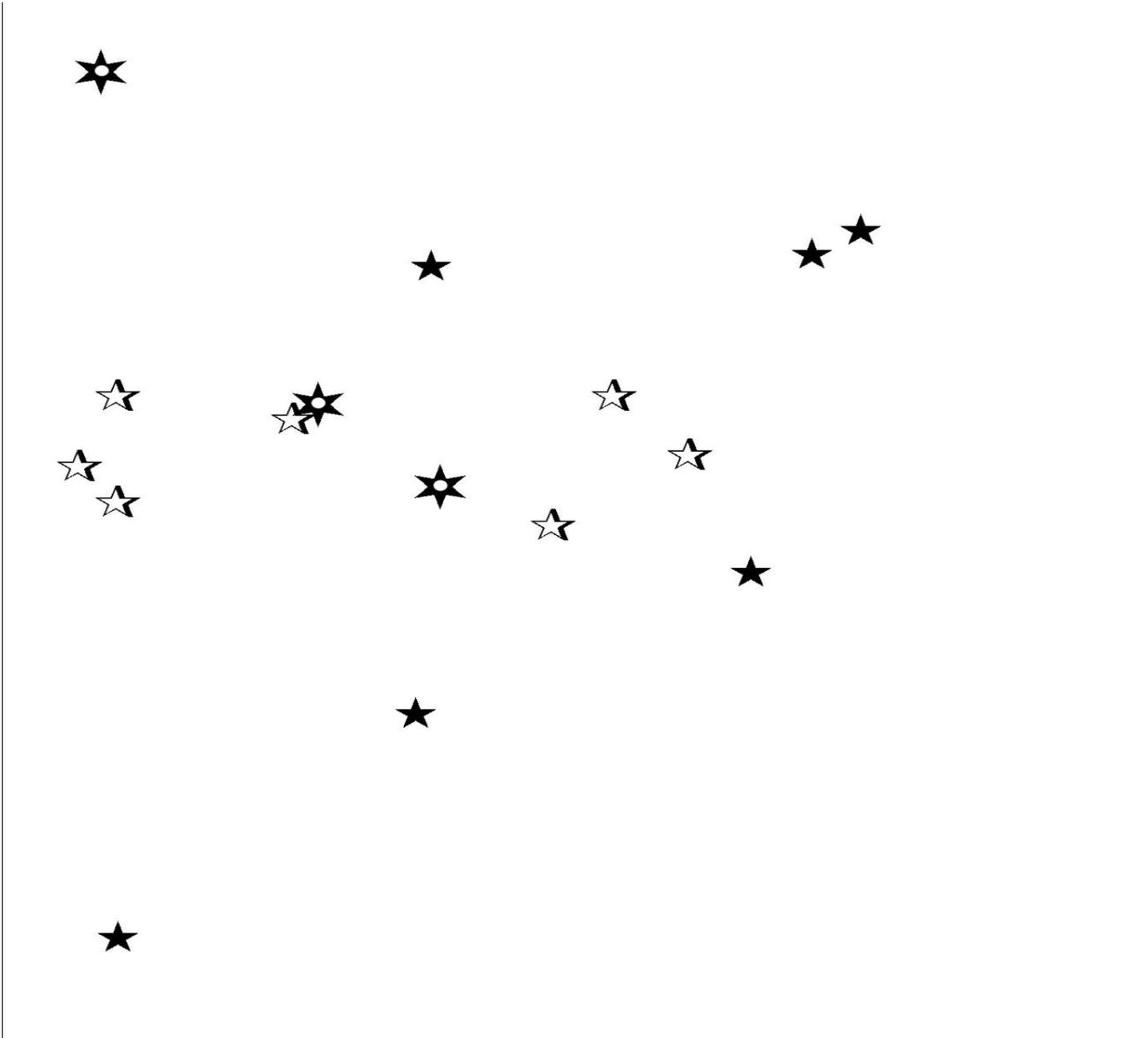
The existence of dinosaurs had been proven—and the race to find out more about these mysterious creatures had begun!

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 3:
HANDOUT 1: TREE OF LIFE COLORING SHEET**

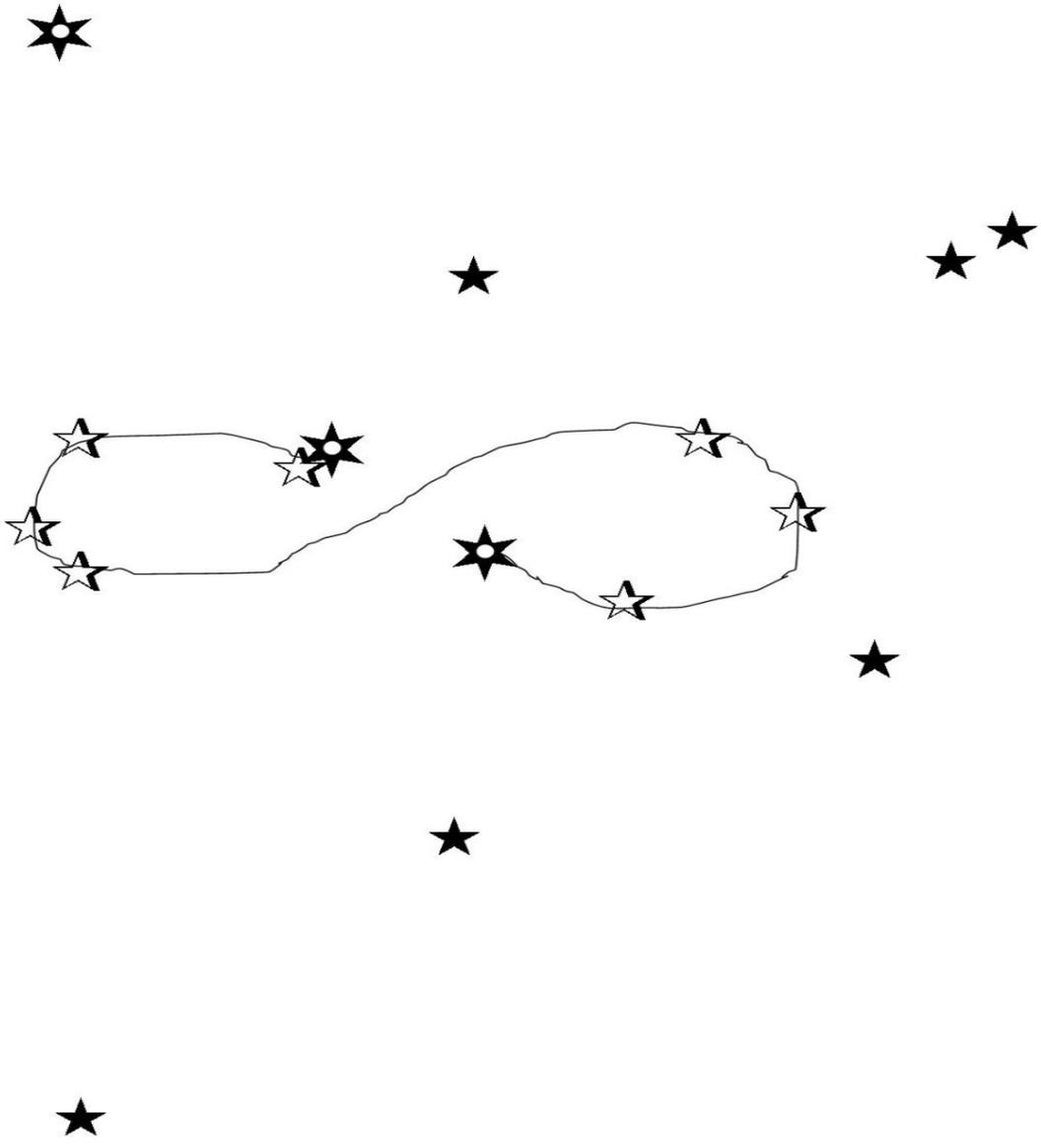
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**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 3:
HANDOUT 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION: REASON AND SCIENCE**



**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 3:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION ANSWER SHEET:
REASON AND SCIENCE**

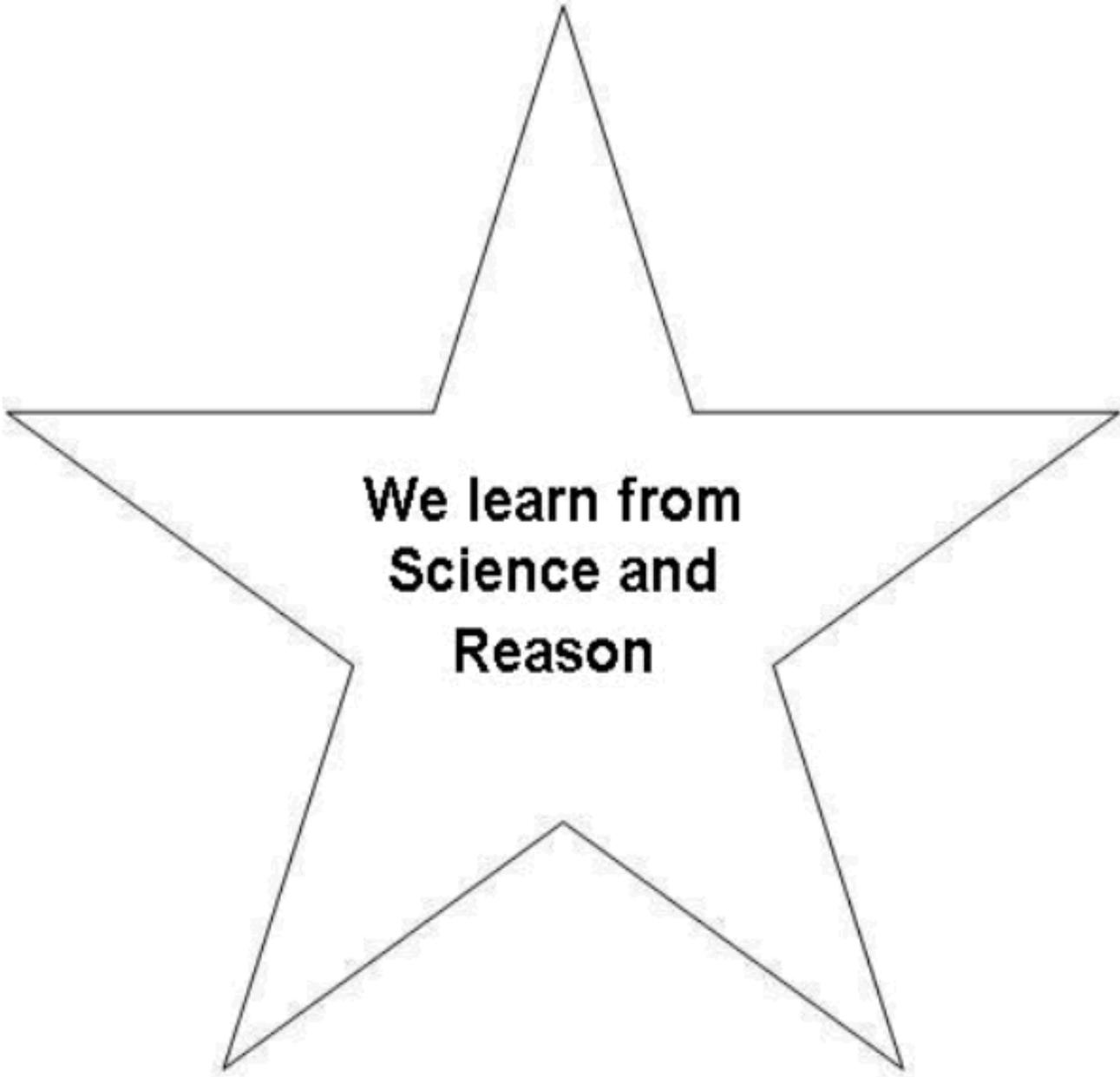


The use of reason and the discoveries of science

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 3: LEADER RESOURCE 2: FACT, THEORY, OR BELIEF?

The earth is round.	Fact
Angels are real.	Belief
It is raining outside.	Fact
Play time is important for children.	Theory
God protects us from bad things.	Belief
Germs make people get sick.	Fact
We can catch a cold from not wearing a jacket in cold weather.	Theory
People are good inside their hearts.	Belief

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 3:
LEADER RESOURCE 3: SOURCE STAR: REASON AND SCIENCE**



FIND OUT MORE

Charles Darwin

We cannot talk of evolution without mentioning Darwin. Charles Darwin was a Unitarian. His theory on natural selection was incomplete 150 years ago, but today, many questions have been answered. The theory of evolution generated new scientific disciplines, such as the study of DNA, that further our understanding of life. No one who respects science denies the importance of Darwin's discoveries.

Books and Online Resources

On the Origin of Species: The Illustrated Edition by Charles Darwin (Sterling, 2008), released to honor the 150-year anniversary of the book's original publication

The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design by Richard Dawkins (W. W. Norton & Co., 1996)

The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature by Steven Pinker (Penguin, 2003)

The Flamingo's Smile: Reflections in Natural History by Stephen Jay Gould (W. W. Norton & Co., 1987)

The Selfish Gene by Richard Dawkins (Oxford University Press, 2006)

The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal by Jared Diamond (Harper Perennial, 2006)

[The Encyclopedia of Life](http://www.eol.org/) (at www.eol.org/)

Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5-Billion-Year History of the Human Body by Neil Shubin (Vintage, 2009).

SESSION 4: LOVE IN OUR CONGREGATION

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life. — Jane Addams, American social activist and 1931 Nobel Peace Prize recipient

The session focuses on the fourth Source of Unitarian Universalism, expressed in children's language as "Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves." Jesus called on his followers to live in service to those in need; this service strengthens community. Children hear a story of Jesus' life and explore the concept of community. Alternate Activity 3 offers an introduction to reading the Bible.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the fourth Source of Unitarian Universalism, "Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all other as we love ourselves"
- Introduce Jesus' teachings drawn from Christian scripture
- Explore the meaning of community, the importance of community in our lives, and the role of love in community.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify "Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all other as we love ourselves" as the fourth Source of Unitarian Universalism
- Recognize Hebrew and Christian scripture (the Bible) as texts related to the fourth Source
- Learn about the life of Jesus and Jesus' parables
- Identify communities to which they belong; express observations about what community means to them
- Optional: Interact with Christian scriptural text.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	7
Activity 1: Group Sculpture	18
Activity 2: Story – Meet Jesus	15
Activity 3: What is Community?	12
Faith In Action: Celebrating Community	
Closing	8
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation – Jewish and Christian Teachings	10
Alternate Activity 3: How to Use the Bible	15
Alternate Activity 4: Bookmarks – The Parable of the Mustard Seed	10
Alternate Activity 5: One Body	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Center yourself with your personal beliefs and the calling you have found, as a Unitarian Universalist religious education leader, to offer choices for our children. Recall our fourth Principle, "The free and responsible search for truth and meaning." Christianity, at times, brings up strong feelings for some Unitarian Universalists. Take a moment to realize Jesus' ultimate message to the world was love, and we offer love to our children every time we gather. Reflect on the love expressed by some followers of Jesus, including Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa. Take those positive thoughts to the gathering today.

SESSION PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint
- A variety of color markers or crayons

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange newsprint and markers or crayons on work tables.

Description of Activity

This activity is for congregations where participants do not arrive in a group but individually before the session actually begins, and the expectation is that children will arrive at different times. Welcome participants as they arrive and gather them in groups of three or four around newsprint and markers. Invite each small group to draw a picture together.

A second co-leader should greet any new parents and explain the plans for the day and any arrangements for pick up.

Including All Participants

This is an excellent time for co-leaders to notice the abilities and temperament of each child. Note how they respond to you. Are they shy and reticent? Are they anxious and jumpy? Invite a parent to share any concerns and pertinent information, including information about children's allergies. Do you have a sign-in sheet? As the children settle in, co-leaders should review the names of the children attending and share any issues that may need special attention during the session.

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have

the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.

- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Referring to the Night Sky display, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other people all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Jewish and Christian teachings are one of our Unitarian Universalist Sources. Today we are talking about Christian teachings, especially Jesus' message of love. Christianity is one of the many world religions we can learn from that offer this same message, "to love one another as we love ourselves."

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take time to teach the opening words and song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: GROUP SCULPTURE (18 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Clear an area where four or more children can arrange themselves in a group sculpture. Set up chairs for an "audience."
- Write a list of objects for the groups to "sculpt," such as typewriter, computer, car, bulldozer, sink, helicopter, food processor, shower, birthday cake, swing set, breakfast.

Description of Activity

A group must work together to create "sculptures" using only their bodies. Of course, teamwork and togetherness are the most important elements of success. The goal is to create community spirit.

Invite four or more participants to be a sculpture. Gather everyone else to be an audience. Explain that the small group will have a very short period (30 seconds to one minute is suggested) to create a sculpture and it must include everyone in the group. The sculpture can be moving or still. Tell the small group whether or not they can talk to each other; keeping the children silent while they make a sculpture is one way to invite a group's usual leaders to become followers and shy folks to participate more actively.

Call out an object from your list. Then count down the time. Say "stop" when time is up. Observe the result. Then call out the next object. Keep the pace swift. After calling out a half dozen or so, stop and give a big round of applause. Have the group switch with participants in the audience so others get a turn. Repeat, to give all who wish a turn in a sculpture group.

Follow up with these questions:

- Did everyone feel included in the activity? How did you feel included? Or, why did you not feel included?
- How did you decide who did what in the group?
- Do you think this activity would have been as much fun if each person did it individually?

Including All Participants

If someone is physically challenged, place them safely in the sculpture area and invite the group to create the sculptures including them.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – MEET JESUS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Meet Jesus](#) (included in this document) "
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as a small sheep toy, a Torah scroll (paper wrapped onto two scrolls and tied with cord), a small book of Christian scripture, a figure of Jesus, or a Christian cross
- A rain stick, or another instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover

- Optional: Fidget basket (see Session 1, [Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for participants who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind them where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one, e.g., "Who knows why sheep stay together in their flock? Does anyone know what a Torah is? Who is this a statue of? What religion uses a cross for their symbol? What is a symbol for Unitarian Universalism?"

As items come back to you, display them on the table. Then say, in your own words:

Today we are exploring the Christian message of love that comes from Jesus' teachings. Unitarian Universalists believe it is important to love all others as we love ourselves. That is why Jesus' teachings about love are part of our fourth Source.

Remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you

will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket. In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime or other instrument. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story. Read or tell the story slowly, like a meditation. Use the rain stick again to indicate that the story is over.

Then, ask:

- Is this the first time you've heard a story about Jesus?
- What part of the story did you like best?
- What did Jesus do when he was young?
- What are some of the stories (parables) he told? Do you know of any more?
- Do you think people need to be reminded to show love to others, or to be kind? Why?
- What are things we do as Unitarian Universalists that come from the teachings of Jesus?

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "One person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 3: WHAT IS COMMUNITY? (12 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Fidget basket (see Session 1, [Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- Post a sheet of newsprint and write "COMMUNITY" in the center.
- Look up a dictionary definition of "community."
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather the group and say, in your own words:

Jesus preached that community is important. He did so with his message of love. When he gathered his disciples to help him teach, Jesus was creating community.

Ask the children if they know what a community is. Can they give examples? A community can be a neighborhood, a school, a classroom at school, friends at work (for adults), Girl Scout or Campfire clubs, and sports teams. A community can also be a congregation or a religious education group.

Now ask the children: What is a community? What does it have? Invite them to think about the communities they gave as examples. List attributes that various communities share. Add, if they do not suggest:

- People who feel they have something in common
- People who work together
- People who play on a team together
- People who live near each other
- People who like/need/believe/care about some of the same things.

Ask participants to think of ways their group is a community. Add any new ideas to the list.

Use the list and the definition of "community" you found to summarize a definition of a community that

applies to this group. You may choose to talk about what it means to be part of a community: Why does someone choose to be in Scouts? Do they feel their neighborhood is a community? How? Why do we choose certain communities and not others? Can we be in more than one community (e.g., your family, your neighborhood, your school, your congregation)? Does everyone in a community have to think alike? Look alike?

Now ask the group:

- Do you think community was important to Jesus? How did he show his followers ways to love others in their community?
- Can you name an example of community from the story we told?

Including All Participants

For participants who may lose focus during this discussion, provide the fidget basket.

CLOSING (8 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Source Star – Jewish and Christian Teachings](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Jewish and Christian Teachings. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Write the words for the fourth UU Source on newsprint, and post:
Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from Jewish and Christian teachings that tell us to love all others as we love ourselves.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."

- Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.
- Set the cut-out Source Stars with pencils or markers on work tables.

Description of Activity

Gather participants at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw a cross and/or a heart to symbolize Jesus' teachings about love. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from Jewish and Christian teachings" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we learned from Christian teachings. Jesus showed his followers how to love others as they would love themselves. He showed how love helps a community and everyone in it.

Indicate the fourth Source words you have posted on newsprint. Invite the children to follow along quietly as you read aloud:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the Jewish and Christian teachings that tell us to love all others as we love ourselves.

Pause and invite volunteers to give an example of what that Source means.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: CELEBRATING COMMUNITY

Materials for Activity

- Archival photos and memorabilia from your congregation, such as pictures of members doing things together, old picture directories of congregational members, or a video of a children's play or a worship service

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange to provide a meal for a large number of people. Do you have access to a kitchen facility and equipment? Tables and chairs?
- Invite the children's families (or everyone in the congregation) to come together for a community supper. Pot luck is the best!
- Gather and display photos and other documents and artifacts from your congregational community. If you have a video, obtain and test the equipment to show it.

Description of Activity

The purpose of this Faith in Action is to celebrate community together. Photos and archival information will help people who have been involved for a long time to remember. Those who are new can learn the stories. By gathering to share a meal, the group "breaks bread" as community.

Before the meal, welcome everyone and explain that this is a Faith in Action activity in a program for 2nd- and 3rd-graders called Love Will Guide Us. Tell the group this gathering celebrates community while helping us recognize part of our fourth Source, Jewish and Christian teachings. Tell everyone the children learned that Jesus' message of love is one of the many sources that guide us as Unitarian Universalists.

Begin your meal together with a prayer. You might use this Christian blessing:

Thank you for the food we eat,
Thank you for the friends we meet.
Thank you for the birds that sing,
Thank you, God, for everything.

During the meal, encourage people to tell stories about the congregational community. Afterward, show the video and invite everyone to look at the display.

Close by gathering in a circle, holding hands (if comfortable) and saying:

Today we celebrate the spirit of community.
Thank you for all the moments and memories
we share together.

Including All Participants

Describe the room's accessibility when inviting guests.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life. — Jane Addams, American social activist and 1931 Nobel Peace Prize recipient

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the group learned about Jesus' life through a story, "Meet Jesus," based on passages from Christian scripture. They explored the fourth Unitarian Universalist Source, "Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all other as we love ourselves," learning that Jesus preached and demonstrated the importance of taking care of everyone in a community. The children identified communities they belong to, talked about what being a community means, and worked together on human sculptures.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

Jesus' message of love and his ability to use love to create community wherever he went. Explore the meaning of community in your own life. What communities are important to you?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Online, learn

about [Jesus and Christianity from a Unitarian Universalist perspective](https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/beliefs/christianity)

(<https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/beliefs/christianity>). Read UU perspectives in the pamphlet [UU Views of Jesus](https://www.uuabookstore.org/Assets/PDFs/3040.pdf) (<https://www.uuabookstore.org/Assets/PDFs/3040.pdf>), edited by Bruce Southworth. Read resources about UU Christianity from the [UU Christian Fellowship](http://uuchristian.org/) (<http://uuchristian.org/>) website.

The UUA Bookstore offers:

- *Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher* by Lynn Tuttle Gunney (Skinner House, 2007)
- *Unitarian Universalism Is a Really Long Name* by Jennifer Dant and Anne Carter (Skinner House, 2008)
- *What If Nobody Forgave and Other Stories* by Colleen McDonald (Skinner House, 2003).

A Family Ritual. If you read to your children on a regular basis, consider adding the parables of Jesus to your repertoire. You might read:

- *The Parables and Miracles of Jesus* by Mary Hoffman (Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2007)
- *Tomie dePaola's Book of Bible Stories*, Tomie dePaola (Putnam Juvenile, 2002).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find

instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.

- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite participants to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Variation

Instead of sharing their joys and concerns, invite children to light a candle and, if they wish, answer a question. A question to fit this session might be "Who are a group of people you like to spend time with? How are you connected to them?"

Including All Participants

If participants are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION —

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation — Jewish and Christian Teachings](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet — Jewish and Christian Teachings](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Handout 1, UU Source Constellation — Jewish and Christian Teachings, for all participants plus one extra.
- Print out Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet — Jewish and Christian Teachings.
- Using Leader Resource 1 as a guide, use star stickers to mark the Star of the David and the crucifix on one copy of the handout: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Say in your own words:

Today we are talking about our fourth UU Source, "Jewish and Christian teachings

which tell us to love others as we love ourselves."

Allow children to share the relevant information they know. Then, distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say:

We think it's important to learn from other religions. To help us, we have a constellation named in honor of this Source of learning. Connected stars look like a cross (for Christian teachings) and the Star of David (for Jewish teachings). Can you find them in our Night Sky?

Give them time to look for the Star of David and the crucifix symbol. As children find the symbols, let them show you by tracing the shapes with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the cross and star symbols by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they make take home their own Jewish and Christian Teachings constellations.

Say, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from Jewish and Christian teachings, especially the wisdom they can give us about love.

Light the chalice.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: HOW TO USE THE BIBLE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.)
- Optional: Extra Bibles for children to share
- Optional: A copy of the story "[Meet Jesus](#) (included in this document)"

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with finding a biblical passage (see Description).
- In the New Testament section, find the book of Luke. Locate and read the passages Luke 2:4-6 and 39-40.
- On a sheet of newsprint, write: Luke 2:4-6 and 39-40.

- Optional: Distribute Bibles at work tables for children to share.

Description of Activity

The story "Meet Jesus" refers to specific Christian scripture passages, and this activity gives children a primary source experience with the Bible. The activity is appropriate for children who know how to look up information in books and are familiar with reference tools such as a table of contents and a book index.

Show the children a Bible. Tell them the word "bible" comes from the Greek word for book. Look at the list of chapters at the beginning and point out the Hebrew scripture and the Christian scripture. You may tell the group some people refer to Hebrew scripture as the Old Testament and Christian scripture, which was written later, as the New Testament. Do not refer to Hebrew scripture as "the Jewish Bible."

Look at the first four parts of the Christian scripture, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Explain that these were four men who were disciples, or followers, of Jesus and that each section has stories about Jesus' life.

Indicate where you have written Luke 2: 4-6, 39-40. Demonstrate how to look up this part of Jesus' story in the Bible:

- "Luke" refers to the book of Luke, the third book in the Christian scripture section of the Bible.
- "2" refers to the chapter in the book of Luke where the passage is located. The number before the colon will always refer to the chapter of the book. In a Bible, the chapter numbers usually stand out because they are bigger and bolder than the rest of the text.
- "4-6" and "39-40" refer to the verses 4 through 6 and then verses 39 through 40 in chapter 2. In a Bible reference, the verses always come just after the colon.

If participants have Bibles, invite and help them to find the book of Luke, chapter 2, and verse 4.

When all have found the passage, read it aloud to the group. It is the story of Jesus' birth and may be familiar to them.

For further exploration, look up other passages cited in the story "Meet Jesus." Talk about using the teachings of Jesus, and his message of love and forgiveness. Use these questions, drawn from *Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher* by Lynn Tuttle Gunney:

- Do any of your friends talk about Jesus?

- Have you ever forgiven someone for something? What did it feel like?
- Is it hard to be nice to someone you don't like, or someone who is mean to you?

Including All Participants

Do not put children on the spot to read aloud from the Bible.

You may wish to make large-print handouts of the Christian scripture passages for children to read along silently.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: BOOKMARKS – THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Mustard seed packets
- For bookmarks: Heavy paper stock, glue that dries clear, craft sticks (popsicle sticks), contact paper (sticky on one side), a permanent marker, and (optional) thin ribbon and a single-hole punch
- Optional: Music, and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Cut paper into 2x7-inch strips, one for each participant plus a few extra.
- Cut contact paper into 4x7-inch pieces, one for each participant, plus a few extra.
- Optional: Choose music to play while children work, such as the song "Magic Penny" by Malvina Reynolds, and set up a music player.

Description of Activity

This is a wonderful lesson for a wide variety of learning styles, including kinesthetic. Playing music while children work on bookmarks can tap another mode of learning.

Open a mustard seed packet and show the children the seeds. Say, in your own words:

Have you ever seen a mustard seed before? The mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds. It is so small that if you held one in your hand and you dropped it, you would have a very hard time finding it. Even though the mustard seed is so small, it grows into a plant large enough for birds to stand on its branches and make nests in it. At least this was true for mustard plants in the time of Jesus.

When you look at this little mustard seed before planting it in the ground, you might think it would be impossible for a seed so tiny to grow into a tree.

Jesus talked about the mustard seed and he compared it to love. Love starts out very small at first. Nevertheless, when you see that the more you love, the more you get back in return. Love grows and grows, just like the mustard seed.

Tell the children the story about Jesus and the mustard seed is in Christian scripture, in the book of Matthew.

Distribute heavy paper stock, glue, and contact paper. Show children how to add a bit of glue to the paper stock and spread it thin (so it will dry quickly). Go around the room and sprinkle some mustard seeds on each paper. Give each child a piece of contact paper and invite them to wrap it around the bookmark once the glue is completely dry.

Optional: Use the permanent marker to write "Matthew 13:31" on each bookmark.

Optional: Punch a hole in the top of each bookmark and loop a piece of thin ribbon through the hole.

While everyone is making bookmarks, lead a discussion:

Do you like to read or listen to stories? Jesus loved to tell stories. Jesus' stories that have lessons in them are called parables. The mustard seed story was one of many he told people as he walked around the countryside.

Ask the group:

- Does anyone know another parable Jesus told? (Affirm: Good Samaritan; Prodigal Son)
- Why are stories a good way to learn?
- Do you have a favorite story you like to hear or read over and over again?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 5: ONE BODY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Mural paper and tape
- Black markers
- Color markers, crayons, or color pencils
- Optional: Construction paper, scissors, yarn, glitter, and glue

Preparation for Activity

- Tape a large sheet of mural paper to the floor in a large, open space.
- Set out materials to color or decorate the paper.

Description of Activity

Participants work together to create one large picture of a body. Ideally, the body will contain aspects of everyone in the group.

Invite children, one at a time, to pose by lying down on the mural paper while you trace one part of their body. Position each child so that, all together, the tracings will form one complete body. If the group is large, trace individual fingers of some children, or trace more than one complete body, so every child is represented.

When tracing is done, invite everyone to draw and color the body's hair and clothes. Ask the children to look at what others in the group are wearing and urge them to represent aspects of everyone's clothing and hair styles on the body. Optional: Use construction paper, glitter, and yarn to show clothes, accessories, and hair.

Display the mural in your meeting space.

Follow up with these questions:

- How did each person contribute to this project?
- Where can you see a place where you (individually) are represented?
- In what ways does our picture make sense, even though it combines a lot of different people?
- What are other times when you are asked to contribute as part of a group? Can you think of a time when you worked together as a group on something, and could see your contribution in the end result?
- Do you like being part of a group? Are you willing to accept help from others? Why or why not?

Including All Participants

Before you start the activity, make sure participants are comfortable getting on the floor for you to trace them. Ask each person for permission to touch them before you draw the body part. If touching is problematic, or any children cannot lie on the floor, post the mural paper on a wall and have everyone draw a part of a body freehand.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 4: STORY: MEET JESUS

Adapted by Lynn Tuttle Gunney from *Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher* by Lynn Tuttle Gunney (Skinner House, 2007), available from the UUA Bookstore.

This is the story of Jesus, a beloved teacher. Although he lived long ago, his lessons of love and kindness still bring hope and joy to people all over the world.

Jesus was born more than two thousand years ago in a land now called Israel. He grew up in the town of Nazareth with his parents, Mary and Joseph.

(Luke 2:4-6, 39-40)

Joseph and Mary raised Jesus in the traditions of their Jewish faith. Jesus learned to read the Torah, a sacred book that Jewish people believe was inspired by God. As Jesus and Joseph worked side by side in the carpentry shop, they talked about religion. Jesus felt a strong connection to God. He began to sense that God had called him to bring people a new message of love and forgiveness.

(Luke 14:6-7)

When Jesus grew up, he began to travel to countryside and tell people his ideas about living together in peace and harmony. Soon crowds gathered to hear him preach. People who were sick often came to him, and he helped them feel better. News of Jesus as a healer and teacher spread.

(Matthew 4:23-25)

Jesus did not do this work alone. A group of people traveled with him. He chose twelve friends, called disciples, to help him teach his ideas to others. Together they walked from village to village, sharing their new ideas with anyone who wanted to listen.

(Luke 8:1-3; Mark 3:13-14)

Jesus said we should love one another because God loves us. Jesus taught that God loves each of us, even when we make mistakes or do wrong.

Jesus often told stories, or parables, to teach people about God. One day he told this parable:

Once there was a shepherd who looked after a flock of one hundred sheep. When the shepherd noticed that one little lamb was missing, he was very upset. Leaving the flock, the shepherd searched high and low from dawn to dusk. When he finally found the lost lamb, he was filled with joy.

This parable helped Jesus explain how God loves and cares for each one of us, just like the shepherd loves and cares for each one of his sheep.

(Luke 15: 3-7)

Mothers and fathers brought their sons and daughters to meet Jesus. At first, the disciples waved them away, worried that the children would bother Jesus. But Jesus gathered the children around him and blessed them. "Let the little children come to me," he said.

Jesus believed we should love one another, even people who aren't our friends. "Treat everyone the way you would like them to treat you," he taught. We call this the Golden Rule.

Jesus taught his followers to look for ways to live together in harmony, to learn to forgive, and to settle arguments in a peaceful way. "Blessed are those who work to bring peace to the world," he said, "for they are children of God."

As he went from village to village, Jesus reached out to help sick people get well and to feed those who were hungry. He treated everyone with the same kindness—Jews and non-Jews, rich and poor, good and bad.

(Matthew 9:35, 15:32-38; John 4:7-10; Luke 19:1-7; Mark 2:15-17)

By now, Jesus had many followers, and not everyone was happy about that. Some people worried that the crowd might get out of hand and disturb the peace. This would get the leaders in trouble, since they were in charge of keeping the peace in their city.

Once the disciples knew the leaders disapproved of Jesus, they were worried. When they gathered for the Jewish holiday of Passover meal that year, Jesus blessed the bread and wine and gave thanks to God. "May peace be with you," he said to the disciples. Jesus asked them to remember him and his lessons, no matter what happened.

Today that meal is known as the Last Supper. In some churches, people share bread and wine as a way to remember it.

(Luke 22:8, 14, 17, 19-20; John 14:27)

After the Last Supper, things happened fast. Soldiers arrested Jesus, saying he was stirring up trouble. In those days, the worst criminals were punished by being nailed to a wooden cross and left to die. Jesus was punished in this terrible way.

(Mark 14:43, 46; Mark 15:15-29)

As Jesus suffered on the cross, his mother, Mary, and his friends gathered at his side. They knew Jesus had done nothing wrong. They were filled with sadness.

(John 19:25-27; Mark 15:40-41)

After Jesus died, his followers carried on his teaching and honored his memory. Jesus' message of love and kindness spread throughout the world. Years later, people who learned from his followers wrote down what they wanted people to know about Jesus' life and lessons. The best known of these stories later became part of the Christian holy book, the Bible.

Some people said that Jesus was the son of God and started the Christian religion with that belief. Some said that after Jesus died, God resurrected him, or brought him back to life. They celebrate his resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Many Unitarian Universalists say that Jesus was a wise and beloved teacher, whether or not he was the son of God. They say it is important to remember him because he taught us to treat people with love and to stand up for justice and peace. They believe that now, two thousand years later, we can still learn from the life and lessons of Jesus.

No one knows for sure what day Jesus was born, but many people celebrate his birthday on Christmas Day, December 25. This is a day of joy and generosity spent with family and friends, sharing food, singing songs, and giving gifts.

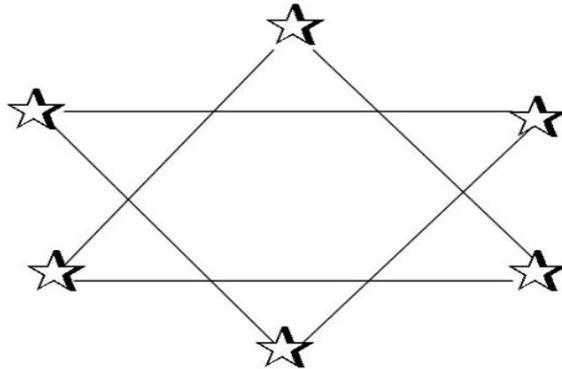
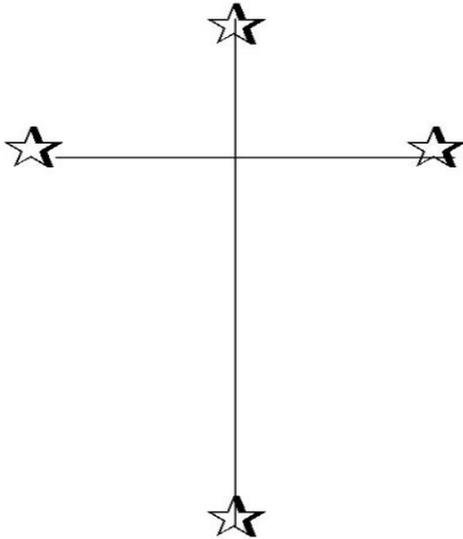
We can celebrate the life of Jesus on any day, by trying to live as he did, with full hearts, loving words, and kind actions.

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 4:
HANDOUT 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION – JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN
TEACHINGS**



1:6a

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 4:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION ANSWER SHEET –
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS**



1:6b

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 4:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: SOURCE STAR – JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN
TEACHINGS**



FIND OUT MORE

Online, learn about [Jesus and Christianity from a Unitarian Universalist perspective](https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/beliefs/christianity) (<https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/beliefs/christianity>). Read UU perspectives in the pamphlet [UU Views of Jesus](https://www.uuabookstore.org/Assets/PDFs/3040.pdf) (<https://www.uuabookstore.org/Assets/PDFs/3040.pdf>), edited by Bruce Southworth. Read resources about UU Christianity from the [UU Christian Fellowship](http://uuchristian.org/) (<http://uuchristian.org/>) website.

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- *Unitarian Universalism Is a Really Long Name* by Jennifer Dant and Anne Carter (Skinner House, 2008)
- *What If Nobody Forgave and Other Stories* by Colleen McDonald (Skinner House, 2003).

Read Logan Geen's blog post "[The Humanity of Jesus](http://new-uu.blogspot.com/2009/04/humanity-of-jesus.html)" (at new-uu.blogspot.com/2009/04/humanity-of-jesus.html) on the Unitarian Christian Universalist blog.

The [UUA Bookstore](http://www.uuabookstore.org/) (at www.uuabookstore.org/) offers *Our Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism* by John A. Buehrens and F. Forrest Church (Beacon Press, 1989). Highly recommended for leaders of this program, this book presents two essays focused on each of the six Sources of Unitarian Universalism.

Also available from the [bookstore](http://www.uuabookstore.org/) (at www.uuabookstore.org/):

- *Christian Voices in Unitarian Universalism: Contemporary Essays*, edited by Kathleen Rolenz (Skinner Books, 2006)
- *The Jefferson Bible: The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, by Thomas Jefferson with Afterword by Jaroslav Pelikan (Beacon Press, 1995)
- *Jesus for the Non-Religious*, John Shelby Spong (Harper: San Francisco, 2007).

SESSION 5: WE ARE LOVED, FLAWS AND ALL

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

When you are in the presence of the Holy Spirit, it is like sitting in front of a fire that does not burn you, but suffuses you with its qualities — its warmth, glow, and color. And as you are there, in the presence of the Spirit, you also become suffused with the divine attributes of compassion, gentleness, and love, without your doing anything about it except to be there. You are loved and you are held in this love. — Bishop Desmond Tutu, South African cleric and activist

This session focuses on the first Unitarian Universalist Source, "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and openness to the forces that create and uphold life," expressed in children's language as "the sense of wonder we all share." Participants consider human nature, with a focus on the wonder and awe of finding beauty in unexpected places. The session affirms that, although humans are imperfect creatures, with work and time and love we can turn our blemishes into strength and beauty. A story illustrates the concept, telling of a gem carver who transforms a deeply scratched diamond by crafting the scratch into a beautiful flower. Participants decorate wooden treasure boxes, incorporating the natural knots and blemishes into the design. We add a star to our Night Sky that says, "We learn from our sense of wonder."

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the first Unitarian Universalist Source, "the sense of wonder we all share"
- Teach that qualities which appear as faults can be turned into strengths and encourage participants to turn blemishes into beauty in their own lives
- Reinforce the idea that despite human failings we are all loved and loveable.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn the first Unitarian Universalist Source, "the sense of wonder we all share"

- Transform apparent flaws into beauty, strength, or other positive attributes, in a game and a craft activity
- Understand the possibility of beauty in imperfection through a story, "The Scratched Diamond"
- Explore ways a human characteristic we usually perceive as negative can also have a positive side, e.g., stubbornness can also be persistence.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	7
Activity 1: Game – Horrible/Beautiful	8
Activity 2: Story – The Scratched Diamond	10
Activity 3: Imperfect Treasure Boxes	25
Faith in Action: Wow Mosaics	45
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation – Our Sense of Wonder	10
Alternate Activity 3: Opening Geodes	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Read the story, "The Scratched Diamond."

When have you worked to turn scratches upon your own life into beautiful flowers? Consider the children in the Love Will Guide Us group. Allow yourself to name characteristics they display which you find challenging. How can some of these characteristics become strengths? For example, stubborn can be persistent; boisterous can be passionate; interruptions can be eager involvement; and reluctant can be careful.

Listen to the song "How Could Anyone Ever Tell You."
Imagine yourself singing this song to each and every
child in the Love Will Guide Us group. Try to fill your

heart with unconditional love for the children and bring
that focus into your time with the group.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.
- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](#) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Referring to the Night Sky display, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am

I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other people all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about the sense of wonder we all share. We think it's important to learn from moments in our lives when we feel a big "wow" in our hearts, when something is amazing or awesome, when something happens that we cannot explain or do not want to explain, and we are filled with a sense of wonder.

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and the song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid a fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: GAME – HORRIBLE/BEAUTIFUL (8 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This active game demonstrates how we can turn something horrible into something beautiful. Gather the children in a circle, standing or sitting depending on mobility issues in the group. Tell the participants that at the count of three they will use their bodies and faces, as quietly and quickly as possible, to make the most horrible pose possible. When you call "Freeze," they should hold their position silently and look around at everyone else. Give participants a moment to think of the posture they will adopt. Count to three and when participants seem to have some truly horrible postures, call out "Freeze!"

While the children are "frozen," encourage them to look around to see others' poses. Ask some volunteers to describe what makes their pose horrible.

Now say you will count to three and call "Freeze!" again. This time, they will change their posture and face into something beautiful. Give them a moment to think of an idea. Count to three, and when you see they have found their beautiful postures, call "Freeze!" Encourage them to look around. Compliment everyone on how beautiful they have made themselves!

Process this activity with questions such as:

- Was it hard or easy to turn the horrible poses into beautiful poses? How did you do it?
- How did it feel when you were making a horrible pose? A beautiful pose?
- I wonder what other horrible or ugly things we could make beautiful?

Including All Participants

If the group includes a blind child, invite the children to make horrible/beautiful sounds. To avoid loud chaos, have children take turns making a horrible sound first and then changing it into a beautiful sound.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – THE SCRATCHED DIAMOND (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Scratched Diamond](#) (included in this document)"

- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as gemstones, particularly crystals or gems with etchings on them, a broken item that can still be used, wood with visible knots, pictures of diamonds, or a geode
- A rain stick, or another instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times and prepare to read or tell it dramatically. You might use different voices to represent the king and the diamond cutter. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props; you might hold up a crystal and pretend to be the diamond cutter looking at it very carefully to inspect the flaw.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one.

As items come back to you, display them on the table. Remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket. In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime or other instrument. When the sound has gone, say, in your own words:

This story is based on one told about 300 years ago by a Jewish teacher, the Maggid of Dubno. He often taught his followers by telling them special stories called parables.

Tell the story "The Scratched Diamond."

Sound the instrument to indicate the story is over. Guide participants in a brief discussion, using the questions below.

NOTE: Children may describe their own anti-social behavior, such as bullying others or refusing to share. If this happens, talk with them about how we can use the human flaws in ourselves to learn to be more loving. For example, you might notice that the child you bullied is sad. This could help you develop empathy. In this way the bullying itself isn't made beautiful but it can be turned into empathy, which is. Or, bullies often have followers. Bullies can learn to be good leaders, leading people to do kind things instead of mean things. Mistakes, failures, or poor choices can all be understood as opportunities to learn.

Process the story with the following questions:

- I wonder if there was a point when the king, the diamond cutter, or someone else in the

story felt awe or wonder—like a big "wow" in their heart about something amazing.

- Have you ever had a time when you saw something get changed in a way that made you feel a big "wow" of wonder and awe?
- I wonder what it means to say a person can have scratches like a diamond?
- I wonder how people's scratches could be made beautiful? What are some "scratches" on us? What could they be turned into?
- Have you ever worked really hard to learn a new way to behave or to learn a new skill? Is that awesome?

To conclude, tell the group that Unitarian Universalists believe our own experiences can teach us new ways of seeing the world, new ways to love, and new ways to find beauty.

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "One person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 3: IMPERFECT TREASURE BOXES (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Unfinished wooden treasure boxes for all participants, available at craft stores such as A.C. Moore, [Oriental Trading Company](http://www.orientaltrading.com/) (at www.orientaltrading.com/), or Michael's
- Materials to decorate the boxes, such as watercolor or tempera paints and paintbrushes; color markers; and items such as sequins, glass gemstones, and pompoms, and craft glue
- Optional: "Treasures" to put inside finished boxes, such as crystals, tumbled rocks, and gemstones (available at New Age stores, craft stores, or online from [Crystal River Gems](http://www.crystalrivergems.com/) (at www.crystalrivergems.com/) or [Nature's](http://www.naturesemporium.com/tumbledstones.html)

[Emporium](http://www.naturesemporium.com/tumbledstones.html) (at www.naturesemporium.com/tumbledstones.html)) or mosaic gemstones (available at craft stores or from the [Beachcrafters](http://www.beachcrafters.com) (at [beachcrafters.com](http://www.beachcrafters.com)) website)

- Shallow trays
- Newspaper to cover tables
- Smocks for all participants

Preparation for Activity

- Purchase unfinished wooden treasure boxes for participants to decorate. Select boxes with a crack, knot, or other blemish in the wood. (Or, create blemishes by making random smudges with a marker.) If you cannot find wooden boxes or cannot afford them for all the children, use other unfinished wooden objects. Craft stores often have bins full of wooden shapes.
- Cover work tables with newspaper.
- Place decoration materials in shallow trays or containers and set on work tables with paint, paintbrushes, and glue for children to share.
- Set unfinished treasure boxes at work tables.
- Optional: Place "treasure" gemstones or crystals in a separate tray.
- Optional: Decorate a model treasure box, embellishing a knot or blemish as a design feature.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a sitting circle with an undecorated treasure box that has a visible knot or imperfection and a decorated treasure box, if you have made one. If you decorated your own, show the children what you did. Then show them the undecorated treasure box. Ask them briefly how its blemish could be turned into something beautiful as part of decorating the box. Be sure they understand that the point is not to hide the imperfection or paint over it, but to use it in making something beautiful.

When participants seem to understand the idea, have them go to the work tables, select a treasure box, and decorate it—turning its blemishes into beauty. Circulate among them while they work. Ask questions such as, "How could that crack be turned into something beautiful?" Tell participants they will have a chance to share their work with one another in the closing circle.

Optional: When they are done, have each child choose some gemstones or a crystal to place in their treasure box.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Participants' treasure boxes, decorated in Activity 3
- Session 2, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star — Our Sense of Wonder](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Session 2, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Our Sense of Wonder. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Write the words for the first UU Source on newsprint, and post:
Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the sense of wonder we all share.
- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather participants at work tables. Invite them to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with

their family. Suggest they draw a heart to symbolize the sense of wonder awesome things can make our hearts feel, or something awesome they have experienced that made their heart go "Wow!" As children work, attach a Source Star that says "We learn from our Sense of Wonder" to the Night Sky.

When participants finish, invite them to bring their decorated treasure boxes and gather in a circle, preferably seated near the chalice table. Invite each child in turn to point out how they turned an imperfection in the wood into something beautiful. Affirm each child, with words like:

Wow! It's awesome that you were able to turn that knot (or crack or smudge) into a beautiful ... (describe the design the child created.)

Ask participants what Unitarian Universalist Source they discovered today. Indicate the first Source words you have posted on newsprint. Invite the children to follow along quietly as you read aloud:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the sense of wonder we all share.

Take a moment to reinforce what the Source means: feeling a moment of "wow" in your heart. Invite volunteers to give an example. Say, in your own words:

Today we learned ways a flaw can be awesomely beautiful. As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from our own sense of wonder when things make us feel a "wow!" This Source says our own feelings of wonder can point us to love. Whenever we feel that sense of wonder, we can let that "wow" feeling guide us to love.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: WOW MOSAICS (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Mosaic stepping stone mix (available at craft stores such as A.C. Moore or Michael's)
- Mosaic glass chips (available at craft stores, such as A.C. Moore or Michael's) and shallow containers
- Mosaic plastic molds
- Bucket, paint stirrer, putty scrapers, and rubber gloves
- Water

Preparation for Activity

- Determine recipients for the mosaics, consulting with your minister or religious educator. You might use the mosaics to decorate a garden (for example, your Love Will Guide Us Garden, if you planted one in Session 1, Faith in Action) or give them as gifts to another group in your congregation. You might give the mosaics to church volunteers as a "thank-you" or to individuals who are ill or have recently experienced a loss.
- Plan a time when participants can place their mosaics in the garden or present them to recipients.
- Read mosaic stepping stone mix instructions and gather all the materials you will need, including water.
- Set mosaic glass chips in shallow containers at work tables.
- Optional: Work with your minister or religious educator to briefly present the mosaics during a worship service.
- Optional: For a multigenerational project, invite members of the congregation to join you in this activity.

Description of Activity

Participants create beautiful works of art out of small bits of glass, reinforcing the idea that something broken can be used to create something beautiful. With the glass they can make images representing things that fill them with awe and wonder, reinforcing our Unitarian Universalist Source, "The sense of wonder we all share."

Hold up a glass chip and say, in your own words:

This is a broken glass chip. We are going to use glass chips like this one to create something beautiful. We are going to make tile mosaics using the glass to make pictures of things that make us feel awe and wonder—things that bring a feeling of "Wow!" into our hearts.

Invite participants to name things that make them feel awe and wonder. Guide the conversation away from the temporal and mundane—such as roller coasters, 3-D movies, and candy—toward the unexplainably marvelous—such as new babies, kittens, rainbows, sunsets, flowers, dinosaurs.

Tell participants to whom they will give their finished mosaics. Talk about the importance of sharing wonder with others and emphasize how generosity makes others feel happy.

Mix the stepping stone mix with water in the bucket according to the instructions. Pour it into the plastic molds and have the children decorate stepping stones with the stained glass chips.

NOTE: The tiles will need to dry and harden over night.

Include the participants in placing the hardened mosaics in the garden or presenting them to their recipients.

Optional: Present the mosaics during a worship service. Tell the story, "The Scratched Diamond" to the congregation and invite participants to show the mosaics they made and share about the "Wow" moments of awe and wonder they represent.

Process this activity with questions such as:

- I wonder how you chose your "wow" moment of awe?
- I wonder if it felt easy or hard to create something beautiful out of the broken pieces of glass?
- I wonder how it feels to create a mosaic to give to someone else (or, for our garden)?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?

- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

When you are in the presence of the Holy Spirit, it is like sitting in front of a fire that does not burn you, but suffuses you with its qualities — its warmth, glow, and color. And as you are there, in the presence of the Spirit, you also become suffused with the divine attributes of compassion, gentleness, and love, without your doing anything about it except to be there. You are loved and you are held in this love. — Bishop Desmond Tutu, South African cleric and activist

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We looked at how the transformation of a flaw into something beautiful can astound us, through the lens of the first Unitarian Universalist Source:

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

This Source is expressed in children's language as, "the sense of wonder we all share." We discussed how turning an imperfection into something beautiful can create a moment of "wow," in our hearts. In the story, "The Scratched Diamond," a gem carver uses a scratch on a diamond as the stem of a beautiful etched rose. Participants had the opportunity to turn knots or cracks in wooden treasure boxes into beautiful designs.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about... ways you can transform uncomfortable situations, poor choices, bad behaviors, or imperfect objects into beauty. Watch for opportunities to:

- Find gratitude in the midst of a disappointment, by taking the time to name

your blessings. See if you can find or create a new opportunity resulting from the disappointment.

- Talk about a failure, mistake, or poor choice. See what new ideas or learning it provided. Point out that learning from our mistakes and succeeding at turning a bad situation around are important achievements that can make us feel a "wow" in our hearts.
- Turn a broken toy into something new.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try... learning about inventors, with a focus on the many mistakes an inventor must make before completing an invention. Online, view an ["interview" with Thomas Edison](#) (at www.meetmeatthecorner.org/episode/happy-birthday-thomas-edison) from the Meet Me at the Corner website. Point out that mistakes are not only inevitable but necessary signs of the creativity and learning that lead to inventing something new.

Family Adventure. Take a "Wow" Walk. Make a point of noticing things around you with an attitude of wonder and awe. As you walk ponder how the things and creatures in your surroundings came to be there. Try a variety of "Wow" Walks: in the woods, in the supermarket, at a museum, in the rain.

Family Discovery. Share books that affirm the value of learning from our mistakes. Check out the Magic School Bus series of books and videos in which the main character, Ms. Frizzle, frequently states, "Take chances, make mistakes, and get messy."

A Family Game. Collect broken items or recyclable materials from around the house and work together as a family to transform them into a toy or game. You might work in teams; compete, using a scoring system that gives points for creativity, beauty, functionality, and fun.

A Family Ritual. Gather daily, or once a week, and have each family member share "wow" moments. Talk about what inspired you or evoked your awe and wonder.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"

- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites participants to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite the children to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Variation

Instead of sharing their joys and concerns, invite children to light a candle and, if they wish, answer a question. A question to fit this session might be "When is a time you have felt a 'wow' feeling in your heart—a time when something filled your thoughts with wonder?"

Including All Participants

If participants are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in

place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION — OUR SENSE OF WONDER (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 2, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation — Our Sense of Wonder](#) (included in this document)
- Session 2, Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet — Our Sense of Wonder](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Session 2, Handout 1, UU Source Constellation — Our Sense of Wonder, for all participants plus one extra.
- Print out Session 2, Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet — Our Sense of Wonder.
- Using the leader resource as a guide, use star stickers to mark the heart constellation on one copy of the handout: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask participants if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then,

explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Say in your own words:

Today we are talking about our first UU Source, "the sense of wonder we all share."

Allow children to share the relevant information they know. Then, distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say:

We think it's important to learn from moments in our lives when we feel a big "wow" in our hearts, when something is amazing or awesome, when something happens that we cannot explain or do not want to explain, and we are filled with a sense of wonder. To help us, we have a constellation named in honor of this UU Source. Some of the stars can be connected to look like a heart. Can you find the heart in our Night Sky?

Give them time to look for the heart. As children find it, let them show you by tracing the shape with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the heart by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they make take home their own Sense of Wonder constellations.

Say:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from the sense of wonder we all share. When we feel a sense of wonder, we let those feelings guide us to love.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: OPENING GEODES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Unopened geodes, for all participants (purchase online from [Oriental Trading Company](http://www.orientaltrading.com/) (at www.orientaltrading.com/), [Amazon](http://www.amazon.com/) (at www.amazon.com/), or a science education website)
- Several hammers

- Old socks that are no longer needed, one per participant)

Preparation for Activity

- Place the geodes, hammers, and socks in a safe place in your room.

Description of Activity

This activity provides a "Wow" moment in finding beautiful crystals hidden away inside the rough exterior of a geode.

Show the children an unopened geode. Ask if they have any guesses what might be inside this ordinary-looking stone. Ask if anyone thinks there might be beautiful crystals.

Instruct the children how to open the geode:

1. Place a geode in the toe of a sock.
2. Hammer the geode until you hear or feel it split open.
3. Reach inside the sock and pull out the crystals.

Advise children to hammer firmly, but not too hard or they may shatter their geodes and destroy the crystals inside. Present hammer safety rules:

- Keep your other hands far away from where anyone is hammering.
- Use hammers only on the geodes.
- Keep the hammer down low; do not wave it around.

Distribute the geodes and socks. Circulate among the children, closely monitoring use of hammers as children open their geodes. Encourage each participant to really take a moment to experience a "wow" feeling in their hearts when they find crystals.

Including All Participants

This activity can be dangerous if a child or children might be inclined to use the hammers inappropriately. If you believe this is the case in your group, either skip the activity or have an adult work one-on-one with any child you are concerned about. Make safety rules very clear and be prepared to act swiftly if they are not followed.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 5: STORY: THE SCRATCHED DIAMOND

Based on a tale told in the 1700s by the Jewish teacher, Jacob ben Wolf Kranz, Maggid of Dubno. Other versions can be found in *The Hungry Clothes and Other Jewish Folktales* by Peninah Schram, *The Maggid of Dubno and His Parables* by Benno Heinemann, and *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore*, edited by Nathan Ausubel.

There was once a very wealthy king who owned many beautiful things. He had cloth tapestries, piles of gold, and statues made by the very best sculptors in the land. Of all of his belongings, his very favorite possession was the most glorious diamond you can imagine. It was huge—as big around as his hand. And it was pure—clear and flawless, without any marks or blemishes. He loved to go and sit with that diamond, gazing at its beauty and perfection.

(Leader: (optional) Hold up a crystal and gaze at it.)

One day when the king went to look at his diamond, he discovered to his horror that it had a long, deep scratch. He couldn't believe his eyes! What could have happened to his flawless diamond?

Immediately he sent for all of the best stone cutters and diamond cutters in his kingdom. One by one they came to inspect the diamond. Each looked at it closely and then sadly shook his head. The scratch was too deep. If they tried to polish it they might break the diamond into pieces.

Finally one last diamond carver came before the king. He looked at the diamond closely, gazing at it from every angle.

(Leader: (optional) Act this out, with the crystal.)

The king watched with bated breath as the diamond carver turned the diamond over and over, pursing his lips and shaking his head.

Suddenly the diamond carver's face broke into a big smile. "I know how to fix this, your majesty!" he exclaimed. "Leave it to me. In two weeks time I will return your diamond to you, better than ever. However, you may not visit me during this time or check on my progress. You must wait until it is finished."

The king was very excited. Soon his flawless diamond would be back with his other lovely things, perfect again, the scratch removed. It took all the king's willpower to resist the temptation to visit the diamond carver to watch him work.

As for the diamond carver, day after day, night after night, he brought out his tools to fix that diamond. Bit by bit, he worked on that scratch. It was slow, tedious work. He knew he had to work carefully or the diamond could crack into pieces.

Finally the diamond cutter was finished. Carefully he wrapped the diamond in cloth to protect it, and he brought it before the king.

"Here it is, your majesty," he said. With a flourish he opened the cloth and presented the diamond.

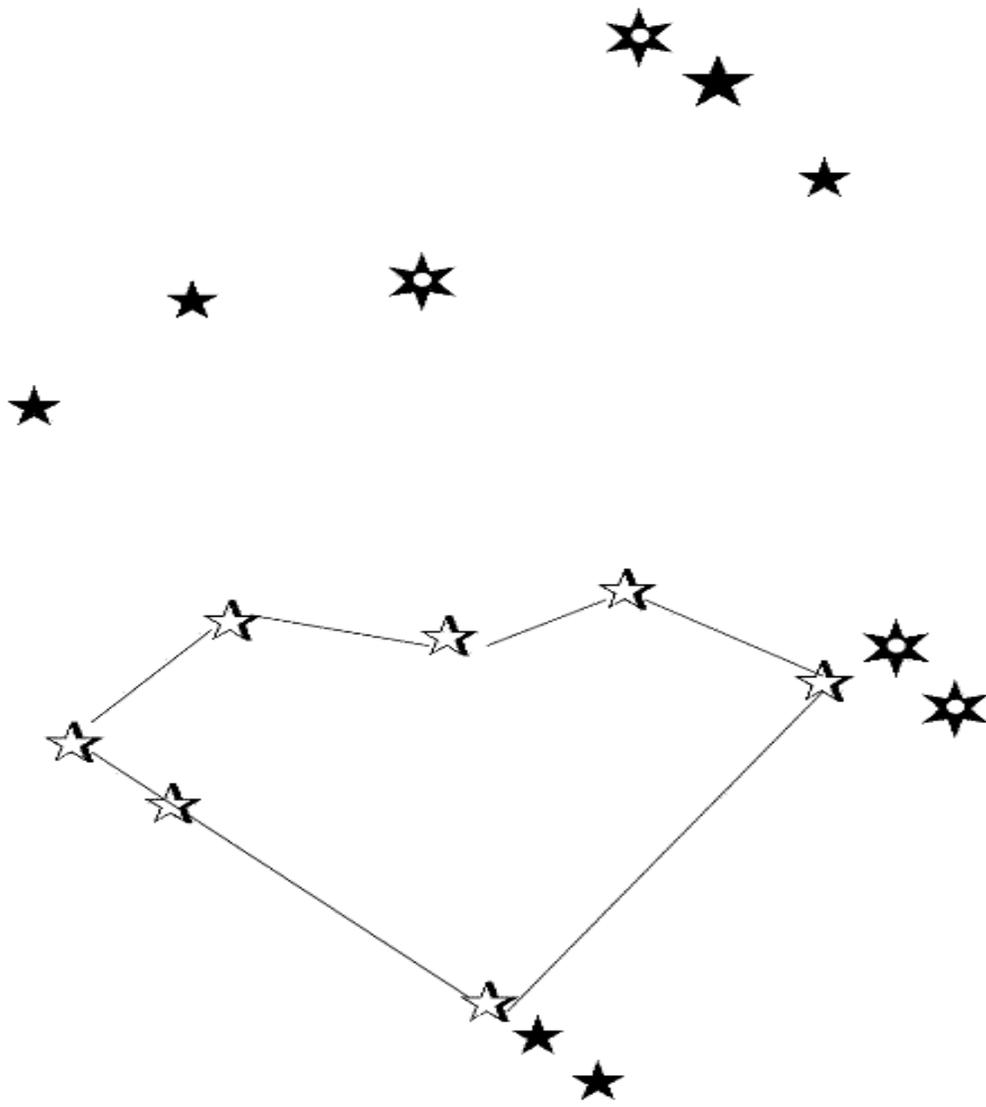
The king gasped at what he saw. Where there had once been a scratch, a horrible flaw in his precious diamond, there was now an exquisitely beautiful flower carved into the diamond. Unable to polish the scratch out of the diamond, the diamond carver had instead turned the flaw into something beautiful.

The king loved his diamond more than ever. Now when he went to hold it in his hands and gaze upon it, he was reminded that even something imperfect or ugly or flawed can become something exquisitely beautiful.

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 5:
HANDOUT 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION — OUR SENSE OF WONDER**



**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 5:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION ANSWER SHEET: OUR
SENSE OF WONDER**



The sense of wonder we all share.

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 5:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: SOURCE STAR: OUR SENSE OF WONDER**



FIND OUT MORE

Many children's stories affirm the beauty of learning from our mistakes. In the Magic School Bus series of books and videos, the main character, Ms. Frizzle, frequently states, "Take chances, make mistakes, and get messy."

SESSION 6: LOVE IS ETERNAL

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Love is strong as death. — Hebrew scripture, Song of Solomon, 8:6

I sometimes feel wrapped, cocooned in love. I often feel it most strongly right before I go to sleep. Then I think of my parents who died years ago and remember what the priest told me when I grieved for my father. "People die," he told me. "They rot and turn to dust. But love is forever." — Agnes Collard, late 20th-century American

This session focuses on the sixth Unitarian Universalist Source—in children's language, "the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life." Drawing on the wisdom of earth-centered traditions, the session connects love with the age-old human question "What happens when we die?" Participants hear some ways people have answered this question and learn that Unitarian Universalists believe we cannot really know the answer. Participants learn that when we remember people we love, they live on in our hearts and minds, and that the love we give when we are alive lives long after our death.

Participants have an opportunity to name their experiences with sorrow and death. They gather together in community, with a ritual for helping us through times of grief that includes creating flowers of memory and receiving a stone of remembrance and love.

NOTE: This session requires at least two adult leaders, so one can be available to offer support to children who find the topic difficult. Removing oneself from the conversation should be an option for any participant who needs to. Leaders should be ready to convey honesty, compassion, and comfort with the topic of death and any feelings participants may express, including fear, anger, guilt, or sadness.

Find out about significant losses these participants have experienced. Many children this age have experienced the death of a pet or grandparent, but some may have lost a parent, sibling, or peer or have a connection to death through war or natural disaster. Talk with your minister or religious educator to find out about recent deaths in the congregation or in the children's lives. Leader Resource 2, Tips for Talking with Children about Death and additional resources listed in Find Out More can support you to handle this topic.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the sixth Unitarian Universalist Source, "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"
- Create a safe place for children to think and talk about grief and death
- Introduce Unitarian Universalist rituals, customs, and teachings related to death and sorrow
- Deepen children's understanding of the cycle of life
- Emphasize that love lives beyond death.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn the sixth Unitarian Universalist Source—in children's language, "The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life"
- Understand death's role in the cycle of human life, through a Malagasy story
- Explore ways people stay with us after they die through our memories and their loving acts
- Experience Unitarian Universalist ways to mark the loss of a loved one and honor them after death, through a craft activity and a ritual of love and remembrance.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	7
Activity 1: Story — Why Death Is Like the Banana Tree	10
Activity 2: Sharing Our Experiences of Death	10
Activity 3: Creating Memory Flowers	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Sit comfortably and take a few deep breaths. With paper and a pencil, create a life loss timeline. With one end representing your birth and the other representing today, mark on the timeline your experiences with death and loss. Think of the first time you experienced death. How was it explained to you? What questions did you have? Take a few minutes to remember that experience and how you were helped or hindered in your grieving. Now bring your attention back to the children you will lead in this session. Sit quietly for a few moments. Open your heart to be guided by love in all you say and do this morning.

Activity 4: Ritual of Love and Remembering	13
Faith in Action: Cemetery Planting	45
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation — The Harmony of Nature	10
Alternate Activity 3: Circle of Life Walk	20

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.
- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](#) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Referring to the Night Sky display, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am

I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other people all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life. This is our sixth Unitarian Universalist Source. We will talk about how nature helps us use love to answer big questions about death and dying.

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – WHY DEATH IS LIKE A BANANA TREE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Why Death Is Like the Banana Tree](#) (included in this document) "
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as a banana, a picture of a banana tree, moon rocks, a picture or model of the moon, an illustration of the phases of the moon, a young plant just beginning to sprout
- A rain stick, or another instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around.

Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one, e.g., "Who has seen a full moon? Who has seen a half moon? Has anyone ever seen a banana tree?"

As items come back to you, display them on the table. Remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket. In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime or other instrument. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story "Why Death Is Like the Banana Tree." Read or tell the story slowly, like a meditation. Use the rain stick again to indicate that the story is over.

Then, ask:

- I wonder what it would be like to die like the moon?
- I wonder what the world would be like if people didn't have children like the banana tree?
- What do you suppose the world would be like if nobody ever died?
- I wonder how the people felt after they made their choice and somebody they loved died?
- I wonder what nature teaches us about death?
- This story is one explanation of what happens when you die. I wonder if any of you have ever heard other ideas about what happens when you die? (Hear children's ideas without

judgment. Affirm that different Unitarian Universalists have different ideas about what happens after death, and nobody can really know the answer to that question for sure.)

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "One person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 2: SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES OF DEATH (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Tips for Talking about Death with Children](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the leader resource.
- Optional: Explore more resources for talking with children about death and other difficult topics—see Find Out More.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a seated circle. Ask if any have known a person or animal that has died. Follow up by asking if anything special happened at that time. Did they go to a memorial service? Did they bury a pet in their yard and put a flower on the ground? Give children a chance to share. Then, say, in your own words:

When a person or a pet dies people feel lots of different feelings. They can feel sad, or angry, or guilty, or scared. One of the things we do together in our congregations is talk to each other about the strong feelings we have. We can show we love each other by listening and offering hugs when someone is sad. In our congregation, when someone dies we have a special ceremony called a memorial service. (Or, mention another ritual used in

your congregation.) At memorial services we remember the person who died. Unitarian Universalists believe we cannot really know for sure what happens when someone dies, but, when we remember them, then their love stays alive in our hearts.

Including All Participants

If a child in the group has recently experienced a death, have a co-leader sit near that child to offer extra support as needed.

Some children may find it difficult to sit still during this conversation; some may express their emotions by becoming restless. This may be a good time to make fidget objects available. Fidget objects are fully described in Session 1, Leader Resource 4. They can provide a non-disruptive outlet for a child who needs to move or who benefits from sensory stimulation.

ACTIVITY 3: CREATING MEMORY FLOWERS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Green pipe cleaners
- White and green paper, scissors (including left-handed scissors), and tape
- Color markers or pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Draw a simple leaf. Use it as a template to trace and cut leaves from the green paper, at least two leaves for each participant and co-leader.
- Make a sample flower.
- Set materials on a work table.

Description of Activity

Tell participants they are going to make memory flowers to remember an animal or a person that has died. If they do not know someone who has died, they can make a flower to represent a relative or an ancestor who has died that they did not know; you might suggest a great-grandparent. Others may wish to remember a public figure they are aware of who has died; suggest a much-loved figure, such as Martin Luther King, Jr.

Show them the sample flower. Say, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from nature. In nature we see that although everything dies, new life is always being born. It's as if old life gets recycled in the Earth and

helps create the new life. Flowers can be a symbol of that new life.

Invite and help children to trace one of their hands on white paper. Then, invite children to cut out the hand and decorate it with images or words that remind them of the loved one that has died. Those who have not experienced a death can simply decorate the hands as they wish. As participants finish decorating their paper hands, help them make flowers by taping the hand (the blossom) and some of the green leaves to a pipe cleaner (the stem).

Note: Make a few extra flowers for leaders to use in Activity 4, Ritual of Love and Remembering.

ACTIVITY 4: RITUAL OF LOVE AND REMEMBERING (13 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Letter to Parents — Ritual of Love and Remembering](#) (included in this document)
- Heart-shaped stones, gems, or beads (or, any smooth stones)
- A decorative, shallow bowl
- A decorative vase
- A small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Chalice and matches, or battery-operated LED chalice
- Participants' memory flowers, made in Activity 3
- Optional: Photos or objects to honor dead loved ones

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and distribute Leader Resource 3 by mail or email at least one week before this session.
- Create an altar by draping the cloth over the table. Place the chalice, vase, and bowl on the centering table. Fill the bowl with heart-shaped stones, gems or beads.

Description of Activity

If you invited participants to bring in pictures or other objects to honor dead loved ones, have them place them on the centering table. Then, gather the children in a semi-circle, with their memory flowers. Say, in your own words:

One of the things we do together in this congregation is share our feelings with each

other—when we are especially happy and when we are especially sad. When someone has died, we have special rituals for remembering them and celebrating their life.

Now we are going to have a ritual here. It is a time for us to share our memories of someone who has died or a time when we were especially sad. One at a time, we will each have a turn to put our flowers in the vase. Only one person should be standing at a time and everyone else should be listening. When it is your turn, you can tell us anything you want to about your flower and your memories and what you loved about the person or pet that died. If you do not want to say anything, that is okay, you can simply put your flower in the vase. After you put a flower in the vase, please sit back down and the next person will have a turn.

Ask if there are any questions.

When every child and adult has put a flower in the vase, say, in your own words:

We will keep this vase in our meeting room to help us remember that love is stronger than death and lasts long after death. Now, one at a time, we will each take a heart stone (or gem or bead) from the bowl on the table. When it is your turn, please go quietly to the table and choose a stone that you will take home with you.

When everyone has a stone, hold a stone up and say, in your own words:

Whenever someone loves us, that love stays alive in our hearts for the rest of our lives—even if they die. Take the heart you chose home with you, as a reminder that love lasts forever.

Including All Participants

Children will have had a variety of experiences with death. In addition, children will have varying levels of comfort in sharing their thoughts or feelings about death. Allow children to share as much or as little as they wish.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 4, [Source Star — The Harmony of Nature](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers

- Taking It Home
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 4, Source Star — The Harmony of Nature. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Write the words for the sixth UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.
- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather participants at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw a circle to symbolize Earth or a picture of something alive in nature. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from the Harmony of Nature" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we talked about how we learn from the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life. We learned death is part of the circle of life. What does nature teach us about death? (Point out: We can see it is natural for everything alive to die, we can see new life

constantly being born, the old life is recycled into the earth and helps create new life.)

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: CEMETERY PLANTING (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Flower bulbs or seeds
- Shovels, trowels, and large containers of water

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a local cemetery or memorial garden and arrange with its caretakers to plant flowers.
- Arrange transportation to the site.
- Communicate all relevant information to participants' parents.
- Optional: Create an intergenerational activity by inviting the children's parents or the entire congregation to participate. If you choose to do this, tell the congregation the story "Why Death Is Like the Banana Tree" and/or use text from Taking It Home and the session Introduction to explain what the children did and learned in this session.

Description of Activity

Travel to the local cemetery you have selected. Gather in a circle and ask the children what they know about cemeteries. Say, in your own words:

Cemeteries are special places where a person's body can be buried when they die. The gravestones have the names of the people whose bodies are there. Some people come to a cemetery to visit their loved ones who have died, to remember them and place

flowers on their tomb. We will plant flowers here, so new life can grow from the old life.

Have children plant the bulbs or seeds in the location selected.

Debrief the experience with questions such as:

- I wonder what sorts of thoughts or feelings you had about going to a cemetery before we went?
- I wonder what sorts of thoughts or feelings you had when we got to the cemetery?
- Was anything about the cemetery surprising?
- I wonder how people will feel when they see the flowers we planted?

Including All Participants

Make sure the planting site is fully accessible to everyone in the group.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

Love is strong as death. — Hebrew scripture, Song of Solomon, 8:6

I sometimes feel wrapped, cocooned in love. I often feel it most strongly right before I go to sleep. Then I think of my parents who died

years ago and remember what the priest told me when I grieved for my father. "People die," he told me. "They rot and turn to dust. But love is forever." — Agnes Collard

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We talked about ways of understanding death, drawing on wisdom from the sixth Unitarian Universalist Source, "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." This Source is expressed in children's language as "the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life." The children heard a story from Madagascar, in which the first man and woman are given a choice: Would humans die like the moon, in an endless cycle of death and rebirth, or die like banana plants, to be gone from earth forever but leaving a shoot behind that creates new life. Children discussed which choice they would have made. They made Memory Flowers to honor dead loved ones and shared in a ritual of Love and Remembering, placing their flowers in a common vase as a symbol that love lives beyond death.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Follow your child's lead in talking about death. These tips may help you be ready, when the topic comes up:

- It is important to show children that it is okay to talk about death. Affirm their feelings, questions, and comments without judgment. Respond honestly with simple but realistic language. Assure them you are open to talking with them and answering their questions.
- Listen carefully to children's questions. Make sure you understand what is being asked before you offer an answer. When you have answered simply but honestly, give children the opportunity to either accept the answer or ask another question.
- Avoid flooding children with too much information. Watch for cues that they have heard enough or are having a strong emotional reaction to the conversation.
- Avoid euphemisms. For example, "went to sleep" might confuse children and cause them to be afraid of sleeping.
- Affirm that there are many different beliefs about death and as Unitarian Universalists we think people are free to choose their own beliefs.
- It's okay to say, "I don't know."

- Reassure children that they and the people who take care of them are likely to live for a very long time (unless, of course, the person in question is very ill). Be careful, however, not to make any promises. We expect to live for a long time, but we cannot promise that.
- If a child refers to someone who is ill, very old, or dying, you can acknowledge their observation and state that we do not know exactly what will happen or when. Reassure the child by referencing the people who are caring for the person who is ill, as well as naming the people who will take care of the child.
- Do not be surprised if the child moves quickly between topics, first speaking about death and then changing the subject to something entirely unrelated. A child may need time to process their thoughts or may need emotional distance from the topic. They will often come back to the conversation when they are ready.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try... making a family tree together. You might include loved ones in your extended family, including relatives by adoption and remarriage. You may wish to include pets, as well. Talk about family stories that have been passed down. Focus on legacies each loved one left behind—ways their lives and their acts of love are still part of your family.

Family Adventure. Create a compost worm bin together and begin to compost your food wastes. A simple worm bin can be made by drilling air ventilation holes into a plastic container with a lid. Learn the benefits of composting and find instructions to make either a simple or more complex worm bin on the [Watershed Activities website](http://www.watershedactivities.com/projects/winter/wormbin.html) (at www.watershedactivities.com/projects/winter/wormbin.html).

Family Discovery. Many books introduce death and dying to children in an age-appropriate way.

- *Annie and the Old One* by Miska Miles tells the story of a Navajo girl and her dying grandmother.
- *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown describes children finding and burying a dead bird.
- *The Dead Tree* by Alvin Tresselt talks about interdependence and the cycle of life as viewed through the life of an oak tree.

- *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf* by Leo Buscaglia looks at death through the perspective of a leaf in the autumn.
- *I'll Always Love You* by Wilhelm Hans tells the story of a boy grieving when his dog dies.
- *Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children* by Bryan Mellonie is a direct, unsentimental description of life cycles for various creatures, including humans.
- [Talking About Death: A Dialogue Between Parent and Child](http://www.uuabookstore.org/) (at www.uuabookstore.org/) by Earl A. Grollman (Beacon Press, 1993) is a guide for children and parents to read together when your child is seeking answers.
- *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*, by Judith Viorst. A child works through his grief after his cat dies by listing things he loved about his cat.

A Family Ritual. Memorialize the death of a loved one by creating an annual remembering day, perhaps on the anniversary of the death. Your activities should reflect that person. You might make their favorite food, visit a place they liked to go, gather flowers that were their favorite, or share memories and stories about them.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites participants to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite participants to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION — THE HARMONY OF NATURE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation — The Harmony of Nature](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet — The Harmony of Nature](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Handout 1, UU Source Constellation — The Harmony of Nature for all participants, plus one extra.
- Print out Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet — The Harmony of Nature.
- Using Leader Resource 1 as a guide, use star stickers to mark the terra symbol constellation on one copy of the handout: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Say in your own words:

Today we are talking about the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life—our sixth UU Source. We will talk about how this Source helps us answer the questions we have about death and dying.

Give the children time to think. Then, distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say:

We think it's important to learn from nature, so we have a constellation named in honor of this Source. Some of the stars can be connected to look like a terra (or Earth) symbol. It is a circle, with two lines across it to make four parts, like pieces of a pie. Can you find the terra symbol in our Night Sky?

Give them time to look for the terra symbol. As children find it, let them show you by tracing the shape with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the terra constellation by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they may take home their own Harmony of Nature constellations.

Say:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life. Nature can teach us and guide us to love.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE OF LIFE WALK (20 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Select a fully accessible outdoor location for your walk, preferably on your congregation's grounds.
- Optional: If leaving the grounds, make necessary transportation arrangements and obtain parents' permission.

Description of Activity

Go for a walk in your designated location. Look for signs of decaying life that feeds other life, such as rotting logs or fallen leaves. Look for creatures that help with decomposition, such as insects. Explain that the minerals, energy, and nutrients in the dead plant and animal life get recycled back into the Earth. They create rich soil that other life needs to grow and thrive.

Gather in a circle to debrief, with questions such as:

- What would happen if nothing ever died? (Suggest that predators and scavenger animals might starve; the Earth would pretty quickly run out of room for all the living creatures.)
- What would happen if there were no decomposers—creatures that recycle things that have died back into the Earth? (Suggest we would end up with a big mess.)
- I wonder what nature teaches us about death?

Including All Participants

Choose a walk site that is accessible to everyone who might be part of the group.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 6: STORY: WHY DEATH IS LIKE THE BANANA TREE

Based on a folk tale from Madagascar. Other versions appear in *The Moon in the Well* by Erica Helm Meade; *African Myths and Tales*, edited by Susan Feldmann; and *The New King* by Doreen Rappaport.

Long, long ago when God made the first man and the first woman and prepared to put them on the Earth, God asked them if they would rather die like the moon or like the banana tree.

The man and the woman did not understand. They did not know how to answer God's question. They wondered what it was to die. What would it be like to die like a banana tree? What would it be like to die like the moon? They asked God these questions.

God explained, "The moon dies every month. It slowly but surely gets smaller and smaller in the sky until it is only a tiny silver sliver. But then it is reborn and grows bigger every day until it is round and full in the sky. Every month it is the same—the moon grows smaller and then bigger in exactly the same way over and over again forever."

The man and the woman thought about this. They weren't sure they liked the idea of getting smaller and smaller until they died, but it was reassuring to think they would always be born again.

"What would it be like to die like the banana tree?" the woman asked.

God answered, "The banana tree must die. It will never come back. But first it puts out green shoots that grow up to be a new banana tree. Before dying the banana tree helps to create a new life. Which one will you choose?" God asked.

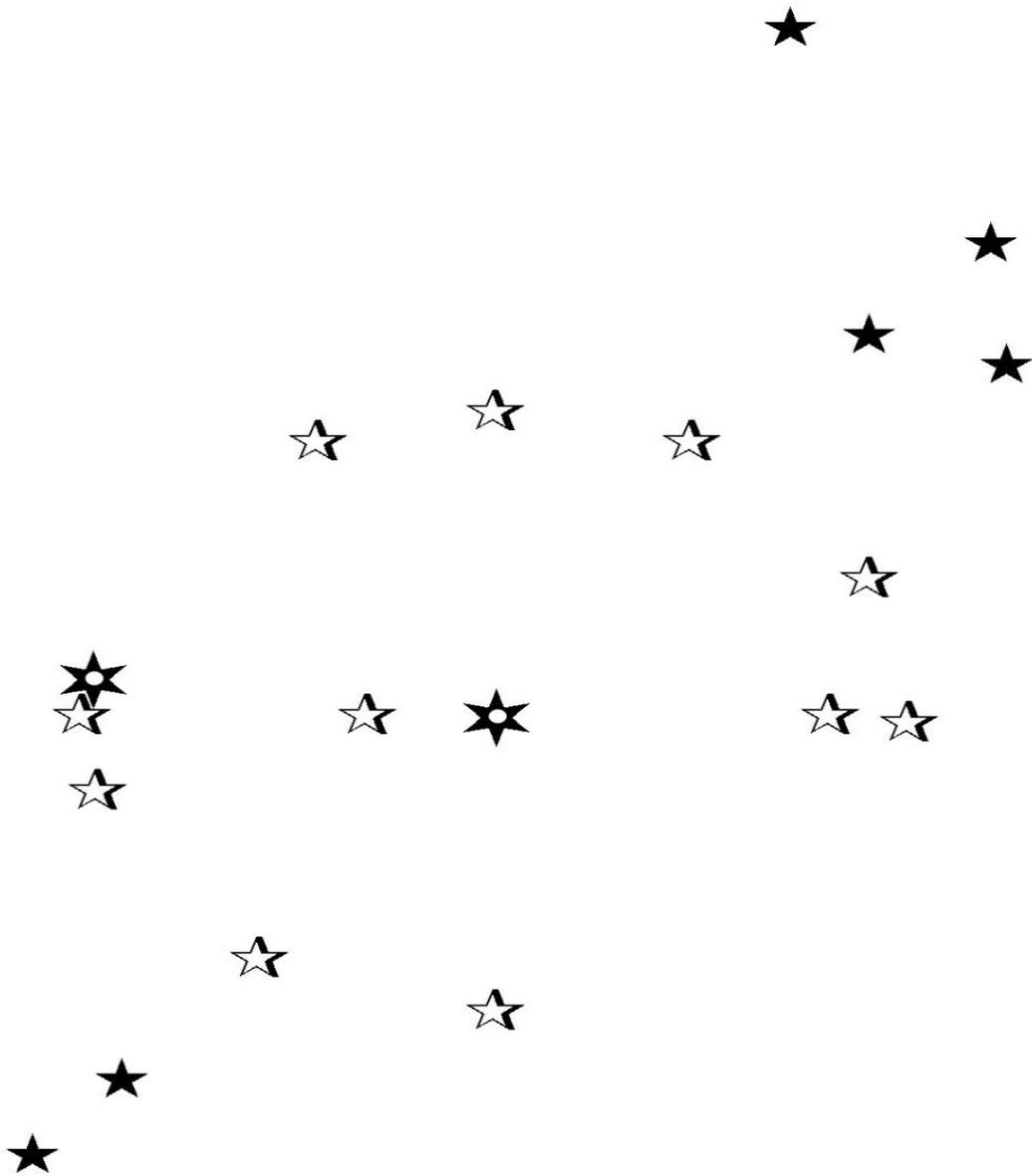
The man and woman considered this for a very long time. Which should they choose?

(Leader: Pause here and ask participants what they would choose. After a brief discussion, return to the story.)

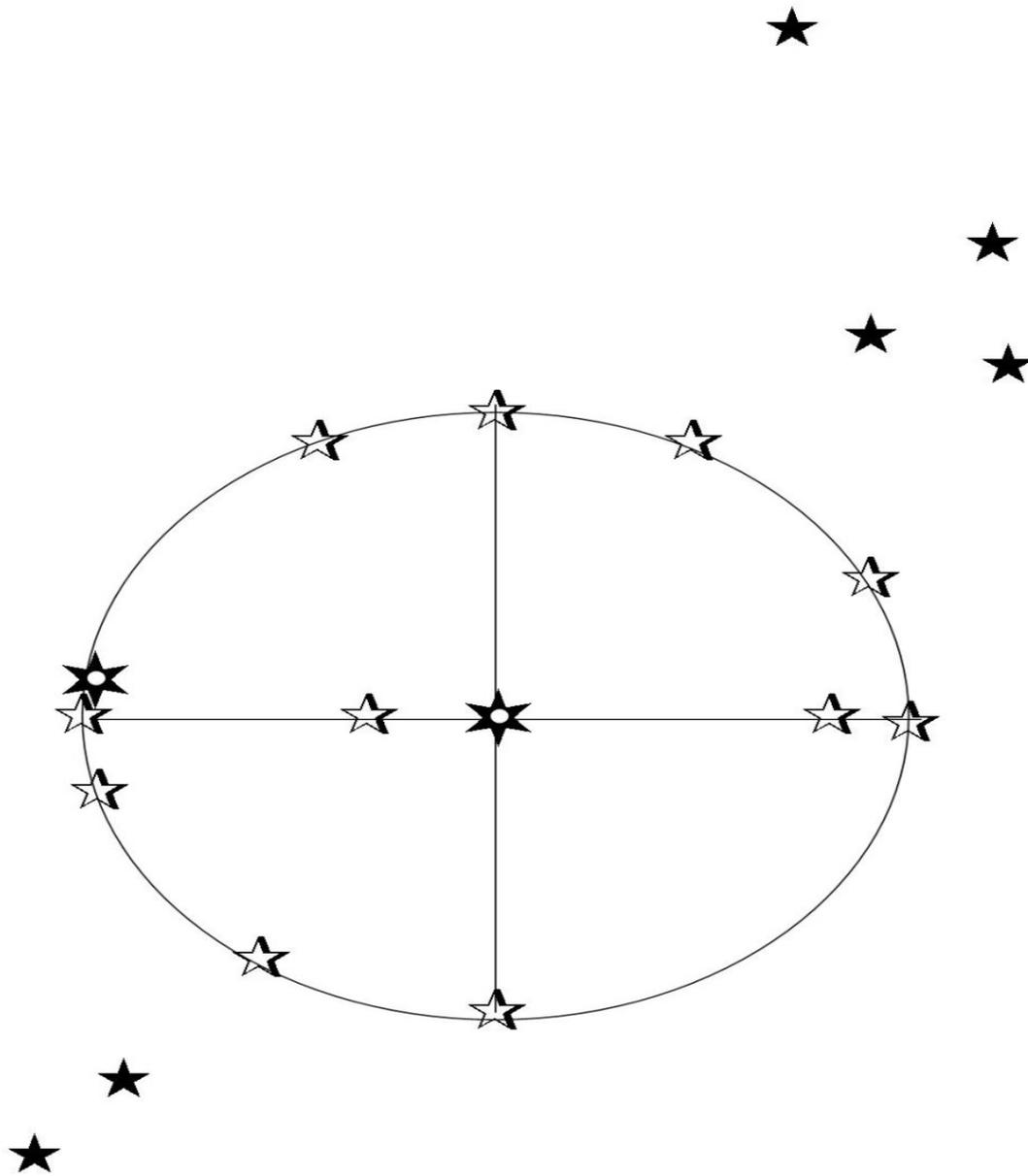
They talked about it all night long, looking into the sky to watch the moon, which was beautiful and full. If they chose the moon they would never die—but life might get boring and lonely. They would only ever have each other for company. There would be no one else. If they chose the banana tree they would have children to love, but, in time, they would grow old and die.

Finally they decided. They would rather experience the joy and miracle of bringing new life into the world—even if it meant they would not be reborn like the moon. They told God they would rather die like the banana tree. And so it was that the first man and the first woman chose love. They had many children together, and their children had many children. Their children filled their hearts and lives with love and joy for all of the days of their lives. Finally, when they were very old, the time came for the first man and the first woman to return to the Earth, never to come back, just as the banana tree does when it dies. Since that time, all humans must die and make room for new life to grow.

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 6:
HANDOUT 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION: THE HARMONY OF NATURE**



**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 6:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION ANSWER SHEET: THE
HARMONY OF NATURE**



The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 6:

LEADER RESOURCE 2: TIPS FOR TALKING WITH CHILDREN ABOUT DEATH

- It is important to show children that it is okay to talk about death. Affirm their feelings, questions, and comments without judgment. Respond honestly with simple but realistic language. Assure them you are open to talking with them and answering their questions.
- Listen carefully to children's questions. Make sure you understand what is being asked before you offer an answer. When you have answered simply but honestly, give children the opportunity to either accept the answer or ask another question.
- Avoid flooding children with too much information. Watch for cues that they have heard enough or are having a strong emotional reaction to the conversation.
- Avoid euphemisms. For example, "went to sleep" might confuse children and cause them to be afraid of sleeping.
- Affirm that there are many different beliefs about death and as Unitarian Universalists we think people are free to choose their own beliefs.
- It's okay to say, "I don't know."
- Reassure children that they and the people who take care of them are likely to live for a very long time (unless, of course, the person in question is very ill). Be careful, however, not to make any promises. We expect to live for a long time, but we cannot promise that.
- If a child refers to someone who is ill, very old, or dying, you can acknowledge their observation and state that we do not know exactly what will happen or when. Reassure the child by referencing the people who are caring for the person who is ill, as well as naming the people who will take care of the child.
- Do not be surprised if the child moves quickly between topics, first speaking about death and then changing the subject to something entirely unrelated. A child may need time to process their thoughts or may need emotional distance from the topic. They will often come back to the conversation when they are ready.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 6: LEADER RESOURCE 3: LETTER TO PARENTS: RITUAL OF LOVE AND REMEMBERING

Download and adapt, filling in the appropriate information in the parentheses. Provide to parents/caregivers a week before this session.

Dear Parents,

This coming Sunday, (insert date), the Love Will Guide Us group will talk about Unitarian Universalist rituals and beliefs about death. As part of this session, children will participate in a Ritual of Love and Remembrance. The ritual will emphasize that people (and pets) who have died live on in our hearts and memories, as well as through the love they have shared.

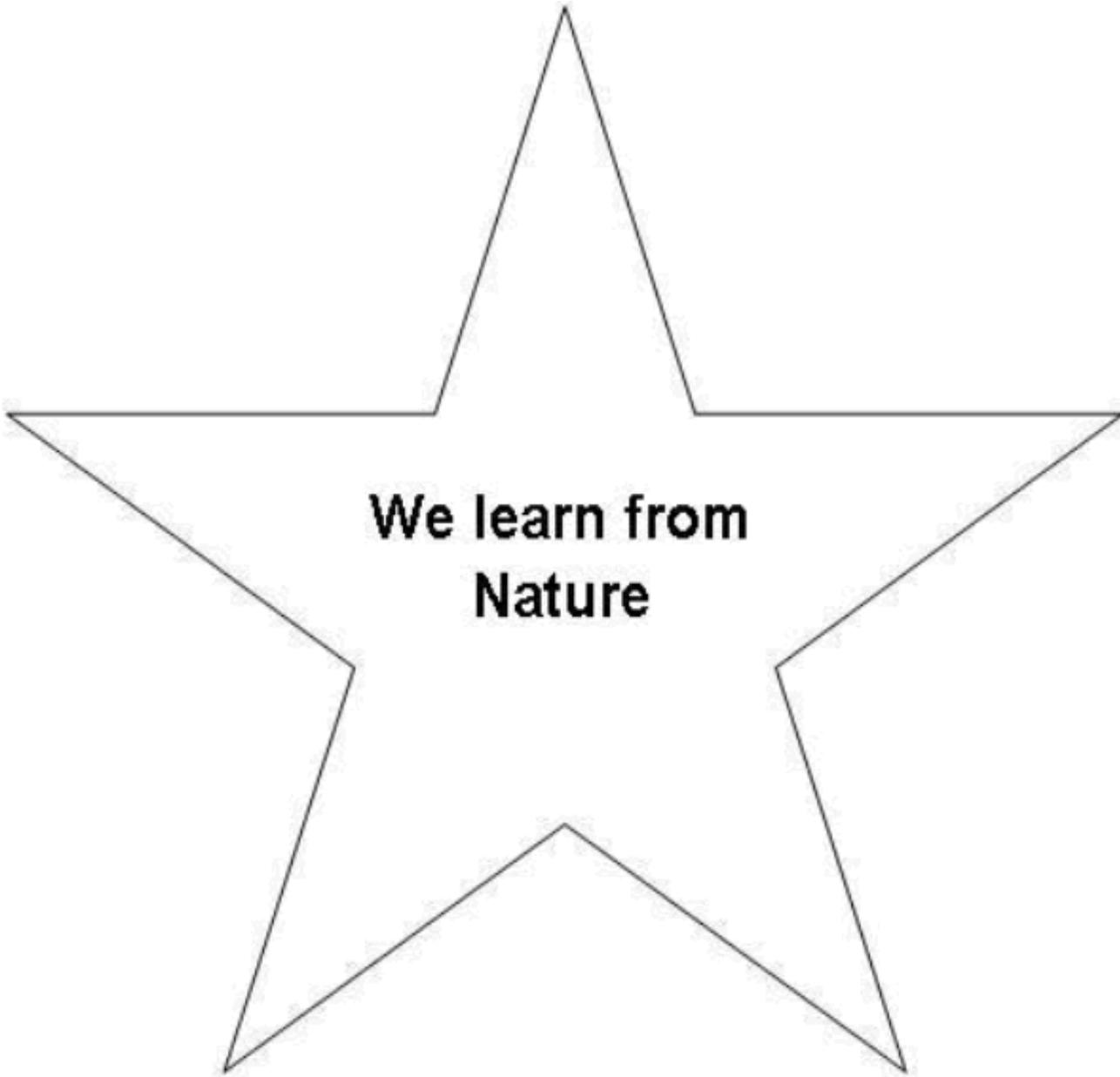
We will create a remembrance together. Your child is invited to bring a picture or other item to place on our table that helps them remember a loved one (human or animal) who has died.

If you have questions about how this topic will be handled or what else we will do during our time together, feel free to contact [co-leader(s) and contact information].

Yours in Faith,

[Co-leaders]

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 6:
LEADER RESOURCE 4: SOURCE STAR: THE HARMONY OF NATURE**



FIND OUT MORE

Talking with Children about Death

Find useful information on the [Hospice Net website](http://www.hospicenet.org/html/talking.html) (at www.hospicenet.org/html/talking.html).

Bereaved Children and Teens: A Support Guide for Parents and Professionals by Earl A. Grollman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996) compiles the wisdom of 14 experts in a comprehensive guide to helping children and adolescents cope with the emotional, religious, social, and physical consequences of a loved one's death.

The Grieving Child by Helen Fitzgerald (Fireside, 1992) offers guidance on how to explain death to

children and includes sections on visiting the dying and attending a funeral.

For help in guiding children to find their own answers to a variety of topics, including death, read *Small Wonder* by Jean Grasso Fitzpatrick (Penguin, 1995).

Our Unitarian Universalist Sources

A book highly recommended for this program is [A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism](https://www.uuabookstore.org/A-Chosen-Faith-P16848.aspx) (at <https://www.uuabookstore.org/A-Chosen-Faith-P16848.aspx>) by John A. Buehrens and F. Forrest Church. Each section includes two essays focusing on the Sources of Unitarian Universalism.

SESSION 7: GIVE LOVE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Love is, above all, the gift of oneself. — Jean Anouilh, French dramatist

This session focuses on the second Unitarian Universalist Source, "Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love," expressed in children's language as "people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair."

Participants hear a story about a valuable lesson the Unitarian Transcendentalist minister and author, Ralph Waldo Emerson, learned from his daughter, Ellen—that the most important gift of all is time and love. Participants experience giving the gift of time by visiting with younger children.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the second Unitarian Universalist Source—in children's language, "people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair"
- Teach that giving time and love is more valuable than giving material objects
- Strengthen children's sense of community in the congregation as they build their relationships with younger children.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn the second Unitarian Universalist Source—in children's language, "people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair"—by hearing, saying, singing, and writing it
- Experience giving the gift of time to younger children in the congregation
- Understand giving one's time as an expression of love
- Introduce Ralph Waldo Emerson as an important figure in Unitarian history

- Reflect on a story in which a daughter teaches her father how giving one's time can express love.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	7
Activity 1: Game – Riddle Me This	8
Activity 2: Story – Give Love	10
Activity 3: Giving Time as a Gift of Love	28
Faith in Action: Giving the Gift of Time	
Closing	7
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation – Wise People from Long Ago and Today	10
Alternate Activity 3: Song – Magic Penny	10
Alternate Activity 4: Transcendentalism in Picture Books	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Read the story "Give Yourself." Remember a time when somebody gave you the gift of time. What did you do together? How did it feel to receive this gift? Did it influence your sense of your own worth? Think about the children you will see for this session and ponder how you can give them full attention and love as you give them the gift of time.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.
- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](#) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Referring to the Night Sky display, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am

I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, the Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other peoples all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about our second Source, "lives of people from long ago and today who remind us to be kind and fair." We will hear about Ralph Waldo Emerson and how his daughter, Ellen, taught him a way to be loving. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a minister and a writer, who shared that lesson with others, more than 100 years ago. Today we can still learn from Ellen and her father that giving time and love is the best kind of gift.

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: GAME – RIDDLE ME THIS (8 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A chime or bell

Description of Activity

A riddle is central to the story, "Give Yourself." In this active game, participants move like a particular animal to demonstrate the answer to each riddle. The game builds community by inviting the group to share fun and gives kinesthetic learners an opportunity to move around a bit.

Gather in a standing circle. Tell participants that you will give a riddle and they will have to figure out what animal the riddle is about. When they have figured it out, they should move like that animal. Tell them when you ring the chime, they should freeze and wait for the next riddle.

Read the first riddle. Wait until most or all of the group is showing the correct answer with movement; then sound the chime and offer the next riddle.

When they have answered all the riddles, gather the group and tell them they will now hear a story that has a riddle about what a daughter wanted from her father for Christmas.

Riddles

With skin of grey and a long, long nose,

Please do not ask me to touch my toes! (Answer: an elephant)

It is spring. I'm in the pond

I sing my song, all night long. (Answer: a frog)

I love to snack on mice and eggs

I move on the ground with no legs. (Answer: a snake)

Do not disturb me as I rest

When it comes to pets, I'm the best!

With scratchy tongue I'll lick you clean

Guess who I am. Guess what I mean. (Answer: a cat)

We're not so different you and I,

Eating fruit as the day goes by

Let's climb a tree and play a game

Eat bananas and guess my name! (Answer: a monkey)

Including All Participants

If a child in the group uses a wheelchair or has limited mobility, have participants sit in a circle and move only the upper part of their bodies.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — GIVE LOVE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Give Love](#) (included in this document) "
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as a picture of Ralph Waldo Emerson or a book that he wrote, a book of riddles, some wrapping paper, a Christmas ornament, or a wrapped box
- A rain stick, or another instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props. Consider developing different voices to represent Emerson and his daughter or having a co-leader read everything Ellen says.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one, e.g., "Who likes gifts that are surprises? Who knows some good riddles?"

As items come back to you, display them on the table. Then say, in your own words:

Today we are exploring the message of love that comes from wise people from now and long ago, who shared their important truths with us—our second Source.

Remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket. In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime or other instrument. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story "Give Love." Read or tell the story slowly, like a meditation. Use the rain stick again to indicate that the story is over.

Then, ask:

- Do you think the gift of time with her father was really the best gift Ellen could receive?

- What do you think Emerson meant when he said he would get more than he would give by spending time with Ellen?
- I wonder what important lesson Ralph Waldo Emerson learned that he later taught to other people?
- I wonder if there is someone whose time you would especially like to receive as a gift?
- I wonder if there is someone who might really like to receive the gift of time from you?

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the story basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "one person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 3: GIVING TIME AS A GIFT OF LOVE (28 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Items to share with younger children such as Easy Reader books, simple craft supplies, easy puzzles, modeling clay, or board games such as Candyland or Chutes and Ladders

Preparation for Activity

- In consultation with your religious educator or the appropriate lay leaders, arrange for the children to spend part of this session giving the gift of their time to a younger group of children.
- List the activities you have planned for the children to do with the younger children on newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

Tell participants they are going to give the gift of time to the younger children. Point out the items you have gathered for this purpose and ask for volunteers who might like to read a story to younger children; help

younger children with a craft, modeling clay, or a puzzle; or play a game with younger children. Record their choices on newsprint; each child should sign up to do at least one activity.

Have the children help you carry the supplies to the room you are visiting.

Enjoy an informal play time. Allow the children to switch activities if they wish. If the older children get distracted from their role, redirect them toward ways they can share time with a younger child.

Leave time to invite the children to help you gather the supplies and tidy up the younger children's space.

Return to the meeting space and ask the group to discuss their time with the younger children, with these questions.

- How did you like giving your time to the younger group?
- What is different about giving an object and about giving time?
- What are some ways you can give the gift of time to people in your family? How might you use the time differently if you gave it to someone in your family, instead of using it for playing, as you did with the younger children today?

CLOSING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Source Star – Wise People](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, "[Our Sources](#)" (included in this document) Lyrics
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, Source Star — Wise People. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).

- Write the words for the second UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.

- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather participants at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw about a wise lesson they have learned from someone from long ago. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from Wise People" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Take a moment to ask the children if they know what it means to be "prophetic." You might say:

Being prophetic means being especially wise and honest, and sharing your wisdom with others. Prophetic people tell important truths about how we should live together. In our story, we learned an important truth from Ralph Waldo Emerson and his daughter: Giving our time to someone else in a loving way is the best gift we can give.

Unitarian Universalists believe that wise lessons from prophetic people can point our way to love. Indicate the second Source words posted on newsprint. Invite the children to follow along quietly as you read aloud:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.

Pause and invite volunteers to give an example of what that Source means. Invite them to suggest other people from now, or long ago, whose wisdom might be prophetic—that is, people who have shared important truths that can point us toward love.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you

have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: GIVING THE GIFT OF TIME

Materials for Activity

- Simple puzzles, card games, and board games

Preparation for Activity

- Consult with your minister or religious educator to select a group of people to whom the children can give the gift of time. Ideally, choose a group of people with whom the children can have an ongoing relationship and with whom they do not often interact, for example, a congregational senior group, toddler play group, or young adult or youth group.
- Arrange a time and place for the children to visit with the group of people.
- Communicate your plan to the parents and children. Arrange transportation and gather permissions, as appropriate.
- Recruit a few extra adult leaders for the visit.

Description of Activity

Before the visit, gather the group to discuss the needs of the people you will visit. Talk about appropriate behaviors for the setting you will be in. If you will visit elders, for example, talk about the possibility that some older people need help walking or may not hear very well. Emphasize that spending time together with people of different ages, with different needs, is a way of building a loving community.

Visit the designated group and spend an hour or so playing games together. Before you leave, or immediately afterward, gather participants and take a few minutes to debrief the experience using questions such as:

- Did anyone see anything or experience anything that was surprising?
- Did anyone see anything or experience anything that was uncomfortable?
- Were there any ways that you could tell that this gift of time was appreciated?
- Does anyone want to share something that was especially fun about this experience?

If possible, follow up with additional opportunities for the children to interact with the group they have visited. This way, the connections they make can continue through lasting relationships.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

Love is, above all, the gift of oneself. — Jean Anouilh, French dramatist

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we focused on the second Unitarian Universalist Source, "Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love," expressed in children's language as "people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair." The story, "Give Love," tells of a Christmas when Ellen told her father, Unitarian minister and author

Ralph Waldo Emerson, a riddle to help him guess the gift she wanted from him: You cannot buy it, for it is worth all the money you have, but only *you* can give it. Emerson solved the riddle: His daughter wanted the gift of his time. Later in his life, Emerson wrote about the importance of giving time. The children gave their own time today by visiting with younger children in the congregation.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Is there a family member or a family friend who might especially appreciate the gift of your time? Brainstorm ways your family can spend time together without spending a lot of money, such as planting a garden, going for a walk, reading books, playing a game, going to a playground, and cooking something together.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Create a "Give Love" family scrapbook of special time you spend together. Involve older relatives, special friends, uncles, and aunts in scrapbook-making, as a way for multiple generations to spend and celebrate quality time together. Interview each member of your family and special friends to capture their recollections of times when someone gave them the gift of time; include their reflections in your scrapbook.

Family Adventure. Schedule time with your child to do something they love to do which does not cost money. Follow their lead on an adventure in the mud, in the woods, in the gym. Be nonjudgmental and open so you can give your time and join them in their interests.

Family Discovery. Many books offer ideas for spending time together with your children, such as the Williamson *Kids Can!* series. *Living Simply with Children: A Voluntary Simplicity Guide for Moms, Dads and Kids Who Want to Reclaim the Bliss of Childhood and the Joy of Parenting* by Marie Sherlock gives advice on how to slow down and enjoy quality time together with your children.

To learn more about Transcendentalism, read the picture books *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg*, *Henry Works*, *Henry Builds a Cabin*, and *Henry Climbs a Mountain* by D.B. Johnson. A bear named Henry represents the lifestyle adopted by Emerson's contemporary, Unitarian Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau.

A Family Game. Teach your child how to play your favorite game from your childhood. Ask them to teach you their favorite game as well. Play the games together.

A Family Ritual. Start a holiday or birthday tradition of giving one another the gift of time. Have each person create "time coupons" to give others. They might specify an activity to share together, or entitle

the recipient to a half-hour of the donor's time to be spent as the recipient wishes.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites participants to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite participants to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Variation

Instead of sharing their joys and concerns, invite children to light a candle and, if they wish, answer a question. A question to fit this session might be "What is a gift you have received that did not cost money?"

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. Alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arises in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION – WISE PEOPLE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation – Wise People](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – Wise People](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Handout 1, UU Source Constellation – Wise People, for all participants plus one extra.
- Print out Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – Wise People.
- Using Leader Resource 1 as a guide, on one copy of the handout use star stickers to mark the two figures holding hands: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Say in your own words:

Today we are talking about our second Source, "lives of people from long ago and today who remind us to be kind and fair." We will hear about Ralph Waldo Emerson and how his daughter, Ellen, taught him a way to be loving. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a minister and a writer, who shared that lesson with others, more than 100 years ago. Today we can still learn from Ellen and her father that giving time and love is the best kind of gift.

Distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say:

We think it's important to learn from people from long ago and today who have shared their wisdom about how to be kind and fair. So we have a constellation to honor this Source. Some of the stars can be connected to look like two people holding hands. Can you find the constellation in our Night Sky?

Give them time to look for the two figures. As children find them, let them show you by tracing with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the two people holding hands by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they may take home their own Wise People constellations.

Say, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from the lives of people from long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.

Light the chalice.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: SONG – MAGIC PENNY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Magic Penny Lyrics](#) (included in this document) or newsprint, markers, and tape
- A recording of the song "Magic Penny" and music player. (optional) A version of the song can be found at [Rhapsody.com](#)

Preparation for Activity

- Copies of Handout 2, Magic Penny Lyrics for all participants. Or, save paper by writing the lyrics on newsprint and posting them.
- If you are unfamiliar with the song, learn it so you can teach/lead the group. Or, invite a musical volunteer to join the group to lead this activity. Hear a version of the song on the [Rhapsody.com](#) website.

Description of Activity

Singing this song reinforces the teaching that by giving love, we receive love in return.

Gather participants in a circle. Teach them the song and then sing it one time through together.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: TRANSCENDENTALISM IN PICTURE BOOKS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of any or all the Henry picture books by D.B. Johnson: *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg*, *Henry Works*, *Henry Builds a Cabin*, *Henry's Night*, and *Henry Climbs a Mountain*

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain picture books from your local library or purchase them (available online from [Amazon](#) (at www.amazon.com/)).

Description of Activity

The experiences of Henry, the bear in these picture books, are based on the life of Unitarian Transcendentalist author Henry David Thoreau. Sharing a few of the stories at one sitting gives participants a sense of how Transcendentalism shapes a lifestyle.

Gather in a circle and read the stories. Debrief with questions such as:

- Why do you suppose Henry ... (Based on the stories you read, fill in the blanks with:
...walked to Fitchburg instead of taking the train? ...built a small cabin in the woods instead of a big house? ...didn't pay his taxes? ...works by walking?)
- Does Henry do things differently than most people today? What's different?
- How does Henry like to live?
- Do you think you might like to live that way? Why?

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 7: STORY: GIVE LOVE

By Denise Tracy, from the collection *Stream of Living Souls*. Used with permission.

"What do you want for Christmas?" the father asked his daughter.

She wrinkled her nose and scrunched her eyes and thought.

"Do you want a doll?"

"No."

"A tea set?"

"No."

"A pony?"

"No, Daddy, I have to think. I want this year to be a special year, a year to remember."

"Alright. You think and let me know."

Ellen thought.

[Ask the children what you think Ellen might have wanted. After a few suggestions, continue the story.]

She thought of bonbons, chocolate, new dresses, hats, kid boots, books, gloves, lace collars, but none of these were what she wanted. What would be special?

Each day her father asked her, "Ellen, do you know what you want for Christmas yet?"

And Ellen would shake her head. "No, Father, I'm still thinking."

After four days her father said, "Ellen?"

"Yes, Father, I've decided."

"Well?"

"I have a riddle. It will tell you what gift I want for Christmas. The riddle is this: You cannot buy it, for it is worth all the money you have, but only *you* can give it."

[Teach the children the riddle and invite them to remember it for later in the story.]

"I need to repeat this riddle because it will tell me what gift you want for Christmas—I cannot buy it, because it is worth all the money I have, but only I can give it. Is that right?"

"Yes, Father."

"Well, now it is my turn to think about your riddle. I have to find the perfect present in the mystery."

Her father paced and pondered. He repeated the riddle over and over.

[Have the group say the riddle aloud together.]

"I cannot buy it, but only I can give it." He paced and pondered. Finally, he smiled, "I know what it is! I know what it is!" Now he had to think how to give it.

[Invite the children to guess what he will give her. After a few suggestions, continue the story.]

Under the Christmas tree there was no present from her father. Ellen didn't expect one. After the presents were opened, Ellen's father said, "It is now time for Ellen's present from me. Ellen, come and sit with me."

So Ellen climbed into the armchair and sat on her father's lap. "My present to you is very special. I hope it is what you wanted—for it is not a book, or a toy, or clothes, but instead it is a present that is for all seasons and for each day. This year your Christmas present from me is that we will spend time together every week, just the two of us. For you are my very special daughter and I love you dearly."

Ellen hugged her father. "Oh, Daddy, I knew you would figure out the riddle."

Her father said...

[Have the children join you in saying...]

"You cannot buy it, for it is worth all the money you have, but only you can give it."

"It took me a long time to figure out the answer, but when I did I knew what gift you wanted. The answer was simple—give yourself."

"Oh, Father, I wanted a gift to make this year special. Time together with you will make this year the very best year of my life!" Ellen looked into her father's eyes. "Why, Father, you are crying!"

"Yes. You teach me more than any book I've ever read or written. By giving you time, I will gain more than I give."

It was Ellen's turn to figure out this riddle. How could her father, by spending time with her, get more than he gave? She thought she knew, love multiplies. But perhaps she would only understand when she was older, when she had children of her own.

But her father understood. And when he wrote an essay on Giving he wrote, "Give yourself." For he knew the wonder of this gift. Ralph Waldo Emerson learned the gift of giving from his daughter, Ellen Tucker Emerson.

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 7:
HANDOUT 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION: WISE PEOPLE**



LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 7: HANDOUT 2: MAGIC PENNY LYRICS

Love is something if you give it away, give it away, give it away.

Love is something if you give it away,

You end up having more.

It's just like a magic penny,

Hold it tight and you won't have any.

Lend it, spend it,

And you'll have so many,

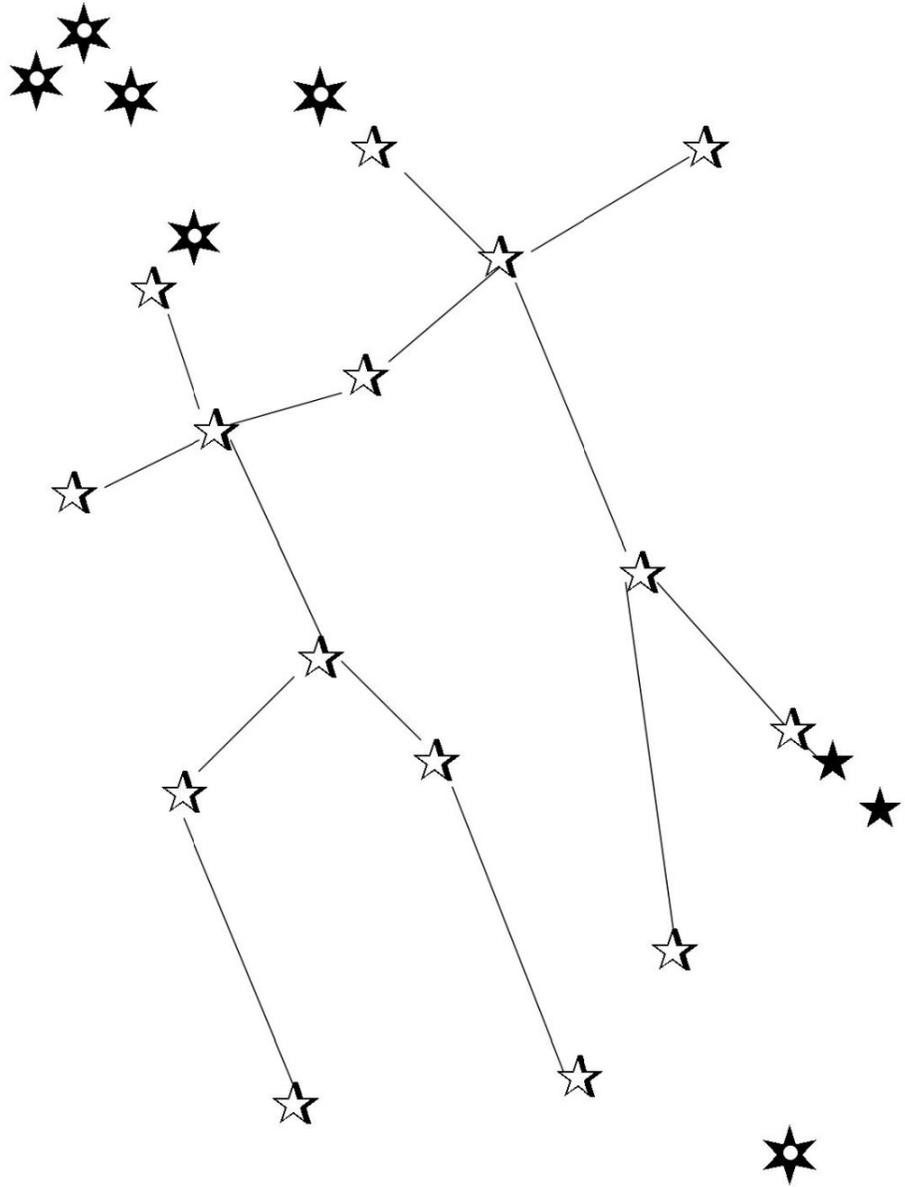
They'll roll all over the floor ... for

Love is something I you give it away, give it away, give it away.

Love is something if you give it away,

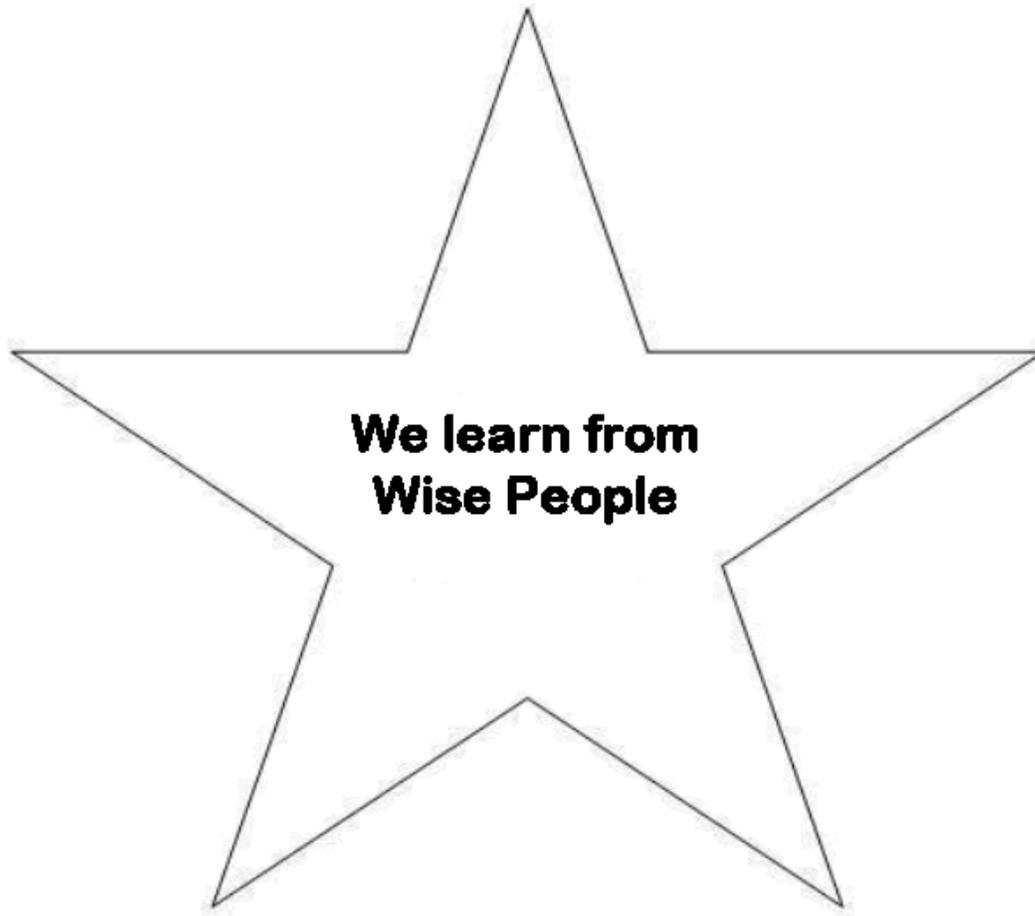
You end up having more.

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 7:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION ANSWER SHEET:
WISE PEOPLE**



People of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 7: LR 2, SOURCE STAR: WISE PEOPLE



FIND OUT MORE

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Read Robert D. Richardson, Jr.'s biography, *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Online, read the [article about Emerson](http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/ralphwaldoemerson.html) (at www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/ralphwaldoemerson.html) in the Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography.

SESSION 8: LOVE IS ACCEPTING

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Learning to live with what you're born with/is the process./the involvement./the making of a life. — Diane Wakoski, American poet and essayist, in The Motorcycle Betrayal Poems

This session focuses on the fourth Unitarian Universalist Source, expressed in children's language as "Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves." The story from Hebrew scripture of Jacob and Rachel meeting for the first time highlights and questions gender stereotypes. Dress-up, role playing, and practice at showing and understanding emotions prompt exploration of gender traits.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore Jewish teachings "which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves," part of the fourth Source of Unitarian Universalism, through a story from Hebrew scripture
- Build awareness of gender stereotypes and how they can harm everyone
- Identify and challenge gender bias, in age-appropriate ways
- Develop participants' ability to express their emotions
- Develop participants' empathy.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience the fourth Source of Unitarian Universalism, "Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all other as we love ourselves," through a story from Hebrew scripture
- Understand that a Unitarian Universalist faith guides us to accept everyone as they are—the same way we want to be accepted—regardless of how someone's behavior matches the gender we perceive them to be
- Explore gender roles and stereotypes in an age-appropriate manner
- Build emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, and empathy.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	7
Activity 1: Dress Up	15
Activity 2: Story – The Strong Man Who Cried	15
Activity 3: Emotion Charades	13
Faith In Action: Toys and Gender	
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation – Jewish and Christian Teachings	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

When have you struggled to accept yourself, or struggled against others' inability to accept you, because you did not conform to others' expectations related to gender? Failing to accept ourselves for who we are can cause enormous problems. Our culture, steeped in masculine and feminine ideals and stereotypes, influences us at all ages. Even young children measure themselves against prevailing gender messages, usually without them (or us) realizing it. This session aims to disrupt the gender stereotyping that most children are absorbing and to anchor children's thinking about gender in love and acceptance.

Consider how gender stereotypes affect you and your relationships with others. Now think back to how gender stereotypes affected your life when you were young, about the age of the children you will lead today. Ask yourself:

- Was there a time when gender stereotypes caused you, or someone close to you, to suffer harm or judgment from others? Pain? Confusion?
- What could adults have said, done, or shown you, at the time, to loosen the grip of gender stereotypes for you?
- What could adults have done to promote self-acceptance and acceptance of others?

Strengthen your resolve that we need not accept the limits of stereotypes. We have the power to decide what makes sense for us. We must affirm others' rights to decide what makes sense for them. Be ready to communicate your resolve to the children.

SESSION PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Drawing paper, and color markers or crayons

Preparation for Activity

- Set paper and markers/crayons at work tables.

Description of Activity

This activity is appropriate when participants do not arrive in a group but arrive individually before the session begins.

Welcome children. Invite them to find a seat at a work table, take some paper, and draw activities they enjoy doing. A second adult should greet new parents and explain the plans for the day.

If children do this activity, be sure to give them an opportunity before the session begins to share what they have drawn.

Including All Participants

This is an excellent time for co-leaders to notice the abilities and temperament of each child. Note how they respond to you. Are they shy and reticent? Are they anxious and jumpy? Invite a parent to share any concerns and pertinent information, including information about children's allergies. Do you have a sign-in sheet? As the children settle in, co-leaders should review the names of the children attending and share any issues that may need special attention during the session.

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you

need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.

- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words posted on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words responsively.

Referring to the Night Sky display, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other people all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we will learn from Jewish teachings. We will hear a story with a message to love and accept others for who they are, as we want others to accept us. Jewish and Christian teachings about the importance of love are our fourth Unitarian Universalist Source.

Distribute Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics or indicate the lyrics you have posted. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts or newsprint for re-use.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and the song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid a fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: DRESS UP (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Dress-up clothes, including highly gendered clothing such as princess gear and hardhats as well as gender neutral items and a variety of scarves and pieces of cloth to supplement dress-up clothes

Preparation for Activity

- Set out the clothes for easy viewing and access.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to dress up in any clothes available. Encourage them to put on whatever appeals to them. Scarves and pieces of fabric can be draped in all kinds of ways. Encourage creativity.

Leave a few minutes to re-gather the group and lead a discussion with these questions:

- Do you like to dress up? When are some times you have had fun dressing up?
- Are some of you wearing clothes that are boys' clothes? Are some of you wearing clothes that are girls' clothes? Who is wearing clothes for any gender? [Opinions will differ. Do not correct children's opinions. To model acceptance of all gender expression and debunking of stereotypes, you can affirm, for any item: "Boys can wear that," "Girls can wear that," "Any gender can wear that."]
- Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a boy (if you are not a boy)? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a girl (if you are not a girl)?
- What are some things you think girls do that boys don't?
- What are some things you think boys do that girls don't?

If possible, allow participants to keep the dress-up clothes on for the remainder of the session. Or, have them remove the clothes and put them away at the end of the activity.

Including All Participants

Set up and lead this activity with words that are sure to make all participants comfortable. Avoid generalizations that reinforce stereotypes and comments that carry assumptions about an individual child's gender identity or dress-up choices.

Remember that many children at this age have a sense of their own gender that may differ from the gender expression you observe.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – THE STRONG MAN WHO CRIED (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Strong Man Who Cried](#)" (included in this document)
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as a set (a flock) of small sheep toys, a handkerchief or box of tissues, and a baby jar with water, and photos of things you find extraordinarily beautiful
- A chime, rain stick, or other instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Dress-up clothing for children to use role-playing characters

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props. This story is very easy to memorize, and very effective when told, instead of read. Consider inviting two volunteers to role play the story silently while you tell it.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget

Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up to show the children and then placed directly on the table.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one. As items come back to you, display them on the table. Then say, in your own words:

Today we are exploring a Jewish message of love. Jewish teachings that tell us to love all others as we love ourselves are part of our fourth Unitarian Universalist Source. The story today comes from the Torah (the Jewish holy book). It's about Jacob and Rachel. It's also about being different.

Ask the children briefly if they have ever felt excluded. Ask them why it is important we are inclusive of everyone. Affirm that as Unitarian Universalists, we believe it is right to treat everyone the way we want to be treated, and we work to make sure everyone is treated fairly and accepted for who they are.

Say, in your own words:

In the story you will hear, two people were not accepted because they did not behave the way people expected them to. The story was written a very long time ago, when gender stereotypes were very strict. That means girls and boys were expected to act a certain way, according to their gender: girl, or boy.

Optional: Tell the children you would like two volunteers to role-play the story of Jacob and Rachel. Explain that the volunteers may choose costumes (if you have brought some) and will act out the story as you tell it. Assign roles and invite volunteers to quickly put on costumes and rejoin the circle.

Remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Remind the children that you will use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing

so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket.

In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice. Then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the instrument.

If children will play roles, invite them to come join you. Indicate the parameters of their "stage."

Read/tell the story. When you have finished, sound the instrument again. Lead a discussion with these questions:

- Why did Jacob cry? Was it okay that he cried? What could Jacob's father have said to him?
- What about Rachel tending sheep? (Point out that when this story was written, in Hebrew scripture, long ago, it was unusual for a girl to have this job.) What do you think about that?
- Are there any situations where you might be surprised to see a boy? Are there situations where you might be surprised to see a girl? (You might prompt by asking the group if some sports have mostly boys and other sports have mostly girls. Or, ask the group if they think equal numbers of boys and girls play particular sports, such as basketball, jump rope, or soccer, and why.)
- The story about Jacob and Rachel comes from a long, long time ago. Do you think people still have stereotypes about boys and girls? Do people still think only boys are strong? Do people think it is only okay for girls to cry?

Ask the children to take a moment and think about things they like to do. Say, in your own words:

Sometimes kids fit a gender stereotype of a boy or a girl, but just as often, they do not. Gender stereotypes are not fair. They hurt all of us, because they do not fit many of us.

Whatever our gender is, most of us like a few things people do not expect us to like because of our gender, or we don't like some things people do expect us to like. What a kid likes to do or wear does not have to fit other people's ideas for that kid's gender. We need to accept everyone, whether they fit a gender stereotype or not.

Including All Participants

Note participants' reactions to the story and discussion. If a child seems especially uncomfortable, consider mentioning your observations to your religious educator or minister.

ACTIVITY 3: EMOTION CHARADES (13 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- List on a sheet of newsprint some emotions for children to act out, such as happy, sad, joyful, confused, frustrated, excited, and surprised.

Description of Activity

This activity exercises the children's ability to express a wide variety of emotions and recognize emotions expressed by others. Link to the story "The Strong Man Who Cried" by reminding the children that Jacob wanted to cry whenever he saw something beautiful. Ask them what emotion Jacob was expressing—responses might include happiness, joy, overwhelmed, appreciation, delight.

Ask a volunteer to act out an emotion on the list, or one of their own, and invite the other children to guess the emotion. If the group is reluctant to volunteer, act out one of the emotions you have listed and ask the group if they can guess what you are feeling.

After a few are acted out, ask:

- Is it easy for you to act out emotions? Why or why not?
- Are some emotions easier to show than others?
- When is it easy for you to tell what emotion another person is showing? When is it harder to tell?
- How do you respond when you see someone laugh? How do you respond when you see someone cry?

- When you are sad, do you want other people to know how you feel? What do you want them to do? How do you let them know? Do you like to talk about it when you are sad?
- When you are happy, do you want to share that as well? How? How do you let people know you are happy and want to share your feeling with them?
- When is it important to let others know how you are feeling? Do you sometimes hide how you feel?
- What can you do to let others know how you feel (if they can't tell by your body language)? We learned from the story today that Rachel and Jacob learned from each other by showing their emotions to each other.

Including All Participants

Emotions encompass a wide range of feelings, and the way that people express these different emotions varies greatly from person to person. Some people are quite dramatic, and it is always easy to tell what they are feeling, while others are quiet and reserved, leaving people to guess how they are feeling. For the dramatic, this activity will be easy, but for the reserved ones, it may take some stretching and the challenge to go beyond one's own comfort zone in order to grow and learn.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 4, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star — Jewish and Christian Teachings](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home section
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Session 4, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star — Jewish and Christian Teachings](#). Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Write the words for the fourth UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the Jewish and Christian teachings that tell us to love all others as we love ourselves.

- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, "Our Sources" Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw something from the story about Jacob and Rachel they heard today. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from Jewish and Christian Teachings" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we learned from Jewish teachings. We heard a story about Jacob and Rachel, two people from Hebrew scripture—with a message to love and accept other people as we want to be loved and accepted, like Jacob and Rachel did in biblical times.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: TOYS AND GENDER

Materials for Activity

- A long sheet of mural paper or poster board
- Catalogs and magazines with photos of toys
- Scissors and glue sticks
- Optional: Small toys, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Cut out pictures of toys. Make sure to cut out pictures of toys marketed specifically to girls and toys marketed to boys as well as "gender neutral" toys. Suggestions: a Slinky(TM), Lego(TM) building toys, Mr. Potato Head(TM), alphabet blocks, jacks, tops, hula hoops, science kits, Light Brights(TM), puzzles, musical instruments. Provide many choices for all participants.
- Lay out the cut-outs on one long table, in no particular order.
- On a sheet of mural paper or poster board, write "Boys" at one end and "Girls" at the other end.

Description of Activity

This activity generates thought and discussion about gender and gender bias through considering images of toys.

Tell participants they will make a continuum with the pictures of toys (and the small toys, if you have some). Ask if anyone knows what a continuum is. Explain that a continuum is a line you can draw to help you compare things on the line to each other.

Invite participants to look over the display of toys. Give them an opportunity to just talk about the toys and discover on their own. Then ask them to arrange the toys in a line, putting the girl toys at one end and the boy toys at the other. Do not say anything about "gender neutral."

Allow the decision-making and discussion to happen naturally. Hopefully, some toys will go undecided and remain in the middle of the table. Once decisions are made and the discussion slows, ask questions like:

- Why do you think these are boy's (girl's) toys? What makes this a girl's (boy's) toy? Color? Shape? What can you do with it?
- Does everyone who is a girl (boy) like this toy?
- (Point to the toys children have left or placed in the middle.) And what about these toys?

Invite children to change where the toys are on the continuum.

Invite volunteers to name three of the toys they like and say why.

Have participants glue/tape the pictures/toys to the poster board, keeping them in the order the group has decided.

Including All Participants

If a child in the group has a visual impairment, your co-leader or a child volunteer can describe photos of toys to the child and discuss the questions together. Even better, gather many toys that can be identified tactilely. Skip the images of toys completely, and have the children make a three-dimensional continuum.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

Learning to live with what you're born with/is the process,/the involvement./the making of a life. — Diane Wakoski, American poet and essayist, in The Motorcycle Betrayal Poems

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children learned from our fourth Unitarian Universalist Source, "Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves," and explored gender stereotypes through a story based on Jacob and Rachel, from Hebrew scripture. While we may wish to believe the damage of gender bias belongs to the past, there is still much to be learned about gender identity. We talked about gender as a feature of identity we find on a continuum, rather than a binary (male/female).

Another topic explored today is one of expressing emotions. The group role played expressing emotions and how they react to those emotions.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. The story "The Strong Man Who Cried" challenges gender stereotypes. Jacob cries whenever he sees something beautiful. Rachel would rather tend sheep than work in the home with other women. Use this story for a teachable moment in your family. Ask about Jacob and crying. Ask about Rachel and the way her father responds to her. The children learned that this story was written a long time ago, when gender roles in many cultures were strict. Ask children whether they notice any ways people act or things that they do because of their gender at home, at school, or in the media. Name specific people who do or do not fit a gender stereotype. Talk about how a gender stereotype can hurt everyone—the person whose behavior does not fit it, as well as people whose behavior does seem to fit. Talk about how stereotyping can prevent people from giving and receiving the love and acceptance we all deserve.

Family Discovery. Try this session's Faith In Action activity at home, with items you have around the house. If more than one gender lives in your home, examine who plays with which toys. If there is only one gender represented, what toys do you have? Are any toys which, according to stereotype, "belong" to the other gender? Invite everyone to play with a toy they do not usually play with.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt “flames” and a basket of felt “candles”
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt “flames” in one basket and the “candles” in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite participants to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Variation

Instead of sharing their joys and concerns, invite children to light a candle and, if they wish, answer a question. A question to fit this session might be “Is there something you like to do, even though other people might seem surprised that you like it?”

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. Alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arises in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION — JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 4, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation — Jewish and Christian Teachings](#) (included in this document)
- Session 4, Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation](#) (included in this document) Answer Sheet – Jewish and Christian Teachings
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Session 4, Handout 1, UU Source Constellation – Jewish and Christian Teachings for all participants plus one extra.
- Print out Session 4, Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – Jewish and Christian Teachings.
- Using Leader Resource 1 as a guide, on one copy of the handout use star stickers to mark the Star of David and the Christian cross: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars

and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say:

We think it's important to learn from Jewish and Christian teachings that have wisdom

about love. So we have a constellation to honor this Source. Some of the stars can be connected to look like a six-pointed Star of David and a Christian cross. Can you find the constellation in our Night Sky?

Give children time to look for the Star of David and the Christian cross. As they find them, let them show you by tracing with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars. Then, invite them to pencil the star and cross symbols on their handouts by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they make take home their own Jewish and Christian Teachings constellations.

Say, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from Jewish and Christian teachings that have a message about love.

Light the chalice.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 8: STORY: THE STRONG MAN WHO CRIED

From *Does God Have a Big Toe? Stories About Stories in the Bible* by Rabbi Marc Gellman (HarperTrophy, 1993). Used with permission.

Jacob cried a lot. Jacob cried when he was happy. Jacob cried when he was sad. But mostly Jacob cried when he saw beautiful things. The sight of a fresh new flower or a sunset would fill him with happiness and he would just cry. He couldn't help it. But his father Isaac was not happy about having a son who cried a lot.

Isaac would not take Jacob hunting because Jacob would cry at the thought of some furry little animal becoming his supper. So Isaac would take his other son Esau, who loved to hunt and never cried.

"Why can't you be more like your brother Esau?" Isaac would scold Jacob. "He hunts and fights and never cries. He is a real man."

And Jacob would answer, "I cry when I feel like crying, I just can't change that." Then Isaac would stomp off, kick the dirt, and mutter strange words.

Meanwhile, Rachel, who was Jacob's cousin living in a place called Harron, was also having trouble with her father. Rachel was a shepherd, and this drove her father Laban crazy. Day and night he would yell at her, "Get away from those sheep and goats! Why can't you be more like your sister Leah? She doesn't smell like sheep. She sits in the tent and cooks and sews. She is a real woman."

And Rachel would answer, "I like being a shepherd. I just can't change that." Then her father would stomp off, kick the dirt, and mutter strange words.

But there was one part of shepherding Rachel did not like. The well for watering the flocks had to be corked up each day with a huge rock so that all the water would not gush out and dry up. The rock was so big that every morning all the shepherds in the area had to push together to move the rock off the well. And every night they had to gather together to push it back on.

One day, on the way to morning rock pushing, Rachel saw a new man at the well. He was small and fair skinned, with warm brown eyes, and he was talking with the other shepherds at the well. Suddenly this little man, all by himself, pushed the big rock off the well. The shepherds were amazed. The man approached Rachel and said, "My name is Jacob, the son of Isaac and Rebekah. I am your cousin and I have been on a long journey. I am very happy to see you." The Jacob kissed Rachel and started to cry because she was so very beautiful.

When the other shepherds saw Jacob crying, they said, "He is strong, but real men don't cry," and they walked away.

But Rachel did not leave Jacob. She sat by him on the rock and they watched the flocks drink from the well. Rachel said, "I never saw a man as strong as you who cries." Jacob looked at Rachel and said, "I never saw a woman so beautiful as you who is a shepherd."

They laughed and Jacob cried, and then after a time they went home—together.

FIND OUT MORE

Developing Positive Gender Identity

Some books for children and adults with a message of gender acceptance are:

- *Who Are You? the kids' guide to gender identity* by Brook Pessin-Whedbee, illustrated by Naomi Bardoff (2017)
- *I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas (2014)
- *Jack (Not Jackie)* by Erica Silverman, illustrated by Holly Hatam (2018)
- *Red: A Crayon's Story* by Michael Hall (2015)

The Human Rights Campaign website offers resources for and about [gender-expansive children and youth](#).

The [Center for Gender Sanity](#) (at <http://www.gendersanity.com/>) website on gender identity provides a helpful [gender diagram](#) (at www.gendersanity.com/diagram.html) that shows gender as a continuum.

Dedicated to equal rights for all in the transgender community, [The National Center for Transgender Equality](#) (at transequality.org/index.html) in Washington, DC monitors relevant legislation.

Fourth UU Source Teachings

Highly recommended for families and all ages, Rabbi Marc Gellman's *Does God Have a Big Toe? Stories about Stories in the Bible* (HarperTrophy, 1993) includes the story "The Strong Man Who Cried" and other wonderful, playful stories of "midrash," Jewish traditional tales that extend and interpret the stories in Hebrew scripture.

SESSION 9: LOVE OF LEARNING

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The reward of the young scientist is the emotional thrill of being the first person in the history of the world to see something or to understand something. Nothing can compare with that experience... The reward of the old scientist is the sense of having seen a vague sketch grow into a masterly landscape. — Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, astronomer, accepting the Henry Norris Russell Prize from the American Astronomical Society

Participants encounter the fifth Source, which "... counsels us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science..." through Unitarian Universalist Cecilia Payne, the first person to be given the title "astronomer." Emphasize Cecilia's love of learning and engage the children in hands-on scientific investigation to illustrate that Unitarian Universalists value discovery throughout life and use reason as a source of strength in our faith.

The Faith in Action activity suggests fundraising for Books For Africa, an organization that collects money and books for communities in Africa in desperate need of books for schools and libraries.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the fifth Source of Unitarian Universalism, "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"
- Introduce Cecilia Payne, astronomer and Unitarian Universalist
- Strengthen a love of learning and discovery
- Foster an interest in science in general, and astronomy in particular.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify "reason and science" as the fifth Source of Unitarian Universalism
- Discover Cecilia Payne, a Unitarian Universalist historic figure in astronomy

- Experience how we can learn about something through science and still recognize its beauty
- Learn that Unitarian Universalists value discovery throughout life and use reason as a source of strength in our faith.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	7
Activity 1: Center of Gravity	10
Activity 2: Story – For the Love of Stars	15
Activity 3: Blue Sky, Red Sunset	18
Faith in Action: Books for Africa Sunday	
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation – Reason and Science	10
Alternate Activity 3: Phases of the Moon	15
Alternate Activity 4: Telescopes	45
Alternate Activity 5: Multigenerational Night Sky Watch	

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

How often do you observe the night sky? Is the night sky clearly visible from where you live, at this time of year? If you can, observe the night sky. Do you notice the phase of the moon? Is it a new moon, barely there? Is it visible during the day? Is it a full moon, with light reflecting so bright it lights up the night? What time of day did you travel to your meeting place? Was there pink in the sky?

Consider the universe and all the discoveries made in your lifetime. Then, consider the universe and all the mystery and wonder it holds; the unknown and unknowable that humbles and arouses us—no matter how much science we know.

Read, and reflect:

You Be Glad at That Star

Several years ago and shortly after twilight, our 3 1/2-year-old tried to gain his parents' attention to a shining star.

The parents were busy with time and schedules, the irritabilities of the day and other worthy preoccupations. "Yes, yes, we see the star—now I'm busy, don't bother me." On hearing this, the young one launched through the porch door, fixed us with a fiery gaze and said, "You be glad at that star!" — Clarke Wells,

in *The Strangeness of this Business*, 1975

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.
- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](#) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words posted on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words responsively.

Indicate the Night Sky display. If the group includes children who have heard the Opening before, you might invite them to explain the Night Sky, the Big Dipper, the North Star in their own words.

Or, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, the Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other peoples all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern

states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about a scientist named Cecilia Payne. More importantly, we are going to explore science as something exciting and a reason as a way to look for answers that we, as Unitarian Universalists, think is really important.

Science will be familiar to this age group, but "reason" may be an abstract concept. You might explain that "to reason" means to gather information from different places and then to make a decision, or to decide some conclusions, on our own, based on that information.

Distribute Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics or indicate the lyrics you have posted. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts or newsprint for re-use.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and the song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid a fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: CENTER OF GRAVITY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A flying disk: a Frisbee(TM), or an unbreakable plate

Preparation for Activity

- Clear a large table or (uncarpeted) floor space for participants to assemble in a circle.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle. Explain that science helps us understand our world by making observations and asking questions.

Spin the disk or plate on its rim. Have participants work together to keep it spinning. Let a few participants keep it spinning. Then, ask the children to let the disk spin on its own. When it falls flat, process with these questions:

- What made the disk stop spinning? (Suggest "gravity" if the group does not guess it.)
- Is gravity magical? Is it a science?
- Can the plate stand on its own without spinning?
- What else does gravity do in our world? (Suggest fruit falling from trees, objects stay put when placed on the ground, when we jump up we will come down.)
- What if there was no gravity?
- Did you learn anything new?

Conclude by saying something like:

Observing our world and asking questions about things that happen help people understand the world around them. Some are questions that science can answer and some are questions that religions try to answer. How does gravity work? That is a question science can answer. Why is there gravity? That's a question religion wonders about, and we may never have a definite answer.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – FOR THE LOVE OF STARS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of the story "[For the Love of Stars](#) (included in this document) "
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as a galaxy wheel or constellation map, sparkly stars such as those used as Christmas tree decorations, a small solar system mobile, a photo of Hubble telescope, or photos taken from [Hubble](http://hubblesite.org/gallery/printshop/) (at hubblesite.org/gallery/printshop/)
- A chime, rain stick, or other instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Dress-up clothing for role-playing children to use characters

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times.
- This story is not plot-driven. It is a biography. To keep young children's interest, help their understanding, and build their comfort with "science words," write these words on newsprint: meteorite, astronomer, Sir Isaac Newton, botany, physics, hydrogen, Ph.D. Place the newsprint in the story basket. Post it just before you begin the story. Invite them to listen for these words as you tell the story.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget

Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one. As items come back to you, display them on the table. Then say, in your own words:

Today I have a story to share about an astronomer. Her name was Cecilia Payne and she was a Unitarian Universalist. It's a big deal that she was the first person, ever, to be called an astronomer. More importantly, she loved science and believed that using reason to figure things out was a way to answer the big questions we all share.

Remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Remind the children that you will use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket.

In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice. Then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the instrument.

Read/tell the story. When you have finished, sound the instrument again. Lead a discussion with these questions:

- Do you ever think about what you want to be when you grow up?

- Have you ever done a science experiment?
- Have you ever been excited about figuring out how something works?
- What do you think about not believing someone because of who they are (female, young, a different skin color)?

ACTIVITY 3: BLUE SKY, RED SUNSET (18 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A large, transparent container with flat parallel sides (a 2 1/2 gallon aquarium tank is ideal)
- A flashlight
- One cup of milk in a measuring cup
- A large spatula or stirring spoon

Preparation for Activity

- Set the container on a table and fill it 3/4 full with water.

Description of Activity

This quiet, more contemplative activity helps participants recognize that while science can be exciting, it also involves reflection. Along the fine line between mystery and knowing is found the spiritual aspect of learning and discovering. Why is the sky blue, but a sunset red? This very simple experiment shows why. Hopefully, it will also evoke a sense of wonder! This experiment is used with permission from a University of Wisconsin website, [Science Is Fun](http://www.scifun.org) (at www.scifun.org).

Light the flashlight and hold it against the side of the container so its beam shines through the water. Ask children to note the direction of the beam. They may be able to see some particles of floating dust, which appear white. However, it is difficult to see exactly where the beam passes through the water.

Now add 1/4 cup of milk to the water and stir it. Hold the flashlight to the side of the container, as before. Ask the children to share their observations. Affirm that the beam of light is now easily visible as it passes through the water. Look at the beam from the side (as it travels through the water) and from the end where the beam shines out of the container (looking directly toward the flashlight). From the side, the beam appears slightly blue, and on the end, it appears somewhat yellow.

Add another 1/4 cup of milk to the water and stir it. Ask the children what they see. The beam will look more blue from the side and more yellow, perhaps even orange, from the end.

Add the rest of the milk and stir. What has changed? Now the beam will look even more blue from the side. From the end, it will look orange. Furthermore, the beam seems to spread more now than it did before; it is not quite as narrow.

Process with these questions:

- What causes the beam from the flashlight to look blue from the side and orange when viewed head on? (Astronomers know that light travels in straight lines, unless it encounters the edges of a material. This is true when light travels through air, and it's true when light travels through water. Milk becomes many tiny particles suspended in the water. These particles scatter the light and make the beam visible from the side and different colors (like in a rainbow) scatter and separate, so we can see the blue and the orange light.)
- What does this experiment have to do with blue sky and orange sunsets? (The light you see when you look at the sky is sunlight that is scattered by particles of dust in the atmosphere, the same way the flashlight is scattered by particles in milk. When you look at the setting sun, it's like looking directly into the beam of the flashlight, and you see the orange and red spectrum of light.)

Make the point that knowing why light appears different—refracts differently—in different situations need not take away from our enjoyment of a sunset's beauty.

Do not let your explaining role dominate this activity. Minimize fussing with the lamp, balloon, and ball. Emphasize the children's own observations. Keep explanations short and simple. Allow silences so children can absorb what you are showing them. This is a great activity for a wide assortment of learning modalities. The challenge is to keep them from playing in the water!

Including All Participants

If the group includes a visually impaired child, verbally describe your actions and their effects at each step of this experiment.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 3, Leader Resource 3, [Source Star — Reason and Science](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home

- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Session 3, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Reason and Science. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Write the words for the fifth UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the use of reason and the discoveries of science.

- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather participants at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw something they learned about astronomy, the planets, or the sky. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from Reason and Science" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we learned how Unitarian Universalists use reason and the discoveries of science to learn about our world and get closer to the world's mystery. We learned how Cecilia Payne did that, and became the world's first astronomer.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a

musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: BOOKS FOR AFRICA SUNDAY

Preparation for Activity

- Go online and learn about the organization [Books for Africa](#) (<https://www.booksforafrica.org/>). Download brochures. You will see an opportunity on the website to register your fundraiser.
- Arrange with your minister, social justice committee, or lay worship leaders to donate one Sunday's collection plate to Books for Africa.

Description of Activity

Through her love of discovery and learning, Cecilia Payne made significant contributions to astronomy. Not everyone in the world has the same access and tools to learn. Books for Africa is an organization dedicated to bringing books to people in underdeveloped nations.

Plan a short presentation with the group to present to the congregation before the collection plate is passed during the service. Talk about Cecilia Payne and her love of learning. Tell the congregation that this collection is an opportunity to give others more of a chance to learn from books to which they have had limited, if any, access.

Process this Faith in Action activity with the group by saying:

As Unitarian Universalists, it is important that we share our resources with those with who have less than we do. Helping people get access to books is feeding their minds. We know we can donate money and food for people who are hungry. There are people in the world hungry for learning.

Invite participants to discuss this statement. Help the children make connections between sharing the tools people need to use reason and science and letting the fifth UU Source guide us to love.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

The reward of the young scientist is the emotional thrill of being the first person in the history of the world to see something or to understand something. Nothing can compare with that experience... The reward of the old scientist is the sense of having seen a vague sketch grow into a masterly landscape. — Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, astronomer, accepting the Henry Norris Russell Prize from the American Astronomical Society

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children learned about the fifth Unitarian Universalist Source, in child-friendly words "the use of reason and the discoveries of science." We heard a story about Cecilia Payne, a Unitarian Universalist and the first professional astronomer. We conducted simple experiments to observe gravity and to investigate why sunsets are orange. Children learned that scientific investigation of falling objects or sunsets does not reduce their beauty or mystery, yet helps us understand our world.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about... your own love of learning. We continue to learn new things all the time. Cecilia Payne faced challenges as a woman interested in a scientific field (astronomy) which did not yet exist, and yet she persevered. Discuss with your family a time you made a

commitment to lifelong learning. Talk about something new you learned—in school, or not—and what that was like. How did you feel about school? What did you most enjoy doing in school? Why? Share with your child why you believe it's important that we learn and discover.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Learn about and track the [Hubble telescope](http://hubblesite.org/) (at hubblesite.org/) on a website that includes downloadable photographs. Another online resource is [Astronomy magazine](http://www.astronomy.com/asy/default.aspx) (at www.astronomy.com/asy/default.aspx); take note of the special editions.

Books your family might enjoy include:

- *A Child's Introduction to the Night Sky: The Story of the Stars, Planets, and Constellations — and How You Can Find Them in the Sky* by Michael Driscoll (Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2004)
- *Astronomy* by Kristen Lippincott (DK Eyewitness Books, 2008)
- *The Stars: A New Way To See Them* by H. A. Rey (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008)
- *Maybe Yes, Maybe No* by Dan Barker (Prometheus Books, 1993). In this child's introduction to healthy skepticism and critical thinking, the ten-year-old heroine, Andrea, is "always asking questions," writes Barker, because she thinks you should prove the truth.
- *Humanism, What's That?* by Helen Bennett (Prometheus Books, 2005). "This small volume holds out the hope and openness of Humanism in a form that can help young people confront Fundamentalist approaches to religion with confidence," writes Rev. William Sinkford, former President of the UUA.

Family Discovery. The science experiment that shows why the sky is blue, but the sunset is red would be easy to replicate at home. Download Session 9, Activity 3, Blue Sky, Red Sunset from the [Tapestry of Faith website](http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/index.shtml).

A Family Ritual. Every week, take time to observe the night sky. Note the position of the Big Dipper and locate the North Star. Keep a log. The cold winter months are the best time of year to view these constellations.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite the children to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Variation

Instead of sharing their joys and concerns, invite children to light a candle and, if they wish, answer a question. A question to fit this session might be "Can

you tell us about a time when you figured out something on your own?"

Including All Participants

If any participants are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION – REASON AND SCIENCE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 3, Handout 2, [UU Source Constellation – Reason and Science](#) (included in this document)
- Session 3, Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation](#) (included in this document) Answer Sheet – Reason and Science
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Session 3, Handout 1, UU Source Constellation – Reason and Science for all participants, plus one extra.
- Print out Session 3, Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – Reason and Science.
- Using the leader resource as a guide, use star stickers to mark the infinity sign constellation on one copy of the handout: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say in your own words:

Today we are talking about the "the use of reason and the discovery of science," our fifth Unitarian Universalist Source.

Unitarian Universalists believe science and reason will help us answer the big questions. They are called Humanists, and people who are humanists want concrete answers. Do we know for certain where we come from, how life began, or why we are here?

Unitarian Universalists believe it's important to learn from science and reason and to help us, we have a constellation named in honor of this Source. It's shaped like an infinity sign (a scientific symbol) to represent this Source. Are you familiar with that symbol? It looks like a figure eight resting on its side. Can you find it in our Night Sky?

Can you find the infinity sign in our Night Sky?

Give them time to look for the infinity symbol. As children find it, let them show you by tracing the shape with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the infinity sign constellation by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they may take home their own Reason and Science constellations.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: PHASES OF THE MOON (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A floor lamp with a bare bulb, and (optional) extension cord
- A large blue balloon, string, and thumbtacks (or painter's tape)

- A dowel or a long, flat tipped stick; a small, light ball (Styrofoam(TM) or a ping pong ball); and a glue gun

Preparation for Activity

- Plug in the floor lamp in a windowless corner, with space for you to walk safely around it.
- Glue the small ball to the end of the dowel.
- Blow up the balloon and use tacks (or tape) and string to suspend it from the ceiling, directly above the floor lamp.
- Read the Description of Activity. Practice using this set-up to throw shadows from the "moon" (the ball on the dowel) onto the surface of the "earth" (the blown-up balloon). Participants will need to see the shadows as you move the ball, in a circle, around the balloon. Make sure there is plenty of room to maneuver. Adjust the components as needed.

Description of Activity

The goal is to explore the phases of the moon.

Gather participants around the floor lamp and explain that the balloon represents Earth, the ball represents the moon, and the light bulb represents the sun. Using the stick, circle the "moon" around the "earth." Try it while standing in different positions. Invite the children to observe and describe the different shadows the moon casts on the earth.

Ask the children if they have ever seen a full moon, a half moon, or a quarter moon. They may be familiar with terms such as crescent moon, harvest moon, or "once in a blue moon." Invite them to look for moon shapes they know as you make different shadows.

Use these questions to lead a follow-up discussion:

- Imagine living thousands of years ago. What would it have been like for people who did not know the earth was round, or how the phases of the moon were formed? What would they think? What would they believe?
- Are you ever amazed by the sight of a full moon in the sky? Does understanding why you can see the whole moon make you more amazed, less amazed, neither, or not sure?

Optional: Have someone draw continents on the "earth" before it is suspended. Have someone else draw pockmarks on the "moon."

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: TELESCOPE (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- 12-inch long, 2 1/2-inch diameter cardboard rolls for all participants
- Box cutter
- Black construction paper, a few three-inch circle templates or compasses for drawing circles, pencils, and scissors
- Phosphorescent (not glow-in-the-dark) paint and toothpicks
- Images of constellations, including their names, and tape
- Chalk pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain cardboard mailing tubes or finished paper-towel or gift-wrap rolls. Or, roll sheets of corrugated cardboard into a tube for each participant.
- On each tube, use the box cutter to make a slit more than half way across the tube, approximately 1 1/2 inches from one end.
- Set compasses to draw a 3-inch diameter circle. Or, make a few 3-inch circle templates from stiff paper.
- Set construction paper, circle templates or compasses and pencils, paint, toothpicks, and cardboard tubes and on work tables.
- Post images of constellations for everyone to see.
- Make a sample “telescope” and constellation disk.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to use a compass or template to draw 3-inch diameter circles on the black construction paper and cut them out.

Ask the children to choose a constellation you have posted and draw it on a black paper circle, using toothpicks to make tiny dots, for the stars, using the phosphorescent paint. (Optional: Have children mark each star with a pencil and then poke the pencil through each dot to make a small puncture.)

Let the paint dry. Then, slip the circles into the slits you have cut into the tubes, to make “telescopes.” Have children use chalk pencils to write the constellation's name on the back of each disk.

Lead a discussion with these questions:

- Why do you think we made a telescope today?
- How is using a telescope an example of one of our Sources as Unitarian Universalists?
- Have you used a real telescope? Where? When? What was it like?
- What do learn when we study the stars?

Including All Participants

This activity will hold the attention of some, but may be too complicated for or tax the fine motor skills of others. Cut some circles to offer children, as needed. You may wish to paint a few constellation disks, as well. Consider providing books about constellations for children to browse (see Find Out More).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 5: MULTIGENERATIONAL NIGHT SKY WATCH

Preparation for Activity

- Plan for a multigenerational evening of watching the night sky—you will need a location away from city lights, and a clear night.
- Invite someone who is familiar with the constellations and how to locate them. Or, obtain a book from the local library that explains how to find constellations (and bring a flashlight, to read the book).
- Plan to bring the Description of Activity so you can guide a processing discussion while the group is together. You may also wish distribute the questions to participants to reflect on as a family before the sky watch.
- Make badges or buttons with a Unitarian Universalist chalice for all participants. They might say “UU Sky Watch.”

Description of Activity

Arrange a nighttime observation of stars.

It's important to take time to connect this activity to our identity as Unitarian Universalists. As the group observes the night sky, invite them to consider the science knowledge they bring to their observation and its influence on their concept of God. Process together with these suggested questions:

- What is the Unitarian Universalist Source we are focusing on today? (teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science; the fifth UU Source)

- Why do we turn to reason and science as a part of our religion?
- Is there mystery in the universe?
- Have all the questions about how the universe began been answered?
- Did you learn something new today?

children, adults, and elders in the congregation who need assistance walking? Make specific arrangements for someone to help them getting to the sky watch location. Does anyone in your congregation have trouble seeing? Perhaps invite the children to describe what they witness to people who would welcome a verbal description of the night sky. Invite and welcome all.

Including All Participants

Practice what it means to be inclusive by addressing accessibility issues for people of all ages. Are there

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 9: STORY: FOR THE LOVE OF STARS

Adapted from *Stories in Faith* by Gail Forsyth-Vail, a Tapestry of Faith Toolkit book (Boston: UUA, 2007). Used with permission.

Once there was a little girl named Cecilia who fell in love with the universe. She felt her heart leap with joy every time she learned something new about the world around her. She wanted to grow up to become an astronomer who studied the stars. Throughout her whole life, she studied and observed the stars, asking, "What are stars made of? How are they born? Do they die? And how do we know?" Throughout her whole life, her heart sang with each discover, each bit of new understanding about the wonders of the far-off sky.

When Cecilia was a small child in England, she saw a meteorite blaze across the sky. Her mother taught her a small rhyme so she could remember what it was:

"As we were walking home that night
We saw a shining meteorite."

She later told a friend that from that moment, she knew she would grow up to be an astronomer. She learned the names of all the constellations in the sky: the Big Dipper, Orion's Belt, and others. She was naturally very observant and precise, able to remember small details. By age twelve, she had learned to measure things and to do math problems easily. At her school, they had an interesting way of increasing the students' powers of observation. Once a week, students were required to find with their eyes (not touching) three little brass tacks scattered somewhere in the school garden. For Cecilia, always an observer, this exercise strengthened her resolve to be a scientist.

In 1912, when Cecilia was a teenager, there was very little education available for a young woman who wanted to be a scientist. She spent hours in a makeshift laboratory, which she called her chapel, where she conducted "a little worship service of her own," in awe before the magnificence of the natural world. Persistent, she found people who would teach her science at school, and she pored over her family's home library until she found two lonely science books to study: one about plants and the other containing Sir Isaac Newton's observations about gravity.

In 1919, Cecilia entered college to study botany, or plants. This was one of the fields of science permitted for women. She went through her courses, but also attended lectures in physics, where she found "pure delight." Each new bit of knowledge about physics and astronomy transformed her. Leaving botany behind, she persuaded the college to allow her to take a degree in physics: astronomy is a branch of physics.

After finishing her degree, Cecilia Payne left for the United States, where she would study as an astronomer at Harvard University. As an astronomer, she figured out that stars are primarily made of hydrogen. In today's world of satellites and computers, we know this to be true, but it was an extraordinary statement at that time. How can you possibly know what a makes a star from so far away? Because of this discovery, Cecilia was the first person, male or female, awarded a Ph.D. in astronomy.

Cecilia's choice to be an astronomer was not popular, or appreciated, because she was a woman. People kept her from advancing in her career. Some just flat out didn't believe her. Nevertheless, she was right. And through it all, she held on to her love for the scientific quest, and her love for the stars.

FIND OUT MORE

Family-Friendly Astronomy

Learn about and track the [Hubble telescope](http://hubblesite.org/) (at hubblesite.org/) on a website that includes downloadable photographs. Another online resource is [Astronomy magazine](http://www.astronomy.com/asy/default.aspx) (at www.astronomy.com/asy/default.aspx); take note of the special editions.

Books geared toward children and families include:

- *A Child's Introduction to the Night Sky: The Story of the Stars, Planets, and Constellations – and How You Can Find Them in the Sky* by Michael Driscoll (Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2004)
- *Astronomy* by Kristen Lippincott (DK Eyewitness Books, 2008)
- *The Stars: A New Way To See Them* by H. A. Rey (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008)
- *Maybe Yes, Maybe No* by Dan Barker (Prometheus Books, 1993). In this child's introduction to healthy skepticism and critical thinking, the ten-year-old heroine, Andrea, is "always asking questions," writes Barker, because she thinks you should prove the truth.
- *Humanism, What's That?* by Helen Bennett (Prometheus Books, 2005). "This small volume holds out the hope and openness of Humanism in a form that can help young people confront Fundamentalist approaches to religion with confidence," writes Rev. William Sinkford, past President of the UUA.

SESSION 10: LOVE FOR ALL CREATURES

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

What is religion? Compassion for all things, which have life. — Hindu Hitopadesha (Sanskrit collection of fables)

Animals can communicate quite well. And they do. And generally speaking, they are ignored. — Alice Walker, African American author

In this session we will focus on the third Unitarian Universalist Source expressed in child friendly language as, "the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions."

The story "The Cat" comes from the Hindu tradition and illustrates the importance of kindness to animals, reflected in the Hindu teaching of "ahimsa," or non-harm. Participants deepen their empathy for all Earth's living beings as they consider the ways they interact with animals.

NOTE: The main activity includes visiting with live animals. Arrange this in advance, first finding out about any allergies in the group and any congregational policies about live animal visitors. If you cannot host live animals, use Alternate Activity 3, Role Play, instead.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the third Unitarian Universalist Source in child-friendly language, "the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions"
- Introduce the Hindu religion through a story about the god Ganesha
- Introduce "ahimsa," or "non-harm," a Hindu concept from which we draw wisdom about our right relation with animals
- Emphasize our connections and interdependence with other living beings and foster an ethic of kindness towards all living beings.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn the third Unitarian Universalist Source, in child-friendly language, "the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions"

- Learn about the Hindu religion through a story about the god Ganesha and exploration of the concept of "ahimsa" (non-harm)
- Understand how wisdom from another religion, Hinduism, can guide Unitarian Universalists, with love, into right relation with animals
- Develop understanding of animal communication and deepen empathy toward animals.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	7
Activity 1: Animal Talk Game	7
Activity 2: Story – The Cat	13
Activity 3: Live Animal Observation and Interaction	23
Faith in Action: Creating a Backyard Habitat	
Closing	10
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SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Read the story, "The Cat." Close your eyes and imagine yourself to be like Parvati, Ganesha's mother. Imagine that you are so closely connected to other creatures that you experience their pain. What would you want to say to other people? What would you want to say to other animals? Pay attention to your breathing. As you breathe in, imagine that you are

breathing in compassion. As you breathe out, focus on hope for new ways of human and animal interactions. Take a moment to dedicate yourself to

kindness to all other living beings and then bring your attention back to your surroundings.

SESSION PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Pipe cleaners, Wikki Stix, modeling dough, or other moldable materials

Preparation for Activity

- Set materials at work tables.

Description of Activity

This activity is appropriate when participants do not arrive in a group but arrive individually before the session begins.

Welcome children and invite them to sit down and use the materials on the work tables to create an animal or other living being. A second co-leader should greet new parents and explain the plans for the day.

Invite children to share and talk about their creations before the session officially begins.

Including All Participants

This is an excellent time for co-leaders to notice the abilities and temperament of each child. Note how they respond to you. Are they shy and reticent? Are they anxious and jumpy? Invite a parent to share any concerns and pertinent information, including information about children's allergies. Do you have a sign-in sheet? As the children settle in, co-leaders should review the names of the children attending and share any issues that may need special attention during the session.

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need

to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.

- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Indicate the Night Sky display. If the group includes children who have heard the Opening before, you might invite them to explain the Night Sky, the Big Dipper, the North Star in their own words.

Or, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, the Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other peoples all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a

GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about the third Source, "the ethical and spiritual wisdom of world religions." Hinduism is one of the world's religions. Unitarian Universalists believe all faiths have something important to share about love.

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: ANIMAL TALK GAME (7 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Create an open space for a standing circle where participants can move around.

Description of Activity

This activity addresses the needs of the kinesthetic (movement-oriented) learner by encouraging participants to express in movement and sound what they already know about animal communication cues and signals.

Gather in a standing circle. Ask the children whether or not animals talk. Allow a few responses. Then explain that while animals do not talk with words, they

communicate in other ways. Invite the children to name a few examples (wagging tail, hissing, running away).

Tell participants you are going to play a game in which they will act out ways animals communicate. Explain that you will point to someone and give tell them an animal, and a feeling or situation. They will act it out with movement and sound. When you call "freeze," they should stop and you will point to another person and either repeat the same animal scenario or give a new one.

Play the game with these animal scenarios; add your own, if you wish. Keep the time spent on each animal brief.

- You are a frightened cat and there is a huge dog in the room.
- You are a frightened mouse and there is a cat in the room.
- You are an ant and someone just kicked open your ant hill.
- You are a dog and your favorite person just got home.
- You are a snake and a predator bird is trying to catch and eat you.
- You are an elephant using your trunk to hold a stick and draw in the sand.
- You are a cat that wants to play.
- You are a guinea pig and a child is holding you up in the air.
- You are a frog and a child is trying to catch you in the water.
- You are a dog and you are really hungry.
- You are a dog and a stranger just came to the door.

Process the activity with these questions:

- What are some things we observe when animals make noises or behave a certain way?
- Do any of you have a pet? How do you know when your pet is scared? Or happy?
- Why it is important that people notice how animals communicate?

Affirm that Unitarian Universalists believe in the interdependent web of life. That means we are connected to animals, and we believe it is important to pay attention to their needs.

Including All Participants

Gather in a seated circle if the group includes children with mobility limitations.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – THE CAT (13 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Cat](#) (included in this document) "
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as a cat figurine, picture or stuffed animal; images of Ganesha and/or Parvati; a picture book about Hinduism; or a map of India
- A rain stick, or another instrument with a calming sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain a picture of Ganesha. Borrow a library picture book about Hinduism or download a picture from the Internet. Place it in the story basket, if it fits.
- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one. As items come back to you, display them on the table. Position the picture of Ganesha so children can see it while you tell the story.

Remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket. In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story "The Cat." Start with this information, in your own words:

In the Hindu religion there are many gods and goddesses. Ganesha is a god with the head of an elephant and a human body. The god Shiva is his father and the goddess Parvati is his mother. Ganesha is thought to be wise and to bring good fortune. This is one of many Hindu stories about Ganesha.

Read or tell the story.

Use the chime again to indicate that the story is over. Then, ask:

- I wonder what this story teaches us about Hindu beliefs about animals?

- In Hinduism there is a belief called "ahimsa," which means "non-harm." What do you suppose that means?
- I wonder why Ganesha chased the cat?
- I wonder how the cat was feeling about being chased? What do you suppose the cat was doing that showed it was feeling that way?
- How can we tell when a cat likes something we are doing or wants to play with us? A dog? Other animals?
- How can we tell when a cat doesn't like what we are doing? A dog? Other animals?
- How can we tell what an animal needs?
- I wonder what you could do if you saw someone hurting an animal?

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the story basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "one person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 3: LIVE ANIMAL OBSERVATION AND INTERACTION (23 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Live animals and appropriate paraphernalia (leash, water bowl, treats, cage)

Preparation for Activity

- Consult with your religious educator to determine whether any of the children have animal allergies or extreme fears. Choose animal guests and arrange the meeting space carefully, so every child will be safe and comfortable. If needed, skip this activity and use Alternate Activity 3, Role Play.
- Recruit live animal visitors. Possibilities include pets from your congregation, visitors from a local animal education agency, service

dogs, or animals from a local shelter or wildlife rehabilitation center. Kittens or puppies will be especially popular with this age group. Be sure to bring in animals that are socialized and used to being handled. If you bring in multiple animals, be sure they will get along with one another.

- Make sure you will have extra adult supervision—at least one additional adult for each animal visitor!

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a seated circle. Ask participants what they know about how one should behave around your animal visitor(s). Establish firm guidelines based on the species you will visit with. Guidelines should include:

- Treat the animals kindly and gently.
- Do not try to force the animal to do something.
- Watch the animal for its communication cues that show what it likes and doesn't like. (Name specific cues, such as an arched back with fur raised means a cat is threatened.)
- Do not crowd the animals.
- Anyone who treats the animal unkindly will be removed from the activity.

Based on the size of your group and the species and numbers of animal visitors, you might allow the children to play with the animals in an informal, unstructured way, or structure the visit: For example, select one child at a time to interact with the animal. If your group is large, form two smaller groups and have one group observe the animals and draw pictures of them while the other group interacts with the animals. Have the groups switch half-way through your time.

Before meeting each animal visitor, ask the children what they know or expect about how this animal will communicate.

As the children interact with the animals, ask questions like:

- What do you suppose the animal is communicating to you right now?
- Have you noticed anything the animal likes or dislikes?
- Do you suppose the animal is scared? How can you tell?
- How could we make that animal more comfortable right now?

Including All Participants

Find out whether any of the children are allergic to particular animals. If so, find a different species of animal visitor or choose an alternate activity.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Source Star – World Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, Source Star – World Religions. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Write the words for the third UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions.
- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather participants at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw something

they learned about or from Buddhism today. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from World Religions" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we talked about how we learn from world religions. We learned from the Hindu faith tradition about being kind to animals.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: CREATING A BACKYARD HABITAT

Materials for Activity

- Seedlings for local plants that provide food or shelter for animals (e.g., butterfly bush, milkweed, berry shrubs)
- Items to hold water such as a bird bath or a fountain
- Shovels, watering cans, and digging tools
- Optional: Items to shelter animals, such as a bird house or a bat box

Preparation for Activity

- With your minister, building and grounds committee, and religious educator, identify a habitat niche you can create in your locale and plan a backyard habitat for your grounds.
- Investigate local wildlife needs by consulting government or conservation agencies, such as EPA or the Audubon Society. Determine beneficial plants and trees to support local wildlife. The [National Wildlife Federation' kids and families page](https://www.nwf.org/Kids-and-Family) (<https://www.nwf.org/Kids-and-Family>) has exciting family resources for outdoor experiences. The same organization has a page where you can [certify your backyard habitat](#)

(<https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Certify>).

- Plan a date for building the habitat. Publicize this event in your congregation and in the larger community.
- Optional: Invite a wildlife expert to speak to your congregation about these needs.
- Optional: Provide backyard habitat information to all members of your congregation. Invite them to join the group for this activity and/or create their own backyard habitats at their homes.

Description of Activity

Involve your entire congregation in activities related to creating your backyard habitat, such as installing a fountain or birdbath, making birdhouses, planting food plants or providing cover. Choose a day to construct a backyard habitat on your congregational grounds.

Process the experience with questions like:

- How does creating a backyard habitat reflect our Unitarian Universalist beliefs?
- What UU Sources point us to show love by creating a backyard habitat? (third Source, world religions, Hindu respect for animals and doing no harm (*ahimsa*); fifth Source, reason and science, understanding what animals need to survive and understanding that our environments needs the animals; sixth Source, earth-centered religions and harmony of nature)
- What do we hope will happen in our backyard habitat?
- What more could we do to support local wildlife?
- How could we encourage others in our community to create their own backyard habitats?

Optional: celebrate your new backyard habitat by installing a certified wildlife habitat sign (available for a fee from the [National Wildlife Federation](https://www.nwf.org) (at www.nwf.org)).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

What is religion? Compassion for all things, which have life. — Hindu Hitopadesha (Sanskrit collection of fables)

Animals can communicate quite well. And they do. And generally speaking, they are ignored. — Alice Walker, African American author

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We learned about the third Unitarian Universalist Source, in children's language "the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions." We learned what Hinduism teaches us about reverence for life and living without harming animals and heard a Hindu story about the god, Ganesha, whose mother takes the form of a cat without his knowledge. Ganesha chases and torments this cat without thinking, only to learn that he has tormented his mother. We learned about ways animals communicate without words. We practiced interacting kindly with some live animal visitors.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about... animals your family has contact with and how they communicate. Share stories of your own experiences with animals. Encourage your child to be a scientific observer, watching animals and noting their behaviors in various situations and recording their observations with pictures, in writing, or by dictating them to you. Of course, be clear that your child should not create harmful situations in order to study the result!

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

Family Adventure. Seek out opportunities to interact with and observe many different creatures, preferably uncaged creatures in natural settings. Visit a 4-H show or a farm to observe domesticated animals.

Have you considered serving as a foster family for homeless cats or dogs? Visit an animal shelter or wildlife rehabilitation center. If you go to a zoo, investigate how the animals came to live in captivity and ways the zoo works to preserve and protect wildlife. Whenever you interact with animals, try to observe their behaviors. Speak with animal educators to learn how they communicate.

Family Discovery. Read these children's books based on true stories to learn more about animals and their capabilities:

The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours by Jane Goodall

Koko's Kitten by Dr. Francine Patterson

Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, Paula Kahumbu, and Peter Grete

What Does the Crow Know? The Mysteries of Animal Intelligence by Margery Facklam

A Family Ritual. As a family, create a blessing or prayer for animals. List your hopes and wishes for the animals of your acquaintance, as well as the animals of the world. A good way to start a blessing is the word: "May ...," followed by a list of your hopes and wishes. End the blessing with "Amen" or "May It Ever Be So." Write the blessing and use it repeatedly at bedtime or at some other time, or you might prefer to create new blessings every day.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.

- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite the children to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Variation

Instead of sharing their joys and concerns, invite children to light a candle and, if they wish, answer a question. A question to fit this session might be "What is an animal you know well and what is one thing you know about what they like or don't like?"

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. Alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arises in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION — WORLD RELIGIONS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation – World Religions](#) (included in this document)

- Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – World Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Handout 1, UU Source Constellation — World Religions for all participants plus one extra.
- Print out Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet — World Religions
- Using Leader Resource 1 as a guide, on one copy of the handout use star stickers to mark the spiral: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about our third Source, wisdom of the world's religions. Unitarian Universalists learn from Hinduism and other religions of the world— Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, and many more—that have messages about love. To help us learn from world religions, we have a constellation named in honor of this UU Source. Some stars can be connected to look like a spiral. Can you find it in our Night Sky?

Give children time to look for the spiral. As children find it, let them show you by tracing with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the spiral by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they may take home their own World Religions constellations.

Light the chalice.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: ROLE PLAY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Role Play Scenarios](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Props

Preparation for Activity

- Designate an open space to be your stage area.
- Review and adapt the drama scenarios in Leader Resource 3.
- Optional: Gather props and display them on a work table.

Description of Activity

Describe a scenario and assign volunteers to play the characters. In large groups, you can assign more than one child to be the same animals. In small groups, you can leave out some of the characters.

Explain that improvisation means they get to make up their own lines and actions as they go and in this drama all creatures can speak. They should try to act as they animal they are assigned.

Guide the characters to enact their drama with questions like:

- What is the problem here?
- What does each character need or want?
- How might they try to get it?
- What might happen next?
- How do you think this will end?

As time allows, reassign characters to try different parts or enact a second dramatic scenario.

When you are done, debrief with questions such as:

- Which animals went hungry in the drama? (the predator bird? the mosquito?)
- Did any animals get eaten? (the mosquito? the worms? the mouse?)
- When you have an animal that has to eat or escape from another to survive, how do you decide which animal you hope will "win?"
- Did the characters say anything that surprised you?
- How did the children help or hurt the animals?
- Were you happy with the ending?
- What could we have done differently?
- Do you think the human characters acted in ways that showed love for all creatures?

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 10: STORY: THE CAT

(c) Uma Krishnaswami, 2006 in *The Broken Tusk: Stories of the Hindu God Ganesha* (Little Rock: August House, 1996). Reprinted by permission of the author.

When Ganesha was a small child, he often amused himself by playing on the forested slopes of Mount Kailasa. Sometimes he would invent games, pretending to be a great king and leading imaginary warriors into battle. Once, having nothing to do, he said to his mother Parvati, "I have nothing to do."

Parvati looked surprised. "Nothing to do, with the mountains for your playground?" she remarked. "When my spirit is unsettled, or when my soul needs new vision, I sometimes go where the wild creatures go, to see the world through their eyes."

"I'll go out now," decided Ganesha, "but I will go hunting."

Ganesha looked around outside the hut. He picked up a stout stick and a large flat rock with sharp edges. He tied the two together with lengths of vine. Brandishing his make-believe axe, he ran off, leaping down the mountain trails, shouting with glee, "I am the greatest hunter of all! Wild animals, run for your lives!"

Ganesha stopped and looked about him. "But what shall I hunt?" he said. "I need an animal to hunt."

Suddenly a cat darted out from behind a rock and ran off down the trail.

"Aha!" cried Ganesha. "I'm going to pretend you're a tiger, and I'm going to hunt you!" And he raced off after the cat.

The cat ran down the mountain, mewling with fright. But Ganesha was too caught up with his game to notice her fear. He had convinced himself she was a ferocious tiger, and he was determined to hunt her down.

When he caught up with her, he grabbed her by the tail and pinned her to the ground, shouting, "Now I've got you, you evil tiger!"

The poor cat was too afraid to do anything but lie very still. She could not even meow. She shivered and quaked, and all of a sudden Ganesha noticed that his fearsome prey appeared to have surrendered completely.

Sulkily, he let go of the cat's tail, and she ran off as fast as she could.

"That was no fun at all," muttered Ganesha, as he picked himself up and went back home. When he got there, he was surprised to find that his mother Parvati was covered with scratches and bruises, as if rocks and boulders had cut her skin and thorns had pierced her cheeks.

"Amma, what happened to you?" asked Ganesha, forgetting the disappointments of his own day.

"You did this to me, child," said Parvati to Ganesha. "Don't you remember?"

"I did?" Ganesha was horrified. "No I didn't. I would never hurt you like that."

Parvati said, "Think back. Did you hurt a living creature, only a little while ago?"

Ganesha was about to deny this terrible accusation completely, but then he remembered the cat. He looked at the ground in shame. He hung his head lower and lower until his big ears drooped down to his chest and his trunk slumped on the earth.

"I was that cat," said Parvati. "Remember this for all your life. When you hurt any living creature, you hurt me."

Ganesha hugged his mother sadly. "Forgive me, my mother," he said. "I did not mean to hurt you."

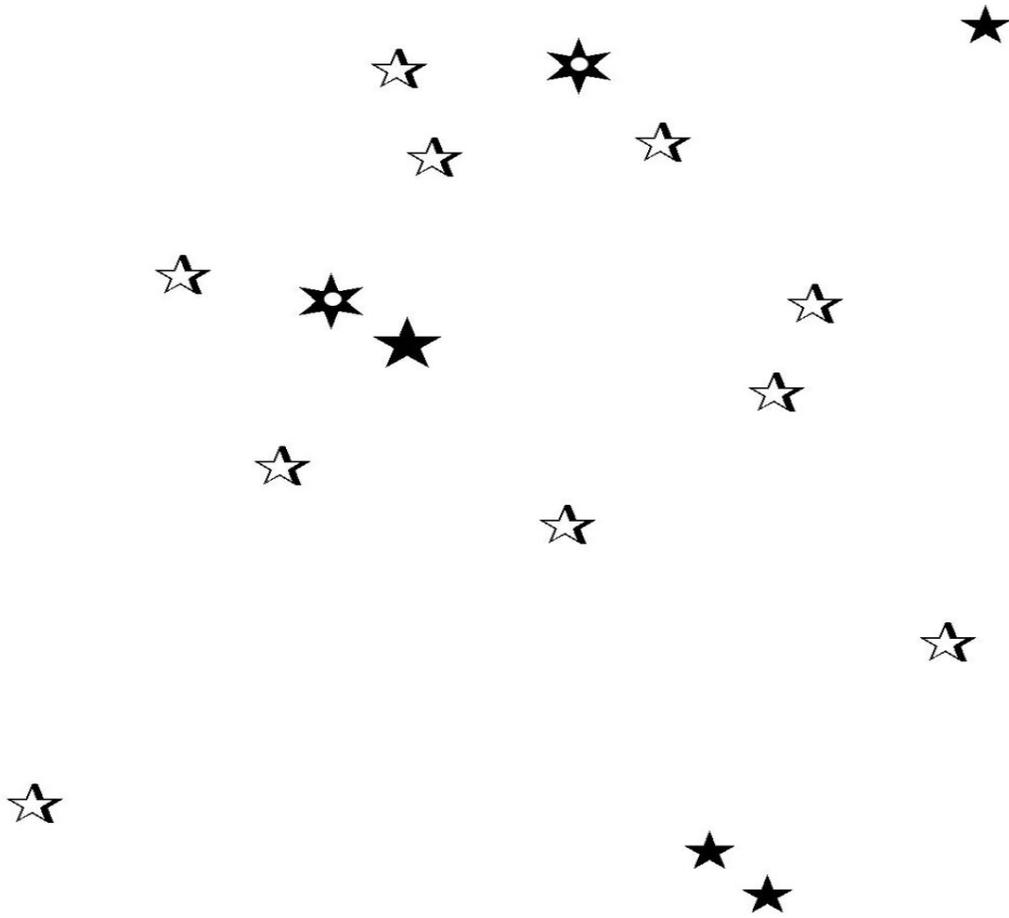
"Ah, but did you mean to hurt the cat?" asked Parvati.

"No," said Ganesha. "Yes—I mean no, no, I didn't. It was only a game."

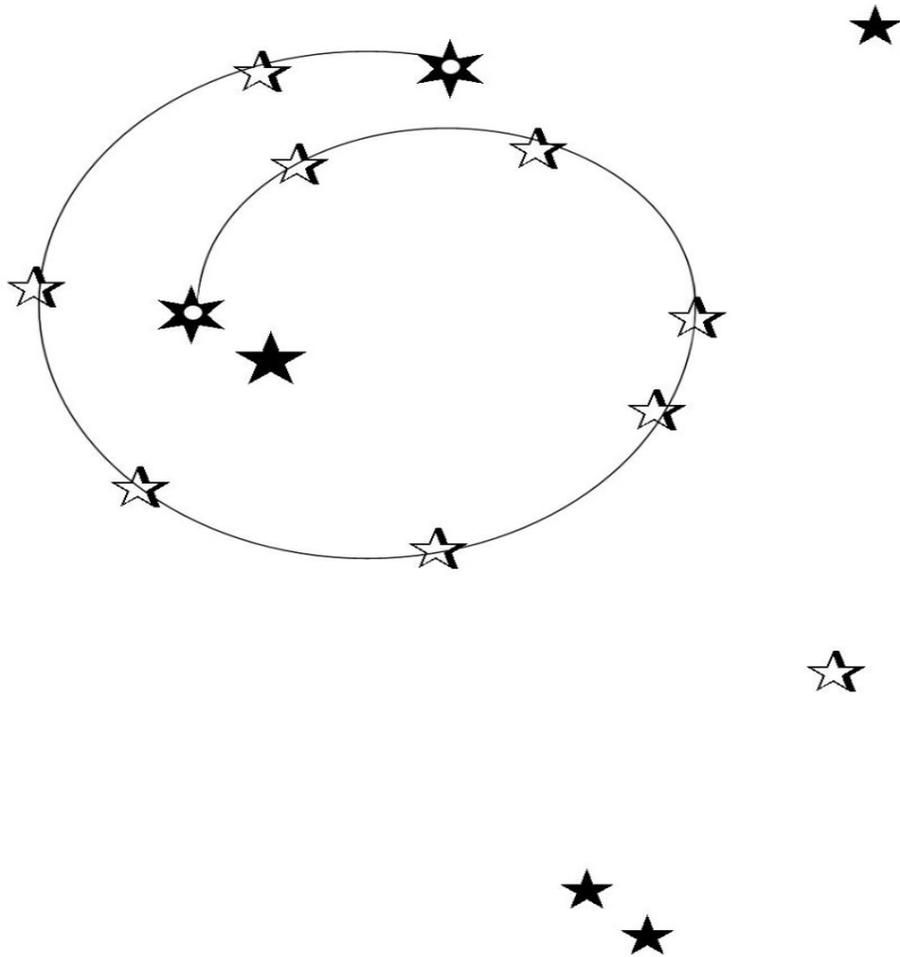
"For you, perhaps," said Parvati. "But as you can tell, it was no game for me. Take care that in your play you do not injure others or cause them grief and fear."

"Yes, Amma," promised Ganesha. After that he took special care to be gentle to the wild creatures of the forests and streams, as you must, too, for any one of them could be Parvati in disguise.

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 10:
HANDOUT 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION: WORLD RELIGIONS**



**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 10:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION ANSWER SHEET:
WORLD RELIGIONS**



The ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions.

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 10:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: SOURCE STAR: WORLD RELIGIONS**



LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 10: LEADER RESOURCE 3: ROLE PLAY SCENARIOS

Scenario 1: The setting is a pond in the woods that is drying out in a very hot year.

Characters (adapt this to your local habitat as appropriate):

Frogs (who eat mosquitoes and need water for their eggs and tadpoles to survive)

Female Mosquitoes (who need blood to lay eggs & whose larvae need water to survive)

Water Snakes (who eat frogs and need water to survive)

Human Children (who witness the drying out pond and need to decide how they will respond in the situation)

Scenario 2: A stray cat with kittens needs a home.

Characters:

Parents (who aren't sure they want a cat)

Cat (stray that needs a home)

Kittens (strays that need homes)

Mouse (who already lives in the house with her babies)

Dog (who already lives in the house)

Human Children

Scenario 3: Baby bird falls out of its nest.

Characters:

Baby Bird (has fallen out of nest)

Baby Bird's Brothers and Sisters (still in nest)

Mother Bird

Father Bird

Large Predator bird (hungry)

Worms (or other insect the birds might eat)

Human Children

FIND OUT MORE

Ganesha and Hinduism

Find more stories about Ganesha in *The Broken Tusk: Stories of the Hindu God Ganesha* retold by Uma Krishnaswami (Little Rock: August House Publishers, 1996).

The website [Religion Facts](http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/index.htm) (at www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/index.htm) offers information about Hinduism. The [BBC website](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/) (at www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/) has information about Hinduism, as well.

Unitarian Universalism and Animal Justice

Check out the [UU Animal Ministry's website](https://uuam.org/wp/) for activities, recipes, and more: <https://uuam.org/wp/>

Read *The Souls of Animals* by the UU minister, the Rev. Gary Kowalski (Stillpoint Publishing, 1991).

Introduce Children to Nature

The North American Association for Environmental Education features the [Natural Start Alliance web pages](#). Find articles that promote children's wildlife education in school and at home and activities families can do together.

SESSION 11: LOVE AND GRATITUDE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

There shall be

Eternal summer in the grateful heart. — Celia Thaxter, in the poem "A Grateful Heart" (1872)

In this session we will focus on the sixth Unitarian Universalist Source, "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," expressed in children's language as "the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life."

Gratitude is a spiritual orientation connected to the experience of joy and the practice of generosity. This session cultivates an "attitude of gratitude" as a practice that leads to spiritual health and well being. Children talk about the importance of gratitude in their lives and explore how gratitude can feel, in our feelings and in our bodies. The central story, "The Rebirth of the Sun," introduces the winter solstice and how the rhythms of nature support our life. In a gratitude circle, participants practice articulating specifically what they are grateful for and appreciate, when they say "thank you."

GOALS

This session will:

- Present a lesson about gratitude based in the sixth Unitarian Universalist Source, "the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life"
- Demonstrate our connections to the rhythms of nature through a story about the winter solstice
- Cultivate in children an "attitude of gratitude" and provide opportunities to express thanksgiving
- Foster an ethic of caring for the Earth by promoting awareness of and gratitude for the gifts we receive from nature
- Teach a way to express gratitude so it is personalized, specific, and meaningful.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about the sixth Unitarian Universalist source, "The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life," through a story about the winter solstice in which children express their gratitude to the sun.
- Experience and articulate emotional and physical feelings that accompany a focus on gratitude
- Appreciate the gifts we receive from nature's cycles and rhythms, and embrace our responsibility to care for the Earth just as the Earth cares for us
- Practice saying thank-you meaningfully to one another, in a gratitude circle.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	7
Activity 1: Grateful Game	7
Activity 2: Story – The Rebirth of the Sun	8
Activity 3: Group Acrostic Poem	8
Activity 4: Gratitude Circle	10
Faith in Action: Giving Thanks in the Larger Community	45
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation – The Harmony of Nature	10
Alternate Activity 3: Making Solstice Candles	45
Alternate Activity 4: Thanksgiving Collage	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Read the story, "The Rebirth of the Sun." Light a candle and take a few moments to ponder how you experience the darkness and compare that to the image of night as a loving mother who cradles you

when you are exhausted. For a few minutes focus on what you are grateful for in your life. Extinguish the candle and say a brief "thank you" in your heart for the energy and light of the sun, as well as the darkness which brings us rest.

SESSION PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- White drawing paper
- Color markers or crayons, including plenty of yellow

Preparation for Activity

- Set paper and markers or crayons on work tables.

Description of Activity

This activity is for congregations where participants do not arrive in a group but individually before the session actually begins, and the expectation is that children will arrive at different times. Welcome participants as they arrive. Invite them to use the drawing paper to create a picture of the sun. If they have more time, they can also draw things that need the sun to live.

A second co-leader should greet any new parents and explain the plans for the day and any arrangements for pick up.

Including All Participants

This is an excellent time for co-leaders to notice the abilities and temperament of each child. Note how they respond to you. Are they shy and reticent? Are they anxious and jumpy? Invite a parent to share any concerns and pertinent information, including information about children's allergies. Do you have a sign-in sheet? As the children settle in, co-leaders should review the names of the children attending and share any issues that may need special attention during the session.

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.
- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.
-

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Indicate the Night Sky display. If the group includes children who have heard the Opening before, you might invite them to explain the Night Sky, the Big Dipper, the North Star in their own words.

Or, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the

Greeks and Romans, the Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other peoples all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life. We will talk about how this Source helps us to answer big questions about our world, like the cycles of night and day.

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: GRATEFUL GAME (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Create a space where the group can stand in a circle and move around a bit.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to learn kinesthetically (through movement and bodily experience) as they explore what happens to us physically when we focus on gratitude versus displeasure. NOTE: It is intentional to have participants focus first on displeasure, then on gratitude. This allows any negative feelings generated in the first part of the exercise to be replaced with more positive feelings, so participants will end the activity on a positive note.

Gather in a standing circle. Briefly ask participants what they think it means to be grateful or thankful. After they've had a chance to respond, say in your own words,

Being grateful means appreciating things. It means we notice and take pleasure when something or someone gives us a gift, or helps us, or does something we like. When we remember to give thanks and to focus on gratitude, it can change how we feel inside.

Today we will be thinking about the things we are grateful for. But first we will think about the things we aren't grateful for—things we really hate.

Invite participants to close their eyes for a moment and think about the things they really hate. After a moment, explain that when you ring the chime, everyone may talk at once, saying aloud the things that really don't feel grateful for. Invite them to move, while they say those things, in whatever way their body feels like moving when they think about the things they hate. Say:

The only rule for the movements is that you cannot destroy items or hurt other people. When I ring the chime a second time, everyone will freeze.

When you are ready to begin, ring the chime. Do not participate in the activity, but pay close attention to the participants. Watch for signs of distress and monitor children's movements to be sure they are not harmful.

Allow participants to rant for approximately one minute. Then, ring the chime and instruct participants to stand normally in the circle. Process, using questions such as:

- What sort of ways did your body want to move when we did this?
- How are you feeling right now? Are you calm? Angry?
- What was it like to hear or see your friends doing this?

Now tell the group they will try something different. Instruct them, this time, to close their eyes and think about things they are grateful for and things they love. Explain that when you ring the chime, participants may say out loud the things they are thankful for, moving their bodies in whatever way it feels like when they think about the things they are grateful for.

Allow a minute, then ring the chime. Bring the group back to a standing circle and debrief the experience using questions such as:

- What sorts of ways did your body want to move when we did this? How were these movements different from before?
- Which was easier—thinking of things you hate, or things you are grateful for?
- How are you feeling right now? How are those feelings different than before?
- What was it like to hear or see your friends expressing things they hate? What about seeing your friends express things they are grateful for and love?
- Which made you feel happier inside: thinking about the things you hate or the things you are grateful for?

Including All Participants

For some participants, loud noise and chaos are very overwhelming and stressful. If you know there is a child in the group for whom this will be the case, adapt this activity by providing more guidelines about how loudly participants can talk and what sorts of movements are acceptable. In addition, you can provide plenty of space between participants while they are moving around. Watch participants closely as they engage in this activity and be prepared to offer extra support to any child that may find it upsetting; for example, you might offer a child a quieter space to sit in for a few minutes. You can also engage the child in a dialogue, affirming their reaction and naming the fact that when we focus on things that we hate it doesn't feel good and it can make us act in ways that are unpleasant and overwhelming for others.

If any participants have mobility issues, have the group do this activity while seated.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – THE REBIRTH OF THE SUN (8 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Rebirth of the Sun](#)" (included in this document)
- A large basket

- Objects related to the story such as pictures or a model of the sun, pictures of the nighttime, seasonal pictures, or a current calendar
- A chime, rain stick, or other instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- If using a calendar in the story basket, highlight the summer and winter solstices (respectively the longest and shortest days of the year). You can find these dates with a quick online search.
- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

As items come back to you, display them on the table. Then say, in your own words:

People have always wondered things like where the sun goes at night and why it goes away every day. This story from our sixth UU source gives us one way to think about that question.

Remove the chime from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use the chime to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket. In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (or, turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story "The Rebirth of the Sun." Read or tell the story slowly, like a meditation. Use the chime again to indicate that the story is over.

Then, ask:

- I wonder why hearing "thank you" gave the sun more and more energy?
- Do you suppose the sun really gets tired?
- What do you suppose would happen if it was always dark without sun? Always sunny, without darkness?
- I wonder how you feel when someone thanks you for something?
- I wonder why it is important to remember to say "thank you?"
- What gifts from nature are you grateful for?

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the story basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you

begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "one person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 3: GROUP ACROSTIC POEM (8 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write the letters that spell "THANK YOU" vertically down the left-hand side a sheet of newsprint, leaving a few inches between the letters. Set this sheet aside.
- On another sheet of newsprint (or several), write the letters of "THANK YOU," leaving enough space between the letters for the group's brainstorming ideas. Post this newsprint.

Description of Activity

To create an acrostic poem, take a word or phrase as the subject and write the letters of that word or phrase vertically down the left-hand side of a page. Next, use each letter to start a word or phrase that describes your subject. For example:

Laughing and filled with joy

Our hearts overflow

Very much at peace

Endless, eternal Love

Gather participants in a circle. Invite them to make an acrostic poem together focusing on gratitude for the Earth. Show them where you have posted the phrase "THANK YOU." Ask if anyone knows what an acrostic poem is; complete the explanation, as necessary.

Have the group brainstorm words and phrases starting with the letters in "thank you" that describe gratitude for the Earth. Use these guidelines:

- To foster creativity, encourage everyone to say every idea they think of, even if it seems silly or weird.
- During the brainstorming part of the activity, nobody should comment on the ideas, either positively or negatively. There will be time later to choose the words everyone likes best.

When the group has created a list of possible words or phrases, post the newsprint you have set aside. Starting with "T," fill in a word or phrase for each letter in "thank you." For each letter, invite the group to offer any new ideas, make changes to brainstormed ideas, and as a group select the word or phrase they like best to describe gratitude for the Earth. Guide the group to articulate why they chose that word/phrase.

Read the final acrostic poem aloud with the group.

ACTIVITY 4: GRATITUDE CIRCLE (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Think of something specific you can thank each child for, so you can model expressing gratitude in this way and make sure each child receives appreciation at least once.

Description of Activity

Gather in a seated circle. Explain that the children will say "thank you" to one another in a special way, to practice expressing gratitude. Give these guidelines:

- Be as specific as possible about what the person did that you are grateful for. Say exactly what you appreciated. For example, instead of saying, "Thank you for helping me," you can give more information. You might say "Thank you for noticing I needed help when I was making my paper airplane and interrupting your own work to show me how to make the folds the right way." Or, instead of "You are a great friend," say, "I really appreciate that you are generous with me in sharing your toys and snacks."
- Tell what the person's actions did for you. For example: "I was feeling frustrated when I couldn't get the fold to work, and when you showed me how to do it, I felt really proud when I got it right!" Or, "When I was sick and stayed home from school, I was worried about my homework and when you brought it to it to my house that night, I was very happy and relieved and glad I could get it done for the next day!"

When the participants understand the guidelines, tell them they will now have a chance to try this kind of "thank you" with one another. Say, in your own words:

You can thank someone for something they did a long time ago, like sharing a toy with you or making you feel welcome when you first came to church. You can also thank someone for something they did today that you

appreciate. We won't go in any particular order. If you have something to say, raise your hand and I will call on you for a turn. You can go more than once if you have more than one person you would like to thank.

Begin by offering a thank you to someone in the group (perhaps someone you think might be overlooked by their peers), as a way of modeling the process.

Debrief with these questions:

- How did it feel to say, "thank you?"
- How did it feel to have someone express gratitude to you?
- Was this activity easy or hard?
- Was this different from ways you usually say thank you? How?
- Why is it important that we express our gratitude?
- Why is it important we say why we are grateful, when we say thank you?

Including All Participants

Make sure every participant is thanked for something. If the group is thanking the same person repeatedly, ask them to think of other people. Periodically during the sharing time, you may need to jump in and express gratitude to a participant who has not yet been thanked.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 6, Leader Resource 4, [Source Star – The Harmony of Nature](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Session 6, Leader Resource 2, Source Star — The Harmony of Nature. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Write the words for the sixth UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.

- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather participants at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw something they learned about or from the earth-centered story they heard, about the sun and the cycles of day and night. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from the Harmony of Nature" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we talked about how we learn from the harmony of nature. We learned about how important the sun is to us. This Source points us to love as we learning about our world's sacred circle of life.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

Children this age range widely in reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: GIVING THANKS IN THE LARGER COMMUNITY (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper for thank you cards
- Pens, pencils, and markers
- Envelopes and postage stamps
- Optional: Return address stickers or address stamp for your congregation

Preparation for Activity

- Consult with your minister and/or religious educator to determine a coffee hour or another time when the children can host a gratitude table. Announce your event and invite the participants and members of the congregation to take part.
- Plan to introduce the gratitude table during the worship service. For example, you might tell the story "The Rebirth of the Sun" or share the acrostic poem the participants created in Activity 3. You could model personal expressions of gratitude, using the guidelines in Activity 4, Gratitude Circle, by thanking specific congregational members during the service.
- Compile a list of congregational members and folks in the larger community to whom your congregation might wish to express appreciation and gratitude, including postal addresses. Make a few copies of the list to provide at gratitude tables. (Possibilities include congregational custodian, minister, board members, committee chairs, administrator, music director, and librarian, or community non-profit organization staff or clients, sales clerks, school principals, fire fighters, and others with whom your congregation has interacted or partnered.)
- Set up one or more gratitude tables with chairs. Place writing paper, pens, pencils, and markers on tables.
- Create a sign that says "Gratitude Table" to post near your table(s).
- Optional: Use the acrostic poem the group created in Activity 3 as a template for a thank you card. Make multiple copies for children to use as thank-you stationery.

- Optional: Pre-stamp the envelopes with your congregation's return address.

Description of Activity

This activity fosters a spirit of gratitude by creating a multigenerational flurry of thanksgiving in your congregation, extending into your wider community.

Set up your gratitude tables with materials described above. Invite people to sit at the tables and create thank-you cards. Place postage stamps on the envelopes and mail them.

Gather participants to briefly process the experience with questions like:

- Why do you suppose it is important to say thank you?
- How do you suppose it will feel to receive one of these cards?
- Was it hard or easy to think of something to say?
- Is there anyone else you would like to say thank you to?
- In addition to writing a thank you card, what other ways could you express your gratitude to someone?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

There shall be

Eternal summer in the grateful heart. — Celia Thaxter, in the poem "A Grateful Heart" (1872)

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we learned about the sixth Unitarian Universalist Source, expressed in children's language as "the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life." We heard a winter solstice story in which the sun has grown tired and the children re-energize the sun by expressing their gratitude for all the sun gives. The children experienced what it feels like in our bodies when we focus on what we hate, and then what it feels like to focus on things we are grateful for. Together we created a group poem to express our gratitude to the Earth. Finally, we practiced expressing our gratitude to one another in a gratitude circle.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Ask your child to tell you about the acrostic poem we created using the phrase "thank you." Talk with your child about the specific way we expressed gratitude during our gratitude circle. The guidelines we followed were:

- Be as specific as possible about what the person did that you are grateful for. For example, instead of saying, "Thank you for helping me," give more information such as, "Thank you for noticing I needed help when I was making my paper airplane and interrupting your own work to show me how to make the folds the right way." Or, instead of "You are a great friend," say, "I really appreciate that you are generous with me in sharing your toys and snacks."
- Tell how the person's actions impacted you. For example: "I was feeling really frustrated when I couldn't get the fold to work and after you showed me how to do it I felt really proud when I got it right!" Or, "I really wanted to play with your Transformer and I was really excited when you let me borrow it!"

Practice expressing appreciation using these guidelines. Talk together about how it feels when you do so.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

A Family Adventure. To honor our connection with nature and what we learn from its harmony, set aside a few days to adjust your family's rhythms to the rhythms of nature. Wake up when it gets light. Go to sleep or do activities by candlelight when it gets dark.

Family Discovery. The book *Circle Round: Raising Participants in Goddess Traditions*, by Starhawk, Diane Baker, and Anne Hill, has many ideas for activities, stories, and songs that reflect the sixth Unitarian Universalist Source and teach about the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.

A Family Ritual. Set aside a time every day for sharing gratitude. Meal time or bed time can be especially good choices. Simply light a chalice and give each person an opportunity to name what they are thankful for. In addition, consider setting aside a time once a week for a family gratitude circle, in which you express gratitude for one another using the guidelines above.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite the children to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION – THE HARMONY OF NATURE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 6, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation — The Harmony of Nature](#) (included in this document)
- Session 6, Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet — The Harmony of Nature](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Session 6, Handout 1, UU Source Constellation – The Harmony of Nature for all participants, plus one extra.

- Print out Session 6, Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – The Harmony of Nature.
- Using the leader resource as a guide, use star stickers to mark the terra symbol constellation on one copy of the handout: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say in your own words:

Today we heard a story that helped us learn from the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life—our sixth UU Source. This Source pointed us to love, because it helped us think about gratitude. We have a constellation named in honor of this Source. Some of the stars can be connected to look like a terra (or Earth) symbol. It is a circle, with two lines across it to make four parts, like pieces of a pie. Can you find the terra symbol in our Night Sky?

Give them time to look for the terra symbol. As children find it, let them show you by tracing the shape with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the terra constellation by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they may take home their own Harmony of Nature constellations.

Say:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life. Nature can teach us and guide us to love.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: MAKING SOLSTICE CANDLES (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Candle-making supplies: wax, yellow candle dye, wicks, and (optional) candle fragrance
- Small glass jars (e.g., recycled baby food jars or votive candle holders) — enough for all participants, plus a few extra
- Wooden stirring sticks (e.g., craft sticks)
- Several large, glass measuring cups with at least a 4-cup capacity
- Thick, disposable plastic cups (e.g., Solo brand, available in supermarkets)
- Optional: A copy of the story ["The Rebirth of the Sun"](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain candle-making supplies in advance from a craft store such as A.C. Moore or Michael's or an online supplier such as Ebay. Note: Soy-based or beeswax candles burn cleaner than paraffin wax, which is petroleum based; pre-tabbed wicks are simpler to use.
- Make sure you will have access to a microwave oven.
- Make a "practice" candle.
- Attach a wick to the inside bottom of each glass jar, using instructions provided on the wick packaging.
- Set out supplies at work tables.
- Optional: Confer with your religious education and/or social action committees to plan a sale of the candles. Select a few environmentally oriented causes or charities from which participants can choose a recipient for the sale proceeds.

Description of Activity

This activity is an excellent accompaniment to the story "The Rebirth of the Sun" for a group doing this session near the winter solstice. Candles have long been associated with the Solstice and other holidays that take place in the winter months when days are short.

Remind the children of the part in the story when candles were lit "because all fire is a spark of the sun's fire." Tell them they will make winter solstice

candles. The candles will be yellow to honor the sun. Say in your own words:

The solstice marks the shortest day of the year. It is a time to celebrate hope and gratitude, because we know over the next months the days will get a little bit longer each day until, in six months it will be the summer solstice, the longest day of the year.

Say that many, different winter holidays emphasize candles and creating light, including the Solstice.

Using the instructions provided with the wax, put wax in the glass measuring cups and melt it in the microwave. This will take a few minutes; the temperature required depends on the type of wax you use. Then, pour enough melted wax for one candle into each plastic cup. Add enough dye to create a very dark yellow and (optional) add fragrance. Stir until color is evenly distributed. Let candle stand until wax hardens (this will take a few hours). Trim the wicks.

Optional: Sell solstice candles to raise money for a charity or cause selected by the participants, preferably something related to caring for the Earth.

After candle wax has been poured, process this activity with the children with questions such as:

- Why do you suppose so many religions have candles as part of their holidays?
- How does it feel to look at a candle when it is burning?
- How does it feel to have a candle in the darkness?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: THANKSGIVING COLLAGE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster board (enough to cut a piece approximately 12 inches square for each participant)
- Magazines and catalogues, especially of nature scenes and natural objects
- Scissors (including left-handed scissors) and glue

Preparation for Activity

- Gather magazines and catalogues children can cut up for pictures.
- Cut an approximately 12-inch square piece of poster board for each participant.

- Set magazines (or cut-out pictures), scissors, and glue on work tables.
- Optional: To save time and to assist participants who lack fine motor skills, cut out a variety of images in advance.

Description of Activity

Participants explore gratitude, using a hands-on art approach. You may wish to use this activity to balance, or replace, a more discussion-oriented core session activity.

Invite the children to look through the images and cut out (or select) those which represent things they are

grateful for, with an emphasis on nature. Give every child a sheet of poster board and invite them to attach images to their poster board to make a thanksgiving collage.

Optional: Display the collages in the meeting room or a space where the wider congregation can see them.

Gather participants in a circle with their collages and invite them to take turns sharing about the images they selected and what they are grateful for. Give children a time to mingle and share and discuss their collages.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 11: STORY: THE REBIRTH OF THE SUN

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Circle round, and I'll tell you a story about when the sun was born again ...

It was the middle of winter, and the sun had grown very old.

All year long the sun had worked very hard, rising and setting day after day. All year long the sun had fed everybody on earth, shining and shining, giving energy to the trees and the flowers and the grasses so they could grow and feed the animals and birds and insects and people.

All year the sun's gravity held tight to the spinning ball of the earth and the twirling ball of the moon and the eight other whirling planets as they traveled around and around and around, until the poor sun was dizzy watching it all.

Now the poor tired sun could barely make it up in the morning, and after a very short time, needed to sleep again. So the days grew shorter, and the nights grew longer, until the day was so short it was hardly worth getting up for.

Night felt sorry for the sun.

"Come to my arms and rest, child," she said. "After all, I am your mother. You were born out of my darkness, billions of years ago, and you will return to me when all things end. Let me cradle you now, as I shelter every galaxy and star in the universe."

So Night wrapped her great arms around the sun, and the night was very long indeed.

"Why does the dark go on so long?" asked children all over the earth. "Won't the sun ever come back again?"

"The sun is very tired," the old ones said. "But maybe, if you children say thank you for all the things the sun does for us, the light may return in the morning."

The children sang songs to the sun. They thought about all the things the sun gave them.

(Leader: Ask participants what they think the children might have thanked the sun for. Allow some responses. Then, resume the story.)

"Thank you for growing the lettuces and the corn and the rice and the wheat," they said. "Thank you for growing the trees of the forests and the seaweed in the oceans and the krill that feeds the whales. Thank you for stirring the air and making winds that bring the rain."

Every time a child said thank you, the sun began to feel a little warmer, a little brighter. Wrapped safely in the arms of Night, the sun grew younger and younger.

At last the children had to go to bed. "We will stay up and wait for the sun to rise again" the old ones said.

"Can't we stay up, too?" the children asked.

"You can try, but you will get too sleepy," the old ones said. "But you can each light a candle, because all fire is a spark of the sun's fire. Put your candle in a very safe place, and let it keep vigil for you as you sleep and dream of sunrise."

So the children lit their candles and put them in very safe places, and each flame was a little spark of the sun's fire. And the sun peeped out from between the arms of Night, and saw all the little fires, and began to feel warmer and brighter and younger still.

Early in the morning, the old ones woke the children. Together they climbed a high hill and faced to the east, the direction of sunrise. They sang songs to the sun and ran around trying to keep warm. They waited and waited to see what dawn would bring.

The sky began to turn from black to indigo to blue. Slowly the sky grew light. A golden glow crept over the horizon. Night opened her great arms, and in a burst of brightness, the sun appeared, new and strong and shining.

For in the long night the sun had rested well and grown young from the songs and the thanks of the children, young as a brand-new baby, born out of Night once more.

Everybody cheered, and the children jumped up and down. "The sun has returned! The sun is reborn!" the people cried. And they danced and sang to celebrate the birth of a new day, and then went home to breakfast.

FIND OUT MORE

Earth-Centered Traditions and the Solstice

The book *Circle Round: Raising Participants in Goddess Traditions*, by Starhawk, Diane Baker, and Anne Hill, has many ideas for activities, stories, and songs that reflect the sixth Unitarian Universalist Source and teach about the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.

To learn about paganism in a Unitarian Universalist context, visit the [Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans](http://cuups.org/) (at cuups.org/) (CUUPS) website. Anika Stafford's *Aisha's Moonlit Walk* is filled with stories in which a grade-school girl and her family celebrate a year of pagan holidays; available from the [UUA Bookstore](http://www.uuabookstore.org/) (at www.uuabookstore.org/).

SESSION 12: FROM ANGER TO KINDNESS

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*When my anger's over
may the world be young again
as after rain –
the cool clean promise
and the dance*

*of branches glistening green — Raymond
John Baughan, in Day of Promise: Collected
Meditations, Kathleen Montgomery, ed.
(Skinner House, 2001); used with permission*

This session looks to the third Source of Unitarian Universalism, "Wisdom from the world's religions which inspire us in our ethical and spiritual life." In the story, the Buddha responds to someone's anger in an unconventional way that teaches a lesson of love. Children learn to rely on love and faith to move themselves, and thereby others, from anger to love.

Anger is a normal, healthy feeling—our body's way of alerting us to problems. Anger can give us the energy we need to right wrongs. However, at times it can be misdirected or expressed in hurtful ways. Rather than tell children they should not feel angry, we want to help them harness their anger—to use it constructively, not destructively.

In Activity 4, children create calming beads they can use to cool their anger. Alternate Activity 3, Yoga – Salutation to the Sun, offers a movement option to nurture anger self-awareness and management.

GOALS

This session will:

- Highlight the third Source of Unitarian Universalism, "ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions," with a Buddhist story
- Empower participants to recognize and manage their anger
- Teach that anger is normal, and can be useful when it alerts us that something is unfair or wrong, but can harm us when we hold onto it too long.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify the third Source of Unitarian Universalism—in child-friendly words, "Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions"
- Learn a Buddhist story about how to handle anger
- Understand how anger physically and emotionally affects us
- Practice strategies for managing anger and letting anger go.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	7
Activity 1: Anger Energy	10
Activity 2: Mirror Talking	10
Activity 3: Story – Anger, A Buddhist Story	10
Activity 4: Calming Beads	15
Faith In Action: Body of Anger	30
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation – World Religions	10
Alternate Activity 3: Yoga – Salutation to the Sun	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take a few quiet minutes to consider anger. Issues around anger are a challenge for most adults, yet anger is important to pay attention to. Anger is a healthy feeling. Sometimes it is appropriate, or necessary to right a wrong; when injustice makes us angry, that anger can help us act. Sometimes, however, anger can get the better of us. Some people

are quick to get angry when they are driving and running late and someone in front of them is driving slowly, some get angry when someone is hurtful. Even when we know holding on to anger can become destructive, it can be hard to move ourselves from anger to love, positive action, and forgiveness.

Reflect: Which is easier to maintain, forgiveness or anger? What does "exuding a feeling of loving

kindness" mean? Do you know someone who does this? How easy is it for you to forgive?

Take a calming breath and release any negative tension in your body as a result of any negative emotions that have arisen. Bring calming and positive energy into the group.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.
- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](#) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Indicate the Night Sky display. If the group includes children who have heard the Opening before, you might invite them to explain the Night Sky, the Big Dipper, the North Star in their own words.

Or, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, the Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other peoples all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them

to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about the third Source, "the ethical and spiritual wisdom of world religions." We will hear a story from the Buddhist religion that can teach us something about love and anger.

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: ANGER ENERGY (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Clear an open space for children to move around freely and safely.

Description of Activity

Participants will act out expressions of anger. Invite participants to mingle in the open space and show anger to at least three other people, without touching anyone else and without making noise with their mouths. Tell them they may make faces, stomp their feet, and even exaggerate their movements. Model what being angry can look like.

Give the participants a few minutes to do this. Then ask everyone to stop and sit. Briefly ask the children how it felt to see all these angry faces, and how it felt to make themselves look angry. Then, begin a discussion about why we get angry sometimes. Ask the group to call out some reasons they get angry. Ask some of these questions:

- What was it like when you felt angry?
- How long do you remember staying angry?
- What are some ways we can work through anger, so we can let ourselves feel angry then move on?
- Why do you think holding onto anger for a long time is not helpful?

Affirm that when things are unfair, or hurtful, or wrong, it is appropriate to feel angry. Say, in your own words:

Our anger is a normal feeling. But, it becomes destructive when we hold onto it too long. It is important to understand why we are angry and then work through it so it does not stay with us for a long time.

ACTIVITY 2: MIRROR TALKING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Music, and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how you will pair children. Prepare to pair a co-leader with a child, in an odd-numbered group.
- Optional: Choose about five minutes of instrumental music to evoke a variety of emotions children can express in their mirroring movements—for example, a clip from the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

Description of Activity

This activity develops empathy, self-awareness, and trust, tools that can help children dissipate anger they may feel toward someone else.

Form pairs of participants and arrange them so they face a partner. Tell them they will take turns to mirror each other's hand and arm movements as closely as possible. Explain that the idea is not to stump the other person, or to go so fast their partner cannot follow. The goal is to mirror each other as much as possible.

Have one person be the leader and the other the mirror for a couple of minutes. Then switch.

Optional: Use music to evoke different moods for the hand movements. Include music that evokes anger or music that sounds sad. If you use thematic music, be sure to talk afterward about the emotions the children were expressing.

Follow up with questions:

- How easy or difficult was this?
- What skills do you need, in order to follow someone else's movements in this way? (Concentration, observation, patience.)
- Why would it be important to give someone your full attention?
- How did it feel to have someone else following your movements?
- When you were the mirror, did anyone feel like you were agreeing with emotions your partner was acting out? How did that feel?

Including All Participants

If any child will be unable to see the hand movements, have pairs place their hands palm to palm and mirror with their eyes closed.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY – ANGER, A BUDDHIST STORY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Anger – A Buddhist Story](#)" (included in this document)
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as a small Buddha statue, a mirror, a world map or small globe, a picture of an angry face
- A chime, rain stick, or other instrument with a calming sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see Session 1, Leader Resource 4)

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Plan how you will use items from the story basket as props.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one, e.g., "Has anyone seen a Buddha before? What do you know about Buddha, or the Buddhist religion?" If you have brought a map or globe, ask/affirm that Buddhism originated in India and is practiced widely in many countries in Asia.

As items come back to you, display them on the table. Then say, in your own words:

Today we are exploring the wisdom in religions of the world. This is the third UU Source. Unitarian Universalists believe all faiths and beliefs have something important to share. Today we will hear a story from Buddhism, a very old religion, over 2,500 years old.

Remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket. In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the instrument. When the sound has gone, tell the story "Give Yourself." Read or tell the story slowly, like a meditation. Use the instrument again to indicate that the story is over.

Then, ask:

- What does "unruffled" mean? Can you stay unruffled when someone tells you what you are doing is wrong, though you know it to be right?
- What does "exuding a feeling of loving kindness" mean? Can you do this? Do you know someone who can?
- If anger can be given, as a gift, like the story says, can happiness? How about laughter? What about goodness?

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the story basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "one person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 4: CALMING BEADS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Waxed linen, or elastic cord and large needles for all participants
- Assorted beads, at least 16 for each participant, and shallow trays
- One large wooden or metal bead for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Cut 14-inch lengths of cord, one for each participant. Waxed linen cord is best, because children can string beads without using a needle.
- Place smaller beads in trays and set them at work tables.
- Place the special, larger beads in another tray.
- Make a sample set of Calming Beads using the directions below.

Description of Activity

The children create a strand of beads they can use to calm themselves when they feel angry and learn a tactile counting practice to use with it.

Affirm that is okay to get angry sometimes. However, when we stay angry we hurt ourselves. This activity is about making something we can hold onto instead of holding onto our anger.

Invite each child to choose a large bead. Distribute the lengths of cord. Point out the smaller beads on the work tables.

Explain, demonstrating as needed::

1. String one end of the cord through the starter bead.
2. Then string at least ten smaller beads on the cord, while keeping hold of the end.
3. Pull the cord through the starter bead again. Keep the cord loose enough so the beads can move back and forth, then knot the cord.
4. If the starter bead has a hole too large for the knot, tie another small bead on the end: String both ends of the cord through the smaller bead and tie a knot. You can add even more beads to this "tail."

When everyone is done, call children into a circle and invite them to admire one another's work. Show participants how to take the Calming Beads into their hands, looped over their fingers, and can finger along, bead-to-bead. Ask the children to sit quietly, closing their eyes if they wish, while you repeat these centering words:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Breathe in and out as each bead passes through your finger.

Repeat the centering words a few times. Then say, in your own words:

Just like you can put yourself to sleep at night, you can also calm yourself when you are angry. These beads are a great way to help you. Keep them in your pocket or around your wrist to use whenever you need.

Invite participants to continue holding the beads and using them to count quietly. Ask the group:

- Do you think your Calming Beads might be helpful to you?
- Who can try in the coming week to use your Calming Beads when you get angry?
- What other ways do you use to help you remain calm?

Variation

Have children make extra sets of Calming Beads to include in the Fidget Objects basket.

Including All Participants

This activity requires manual dexterity and in some cases, patience. Large beads are much easier to string.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 10, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star – World Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Session 10, Leader Resource 2, Source Star — World Religions. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Write the words for the third UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions.
- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw something they learned about or from Buddhism today. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from World Religions" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we learned some ways to manage anger that came from Buddhism. Buddha was the founder of one of the world's great religions. Unitarian Universalists believe Buddha's teachings can guide us to love and help us cope with anger.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: BODY OF ANGER (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- An old T-shirt and pair of pants, both light-colored, adult size, and ready to be recycled
- Markers that will write on fabric
- Handout 1, [Three Choices to Reduce Anger](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Face or body paint

Preparation for Activity

- Invite parents to join the group for this activity.
- Read the Description of Activity. Then, invite an appropriate adult volunteer, preferably male, preferably someone with whom the children already are comfortable.
- Copy Handout 1 for all participants/families.
- Clear an open area where the volunteer can stand and be seen by everyone. Set face paint and fabric markers on a work table.

Description of Activity

Participants discover how their bodies react when we become angry. When we can recognize signs of anger in our bodies, we can better understand ourselves.

Have the volunteer put on the old clothes. Introduce your volunteer to the group. Say, in your own words:

Our bodies can tell us when we are angry. For each person the signs are different. Each person has to find out what their own signs are, so they will realize when they are getting angry. The important thing to controlling anger is recognizing that you are becoming angry so you can act responsibly instead of lashing out and saying or doing something that is hurtful.

Ask the group to think of ways their bodies react when they feel angry; encourage the children to speak and adults to listen. As participants name different signs of anger, use the volunteer (dressed in old clothes) as a living "visual" and write or draw each example on their body using either markers or face paint. For example "rapid breathing" could be written on the chest to represent lungs; "red face" on a cheek.

Follow up with questions such as:

- Which body reaction do you have when you get angry? (Use the volunteer as a visual list of body reactions the children have mentioned.)
- How do you control your anger?
- Is anger always bad? When is anger good?

Thank the volunteer and invite them to remove the signs of anger by stepping out of the old clothes. Distribute the handout to adults. Invite families to review it at home.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these

opportunities into experiential learning for the children?

- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

When my anger's over

may the world be young again

as after rain —

the cool clean promise

and the dance

of branches glistening green — Raymond John Baughan, in Day of Promise: Collected Meditations, Kathleen Montgomery, ed. (Skinner House, 2001); used with permission

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children learned from our third Unitarian Universalist Source, "the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions," using a Buddhist story to consider anger, with love. The children used non-verbal communication to express anger and empathy. They made Calming Beads and learned how to use them.

We affirmed that anger is a normal, healthy feeling. While not particularly pleasant, it is our body's way of alerting us to problems. Anger can give us the energy we need to right wrongs. Nevertheless, as you know, it can get too big. Raging out of control, anger can be expressed in hurtful ways and hurts the person holding it. Children learned to recognize their anger, reduce its hold on them, and harness it constructively.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about... how we respond with love to our own anger, and to others who are angry. Ask your child(ren) about:

- How the Buddha responded to anger in the story children heard today
- What we can learn about anger from the third Unitarian Universalist Source, "wisdom from world religions"
- The Calming Beads children made, and how to use them
- Ways they know to respond to someone who is angry, or what they do when they are angry.

EXTEND THE TOPIC. Try...

Family Adventure. Today children explored what happens to us when we get angry. We also need to know how to control our anger. On the Tapestry of

Faith website, find a handout, Three Choices to Reduce Anger. Developed for this session's Faith in Action activity, the handout describes three strategies children (and adults) can use to slow down the body's reaction to anger. Try the strategies together and talk about when and how you can use them.

Family Discovery. Explore these online resources:

A [Missouri Families](http://www.missourifamilies.org/) (at www.missourifamilies.org/) article, "[Helping Children Deal With Anger At Friends](http://www.missourifamilies.org/FEATURES/divorcearticles/divorcefeature4.htm)" (<http://www.missourifamilies.org/FEATURES/divorcearticles/divorcefeature4.htm>)

Great information on the [KidsHealth website](http://www.kidshealth.org/) (at www.kidshealth.org) about all kinds of issues related to being and feeling healthy.

The website of Seattle-based [Committee for Children](http://www.cfchildren.org/) (at www.cfchildren.org/) offers information, curricula, and videos on violence prevention, impulse control, and conflict resolution for use in K-8 classrooms, and links to fiction for children, arranged by age and grade, on topics including impulse control, anger buttons, identifying feelings, problem solving, and keeping out of a fight.

[Parents Anonymous](http://www.parentsanonymous.org/) (at www.parentsanonymous.org/) is a well-established family strengthening program designed to help all parents find ways to manage their own anger and create a safe nurturing home environment for their kids. Parents Anonymous groups meet in communities throughout the United States. Anyone in a parenting role can join at any time and can attend for as long as they wish.

Books with stories and guidance about anger management include: [*Kindness: A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/) by Sarah Conover (Boston: Skinner House, 2010), *What to Do When Your Temper Flares: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Problems With Anger* by Dawn Huebner (Magination Press, 2008), *A Volcano in My Tummy: Helping Children to Handle Anger* by Elaine Whitehouse and Warwick Pudney (New Society Publishers, 1996), and *How to Take the Grrr Out of Anger* by Elizabeth Verdick and Marjorie Lisovskis (Free Spirit Publishing, 2003).

A Family Ritual. Buddhist practice includes meditation. Try meditation as a family, perhaps guiding simple stretching or movements followed by a few minutes of silence. You will find that this serves your children well prior to devoted time to concentration, for example, homework.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites participants to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite the children to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Variation

Instead of sharing their joys and concerns, invite children to light a candle and, if they wish, answer a

question. A question to fit this session might be "When did you feel angry, and how did it feel?"

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. Alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arises in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION — WORLD RELIGIONS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 10, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation – World Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Session 10, Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – World Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Session 10, Handout 1, UU Source Constellation – World Religions for all participants plus one extra.
- Print out Session 10, Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – World Religions
- Using the leader resource as a guide, mark the spiral on one copy of the handout by placing gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about our third Source, wisdom of the world's religions. Unitarian Universalists learn from Buddhism and other religions of the world—Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, and many more—that have messages about love. To help us learn from world religions, we have a constellation named in honor of this UU Source. Some stars can be connected to look like a spiral. Can you find it in our Night Sky?

Give children time to look for the spiral. As children find it, let them show you by tracing with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the spiral by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they may take home their own World Religions constellations.

Light the chalice.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: YOGA – SALUTATION TO THE SUN (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Yoga mats

Preparation for Activity

- Review the Description of Activity and the sun salutation poses. You might also visit [The Yoga Site](http://www.yogasite.com/sunsalute.htm) (at www.yogasite.com/sunsalute.htm), for a detailed description, illustrations of all 12 poses, and an animation of a stick figure doing the entire cycle of poses. Even if you have little or no yoga experience, you may be able to teach and lead a sun salutation on

your own. Or, arrange for someone in the congregation who is familiar with yoga and sun salutations to help you.

- If possible, communicate with families ahead of time, asking that the children wear loose clothing.
- Clear a large, clean floor space where all participants can stretch without bumping into anyone else.
- Optional: Spread the yoga mats, leaving plenty of room between them.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to arrange themselves in the open floor space so they can lie down and spread their arms and legs without touching anyone else (on yoga mats, if you have them).

Lead the children slowly through the 12 postures of a sun salutation. Then, repeat the series of postures, aiming to complete the cycle smoothly in a single graceful, flow. Encourage children to pay attention to their breathing as they do the postures; guide them to inhale when the body is stretching or extending, and exhale when the body folds or contracts.

The 12 Positions

- Mountain pose — Feet hip wide, hands in prayer, take several deep breaths
- Hands overhead — Inhale, arms overhead, arch back
- Head to knees — Exhale, bend forward
- Lunge — Inhale, right leg back
- Plank — Exhale, left leg back, inhale
- Stick — Exhale, lower to floor
- Upward dog — Inhale, lift torso with arms bending only the back
- Downward dog — Exhale, lift from hips, with bum in the air, head point to floor
- Lunge — Inhale, step right foot forward
- Head to knees — Exhale, left foot forward, head to knees
- Hands up — Inhale, slowly rise, extending arms up and back
- Mountain — Stand tall, hands in prayer

Follow up with questions, such as:

- What were you thinking about while you did this yoga exercise?

- Does your body feel the same as it did before we started? If not, how does it feel different?
- What happens when you stop thinking of things that bother you?
- This is very active way to meditate. Do you think it is calming?
- Why do you think it's called Salutation to the Sun? Would this be a good way to start your morning? Why?

Including All Participants

Yoga practice is about how the practitioner feels, not how the pose appears. Encourage participants with any level of ability/disability to try the poses to the degree they are capable and their bodies feel comfortable. Children who need to stay seated can stretch their bodies to approximate the poses and focus on inhaling/exhaling.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 12: STORY: ANGER – A BUDDHIST STORY

From *Kindness: A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents* (Condra Enterprises, 2005), collected and adapted by Sarah Conover. Used with permission.

One day, the Buddha and a large following of monks and nuns were passing through a village. The Buddha chose a large shade tree to sit beneath so the group could rest awhile out of the heat. He often chose times like these to teach, and so he began to speak. Soon, villagers heard about the visiting teacher and many gathered around to hear him.

One surly young man stood to the side, watching, as the crowd grew larger and larger. To him, it seemed that there were too many people traveling from the city to his village, and each had something to sell or teach. Impatient with the bulging crowd of monks and villagers, he shouted at the Buddha, "Go away! You just want to take advantage of us! You teachers come

here to say a few pretty words and then ask for food and money!"

But the Buddha was unruffled by these insults. He remained calm, exuding a feeling of loving-kindness. He politely requested that the man come forward. Then he asked, "Young sir, if you purchased a lovely gift for someone, but that person did not accept the gift, to whom does the gift then belong?"

The odd question took the young man by surprise. "I guess the gift would still be mine because I was the one who bought it."

"Exactly so," replied the Buddha. "Now, you have just cursed me and been angry with me. But if I do not accept your curses, if I do not get insulted and angry in return, these curses will fall back upon you—the same as the gift returning to its owner."

The young man clasped his hands together and slowly bowed to the Buddha. It was an acknowledgement that a valuable lesson had been learned. And so the Buddha concluded for all to hear, "As a mirror reflects an object, as a still lake reflects the sky: take care that what you speak or act is for good. For goodness will always cast back goodness and harm will always cast back harm."

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 12: HANDOUT 1: THREE CHOICES TO REDUCE ANGER

It is not enough to know what happens to us when we get angry. We also need to know how to control our anger.

Here are three choices for reducing the feelings of anger. Learn them together, and use them help one another manage anger. All are intended to slow down your body's reaction to anger:

Choice 1: Stretch

Stretch your arms way up over your head. Reach with your fingertips for the ceiling, as high as you go. Breathe in (1-2-3) and out (1-2-3-4).

Put your hands on your shoulders with your elbows pointed out. Breathe in as you twist slowly to one side. Breathe out as you twist to the other side. Twist back and forth, gently stretching your body with each twist. Keep breathing (in 1-2-3 ... out 1-2-3-4).

Clasp your hands behind your back. Bend forward while you bring your arms up, behind you, stretching gently to raise your arms toward the ceiling. Breathe in (1-2-3) and out (1-2-3-4) twice.

Straighten up and drop your hands to your sides. Roll your head gently to one side, then the other, back and forth. Keep breathing.

Choice 2: Squeezing

Grab a pillow, and suck in a big lungful of air through your nose.

While you're breathing in, squeeze the pillow as tightly as you can. Even if it's a small pillow, scrunch up your face, and stiffen the muscles in your legs. Keep your whole body in that giant squeeze while you count 1-2-3 in your head.

Next, loosen your grip on the pillow and relax everything while you breathe out, counting 1-2-3-4.

While you're relaxed, take a slow, deep breath in (counting 1-2-3) and out (counting 1-2-3-4).

Then breathe in and squeeze again.

Go through this pattern five times: breathe in, squeeze and hold, release and breathe out, breathe in and out one time with squeezing, then start again.

Choice 3: Tapping

Cross your arm to make an X across your chest.

Tap your right shoulder with your left hand, then your left shoulder with your right hand. As you tap, count in your head. Tap once for each number you say to yourself.

Breathe slowly, but don't count your breaths. Count your taps instead.

Keep going—right, left, right, left, right, left—tapping back and forth, over and over again, until you get to 100.

Keep your arms crossed and take two extra breaths, slow and relaxing, in and out through your nose. In 1-2-3 ... out 1-2-3-4 ... pause. In 1-2-3 ... out 1-2-3-4 ... pause.

Then start tapping again until you get to 100.

FIND OUT MORE

Yoga

The [sun salutation directions](http://www.yogasite.com/sunsalute.htm) (at www.yogasite.com/sunsalute.htm) in Alternate Activity 3 were adapted from the [Yoga Site online resource center](#) (at www.yogasite.com/).

UUism and Buddhism

Read a [pamphlet from the UUA](#), "The Faith of a UU Buddhist" by James Ishmael Ford, or order it to display at your congregation.

The [UUA Bookstore](http://www.uuabookstore.org/) (at www.uuabookstore.org/) offers many titles, including the collection that provided this session's story, "Anger," *Kindness: A*

Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents, collected and adapted by Sarah Conover, illustrated by Valerie Wah.

In This Very Moment: A Simple Guide to Zen Buddhism by James Ishmael Ford (Skinner House Press) provides "...history, philosophy and practice of Zen for beginners...stories from Zen masters, helpful discussion of the different schools of Buddhist thought, instruction for sitting *shikantaza* (sitting Zen)..."

Opening the Lotus: A Woman's Guide to Buddhism by Sandy Boucher (Beacon Press) describes fundamental teachings of Buddha, the differences among (Buddhism's) various schools and the components of Buddhist practice."

SESSION 13: RESPONDING WITH LOVE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*The sun never says to the earth,
"You owe me."
Look what happens with a love like that.
It lights up the whole sky. — Hafiz, Sufi poet*

Participants learn from the third Source of Unitarian Universalism, "wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life." A story from Sufism, a mystical facet of Islam, demonstrates responding to negativity with gentleness and love. The Sufi faith encourages a personal relationship with the divine, exemplified by the dancing of Whirling Dervishes. The children experience a dancing meditation—not in imitation of the Whirling Dervishes, but to find movement of their own.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the third Source of Unitarian Universalism, in child-friendly language "the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions"
- Introduce the Sufi religion
- Empower children to respond to difficult situations with love.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Hear a story from the Sufi tradition that models responding to meanness with kindness
- Experience a calming dancing meditation
- Practice transforming negative situations and attitudes with positive words.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	7
Activity 1: Dancing Meditation	18
Activity 2: Story – The Dervish in the Ditch	15

Activity 3: Role Play – Responding with Kindness 10

Faith In Action: Responding with Love Posters 25

Closing 10

Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns 7

Alternate Activity 2: UU Source Constellation – World Religions 10

Alternate Activity 3: Flower Power 20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a quiet place before the creative chaos of the group, and read these [words by photographer Reza Khatir](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/wallpaper/whirling-dervish.html) (at [photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/wallpaper/whirling-dervish.html](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/wallpaper/whirling-dervish.html)):

On the city walls, a word shows the way to whoever knows how to see. Like a relentless invitation, the walls deliver the mysterious message: "Come."

At every step, I read and seem to hear the murmured echo of the one that guides me. "Come. Come. Come."

I follow that unexpected trail. In spite of the hurrying passersby, the daily obligations, and the hubbub, I let myself drift to the poetry of the word. I look for it, wait for it at every street corner. Suddenly, nothing. A door opens onto an old style garden filled with mortuary stelae as witnesses of time past. The Dervish school of Mowlana, a Sufi philosopher is there and I can make out the music and low-pitched voices. I sneak behind a door. He is there, turning towards the infinity, to the rhythm of divine incantations in a mystic dance, one hand reaching up to the sky, the other down to the earth, like a message to God, "We are a knot on a circular line of energy between earth and sky."

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.
- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: If you need to learn the song "Love Will Guide Us," go online to hear [a congregation singing it together](#) (at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQi4ewMrqMU>). Or, you might invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Indicate the Night Sky display. If the group includes children who have heard the Opening before, you might invite them to explain the Night Sky, the Big Dipper, the North Star in their own words.

Or, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, the Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other peoples all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Invite the children to discover the pattern of a dipping spoon. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper. If we lived in Southern France, we would call it a Saucepan. Do you see the saucepan?

Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them

to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about the third Source, the wisdom of world religions, and we will learn about the Sufi faith. We will talk about how this source points the way to love and kindness.

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: DANCING MEDITATION (18 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- "Peppy" instrumental music
- Music player
- A large, clear space

Description of Activity

One aspect of Sufism is a dancing meditation, referred to as a Whirling Dervish, where people whirl in circles in a meditative state. It would be culturally inappropriate to replicate this dance; however, using dance as a form of mediation is common as a spiritual practice and a therapeutic exercise.

This begins as movement with music and ends with silence as a meditative practice that is age-appropriate.

First Stage: (8 minutes)

Play music and encourage children to dance. Allow them to sing, dance, and have total freedom for any kind of body movement.

Second Stage: (5 minutes)

Slowing turn down the volume on the music and ask children to sit down, close their eyes and be as still as possible. (Turn the music off completely.) Tell them to focus on their nostrils and feel the cool breath they take in and the hot breath that they blow out through them. Tell them that if they have any thoughts coming into their minds they should just bring their concentration gently back to their nostrils. At this time, total silence is maintained.

Third Stage: (5 minutes)

Have children lie on their backs, close their eyes and relax completely. After 5 minutes, ask them to breathe in and out deeply three times, before opening their eyes.

Including All Participants

If there are participants with accessibility issues, encourage arm, leg or just head movement by swaying to the music.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – THE DERVISH IN THE DITCH (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Dervish in the Ditch](#) (included in this document) "
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as a symbol or statue representing Sufism, several small plastic horses, a toy carriage, a baby jar with dirt and grass
- A chime, rain stick, or other instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- If using a calendar in the story basket, highlight the summer and winter solstices (respectively the longest and shortest days of the year). You can find these dates with a quick online search.
- Place the story-related items and the chime or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times so you will be comfortable telling it.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

As items come back to you, display them on the table. Then say, in your own words:

Today we are exploring the "wisdom in religions of the world." This is the third Source and it says Unitarian Universalists believe all faiths and beliefs have something important to share. Today we will learn about Sufism. It is a very old religion and a very gentle religion. Sufis believe that by opening your heart to love you can be closer to God. A devoted Sufi is called a Dervish.

Remove the chime from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use the chime to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket. In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (or, turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story "The Dervish in the Ditch." Use the chime again to indicate that the story is over.

Then, ask:

- Do you think the carriage driver was intentionally trying run down the Sufi and the student?
- What did the Sufi say to the driver? ("May all your deepest desires be satisfied!") What do you think he meant by that?
- What could the Sufi have said instead? (Probe responses: Would that be a hurtful response, or responding with love?)

- How do you feel when someone pushes you aside? Do you take it personally, that is, do you assume they did it on purpose to hurt you?
- Did you understand why the Dervish responded with love? (It may be helpful to remember that desires dwell in your heart, and bring the discussion to Sufism.)

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the story basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "one person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 3: ROLE PLAY – RESPONDING WITH KINDNESS (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

This activity comes from *Once Upon A Time: Storytelling to Teach Character and Prevent Bullying* by Elisa Davy Pearmain; permission pending.

Tell the participants, in your own words:

Imagine you are walking down the hall at school when a group of older kids goes by. They are so involved with impressing each other that they force you into the wall, knocking the books out of your hands and to the floor. They don't stop. They don't say "I'm sorry." They don't help to pick up the books. What would you call out?

Give participants a chance to respond. Allow them to say whatever they feel.

Then say:

Now imagine you are one of the older kids. You forgot your lunch. Your mom got mad at you and you are late for class. You bump into some younger kids you don't know. What would you be thinking about? Were you being mean? Were you being unthoughtful?

Again, allow the children to process. Focus the discussion on what difference it might make when hurtful behavior is unintentional, or accidental, as opposed to purposeful. Ask:

- Would it make a difference in how you respond to a hurt, if you assume the person caused hurt by accident?

Now revisit the first scenario. See if the children can come up with responses that wish the older children well, responses that express love and empathy. Remind them although they might feel they want to "get someone back," when their immediate response is anger, they can respond with love instead. They can remember to think like the Sufi Dervish did. The Dervish did not assume the carriage driver wanted to hurt him. The Dervish assumed the driver was thoughtless because he had some problems of his own.

Variation

This lesson may be difficult for some participants, especially younger ones. Consider doing a role play. Describe the first scenario. Have a few volunteers mime walking with books and a few other children play the ones who push. Then do it again, with the roles reversed. Instructions for safety are important: Explain that the "pushing" will be gentle as it is meant to illustrate, not to harm anyone.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 10, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star – World Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home section
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovetwillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Session 10, Leader Resource 2, Source Star — World Religions. Copy for all participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).

- Write the words for the third UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions.

- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw an activity or a symbol to represent the Sufi faith, or love and kindness. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from World Religions" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say, in your own words:

Today we talked about how we learn from religions of the world and we talked about the Sufi religion. Sufism is part of Islam. In the Sufi story we heard, this Source pointed us to love as we learned about kindness.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint to use next time.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: RESPONDING WITH LOVE POSTERS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Poster board
- Magazines (with many pictures of people), scissors (including left-handed scissors), and glue sticks

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange poster board, magazines, markers, scissors and glue sticks on tables for the group to use.
- Meet with the religious educator to discuss where and when to display the posters for the whole congregation to see.

Description of Activity

Brainstorm ways to be kind to others. How do members of the group respond with kindness and love? Write responses on the newsprint.

Invite the participants to find photos in the magazines that show people using the responses they came up with that show kindness and love. Have children work on their own or in small groups to make collages with the pictures they find and words of love and kindness.

Have everyone share the collages they made. Invite each child or small group to say why they chose the images and words they did.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community

guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?

- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

*The sun never says to the earth,
"You owe me."*

Look what happens with a love like that.

It lights up the whole sky. — Hafiz, Sufi poet

IN TODAY'S SESSION... The children explored Sufism as a window into our third Unitarian Universalist Source, expressed in child-friendly words as "the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions." The group learned about responding to meanness with love, using a Sufi story, "The Dervish in the Ditch," as a starting point. The group also experienced a dancing meditation, not to replicate the dance of Sufism's Whirling Dervishes, but to find their own movement. Then, we transitioned into a quiet meditation.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

the Sufi belief in love as the path to God, and how we can respond with love when faced with a difficult situation. Offer your child some "what if?" scenarios. Discussion may open the topic of bullying; your child may tell you about being bullied, witnessing bullying, or bullying someone else. Be ready to take advantage of a "teachable moment" and talk with your child about ways to apply a Sufi lesson about kindness. Answering bullying with love is a very difficult, highly mature response. In some cases, it may not be an appropriate or safe response. It will be important to discern if your child is explaining a situation that needs adult intervention.

Ask your child about:

- The dancing meditation they did
- How the Sufi in the story responded when he was thrown in the ditch. ("May all of your deepest desires be satisfied!")
- A time they responded with love
- A time when someone responded to them angrily, and how that felt.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER...

Consider some of these books as a way to begin a conversation:

- *My Secret Bully* by Trudy Ludwig and Abigail Marble (Tricycle Press, 2005)

- *Just Kidding* by Trudy Ludwig and Adam Gustavson (Tricycle Press, 2006)
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor (Dial Books for Young Readers, 1976)
- *Let the Circle Be Unbroken* by Mildred Taylor (Dial Books for Young Readers, 1981)

A Family Ritual. Unitarian Universalism is not just for Sundays. Make or purchase your own chalice and light it before family dinner. Say together:

We light this chalice to remind ourselves to treat all people kindly because they are our family, to take care of the earth because it is our home, and to try to live a life full of goodness and love because that is how we will become the best people we can be.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite the children to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Variation

Instead of sharing their joys and concerns, invite children to light a candle and, if they wish, answer a question. A question to fit this session might be "Have you ever been bullied by someone?"

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION – WORLD RELIGIONS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 10, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation – World Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Session 10, Leader Resource 1, [UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – World Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.

- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print out Session 10, Handout 1, UU Source Constellation – World Religions for all participants plus one extra.
- Print out Session 10, Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – World Religions
- Using Session 10, Leader Resource 1 as a guide, on one copy of the handout use star stickers to mark the spiral: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about our third Source, wisdom of the world's religions. Unitarian Universalists learn from Sufism, and other religions of the world—Buddhism, Jainism, the Hindu religion, and many more—that have messages about love. To help us learn from world religions, we have a constellation named in honor of this UU Source. Some stars can be connected to look like a spiral. Can you find it in our Night Sky?

Give children time to look for the spiral. As children find it, let them show you by tracing with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the spiral by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they may take home their own World Religions constellations.

Light the chalice.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: FLOWER POWER (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Construction paper in a variety of colors
- Scissors (including left-handed scissors) and glue sticks
- Pencils, and color markers

Description of Activity

Children offer one another compliments and build their own "compliment flower," practicing a way of responding with love.

Give each child a whole sheet of construction paper. Place construction paper, in a variety of colors, on the work tables with pencils, scissors, glue sticks, and color markers. Tell participants:

Compliments are like flowers, with the power to build a person up and allow them to glow from the inside out.

Invite each child to draw a flower stem on their paper, and then cut out two leaves from another sheet of paper and glue the leaves to their stem. Invite them to write one thing they like about themselves on each leaf.

As children finish, ask them to use whatever colors of paper they wish to cut out petals for their flower. The number of petals should equal the number of people in the group, minus one. (If the group is small, have children cut out two petals for each person.) Have the children write their names on the backs of all their petals, then distribute their petals, one (or two) to each person in the group.

Ask the children to look and see whose petal they have, then turn it over, write a positive comment or compliment, and then return the petal to its owner. Encourage them to take a moment to think of something special (specific) about each person.

You may wish to post a few "generic" compliments on newsprint to get the children started, for example:

- I am glad you are my friend.
- You are fun to play with.
- You have a nice personality.

As children receive their petals back, invite them to glue petals to the stem so all the positive comments can be seen. Tell the children they may take their Flower Power flowers home.

Follow up with these questions:

- Was it harder to give compliments to yourself or to give them to someone else? Why?
- How does it feel to get positive comments from others?
- Is it easier for you to say positive comments to others, or to write them down?
- Why is it important to give compliments to others?

Including All Participants

Offer help if you notice a child has difficulty thinking of positive comments or writing on the "leaves" and "petals."

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 13: STORY: THE DERVISH IN THE DITCH

This story is found in a number of sources, including *From Once Upon a Time... Storytelling to Teach Character and Prevent Bullying* by Elisa Davy Pearmain; *Doorways to the Soul: 52 Wisdom Tales from Around the World*, edited by Elisa Pearmain (Pilgrim Press, 1998); *Buddha Is As Buddha Does* by Surya Das (Harper One, 2008); and *Milk from the Bull's Horn: Tales of Nurturing Men* by Doug Lipman (Yellow Moon Press, 1986).

Once upon a time, in a land to the east, a Dervish holy man and their student were walking from one village to the next. Suddenly they saw a great huge cloud of dust rising in the distance. They stood and stared at a grand carriage, pulled by six horses approaching at a full gallop. Riding on top were two liveries dressed in red, each holding a rein. The Dervish and the young student soon realized that the carriage was not going to slow down, let alone veer to

the side to avoid hitting them. The carriage was coming at such a speed that they had to throw themselves from the road and jump into a ditch to save themselves. Covered with dirt and grass, the two got up. They looked after the carriage as it sped away into the distance.

The student was first to respond. They began to call out and curse the drivers. But the teacher ran ahead, cupped his hands over the student's mouth, and called to the carriage: "May all of your deepest desires be satisfied!"

The student stared at the teacher and asked, "Why would you wish that their deepest desires be satisfied? They nearly killed us!"

The old Dervish replied, "Do you think all their deepest desires are satisfied? If they were happy, would they be so thoughtless and cruel as to nearly run down an old man and a student?"

The young student had no answer, for they were deep in thought. And so, in silence, the two continued their journey down the dusty road.

FIND OUT MORE

Sufism

Learn more about [Sufism online](http://www.nimatullahi.org/sufism) (at www.nimatullahi.org/sufism) or explore books such as:

Essential Sufism by James Fadiman and Robert Frager (Harper One, 1999)

The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystic Tradition by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Harper One, 2008)

Sufism: A Beginner's Guide by William C. Chittick (Oneworld Publications, 2007)

Awakening: A Sufi Experience by Pir Vilayat Inayat Kahn (Tarsheer, 2000).

SESSION 14: LOVE BUILDS TRUST

SESSION OVERVIEW

May, 2019: Session 14 has been removed from the Love Will Guide Us program while UUA staff evaluate it for revision.

The session, which focused on a Universalist missionary who worked in India, is in conflict with the UUA's commitment to dismantling white supremacy.

Please contact Susan Lawrence (slawrence@uua.org), Managing Editor for the UUA Faith Development Office, if this session's unavailability creates an inconvenience for your RE programming or you would like more information.

SESSION 15: LOVE IN ACTION

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

I had reasoned this out in my mind, there was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other. — Harriet Tubman, conductor on the Underground Railroad

This session lifts up Harriet Tubman, who escaped slavery and returned again and again to the South to lead more than 300 people north to freedom in the Northern States and Canada. We focus on the second Unitarian Universalist Source, "Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love," expressed in children's language as "The people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair."

The children learn that love calls us to be courageous and to take action in the face of evil. They will apply this learning to their own lives in a role play activity which focuses on the bystander—a person who witnesses injustice or unkindness. Participants will learn that enslaved people used code songs to communicate escape plans and, in the metaphor of following the stars as our guide, they learn the song, "Follow the Drinking Gourd," which refers to using the Big Dipper to find the North Star and travel north toward freedom.

This session will benefit from a leader comfortable with singing and song-leading.

GOALS

This session will:

- Deepen understanding of the second Unitarian Universalist Source, in child-friendly language "The people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair"
- Encourage empathy and affirm courage, through a story of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad
- Introduce the concept of a "bystander" and the choice to get involved when something is wrong
- Empower children to act as agents of justice and kindness
- Reinforce the metaphor of following the stars so love can guide us

- Help children evaluate what makes a good leader.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore the second Unitarian Universalist source, in child-friendly language "The people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair," through a story about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad
- Discuss the "bystander" role and experience, in role play, ways a bystander can choose to get involved when something is wrong
- Explore what makes a good leader and practice ways to respond to injustice, unkindness, or when a leader promotes a poor choice
- Develop empathy through identifying with enslaved people seeking freedom.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	7
Activity 1: Follow the Leader	10
Activity 2: Song – Follow the Drinking Gourd	10
Activity 3: Story – Harriet's Freedom Journeys	13
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SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Light a candle or chalice. Sit comfortably and pay attention to your breathing. Allow your body to relax. Take a few minutes to ponder the following questions, without judgment or criticism—imagine yourself looking back as an impartial observer.

- Have you ever experienced injustice? Did you take action? Did anyone else get involved, as an ally to you?
- Think of a time when you have witnessed injustice. Did you take action? What happened? If you did not act, what stopped you?

Bring your thoughts back to the present and return your awareness to your breathing. As you breathe in, breathe in love. As you breathe out, breathe out forgiveness. Continue this focus on your breathing until you feel at peace with the past and calm in your spirit.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A ladle and a gourd

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper. If you need to create a Night Sky display, see Session 1, Opening.
- Post your Our UU Sources Poster, if it is not already posted.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, for all participants. Or, write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics, for all participants. Or, copy the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Plan to collect and store handouts (or newsprint sheets) for re-use.
- Optional: Invite a member of the choir or someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words printed on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words together responsively.

Indicate the Night Sky display. If the group includes children who have heard the Opening before, you might invite them to explain the Night Sky, the Big Dipper, the North Star in their own words.

Or, say in your own words:

When people first began to ponder the night sky, they wondered, "What are stars and why are they there? Why do they move?" "Where did I come from? How did life begin? Why am

I here?" Although the sky did not give the answers, people used the stars as symbols for their beliefs about the important questions in their lives.

When people looked at their night sky, they saw patterns and pictures in the way the stars were arranged. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and Romans, the Chinese and Arabs, Native Americans, and other peoples all around the world named these constellations for gods they worshipped, animals they relied on, and everyday scenes from their lives.

Indicate the Big Dipper. Say:

We call this constellation the Big Dipper.

Invite the children to discover the pattern of a ladle, a big dipping spoon. Show them the ladle, if you have brought one. Ask the children what other pictures they see. Encourage them to imagine the constellation upside down. Tell them:

To the Skidi Pawnee Indians, this constellation looked like a sick man being carried on a stretcher.

To the ancient Maya, it was a mythological parrot named Seven Macaw.

To the Hindu, it looked like Seven Wise Men.

To the early Egyptians, it was the thigh and leg of a bull.

To the ancient Chinese, it was the chariot of the Emperor of Heaven.

The Micmac Indians saw a bear instead of the scoop, and hunters tracking the bear instead of the handle.

In France, some people call it the Saucepan.

Now say:

Long ago, people discovered how to use the stars to guide them when traveling. Knowing the constellations in the night sky helped them find the direction they wanted to go.

In our country, slavery used to be allowed. There were many places in the U.S. in the 1800s where white people in the Southern states controlled black people by forcing them to work hard for no payment. People who were enslaved in this way had little power to make decisions about their own lives—even the adults.

The people who were enslaved in the South knew that the Northern states did not allow slavery. They knew they could escape to the North by traveling at night, when it was dark, following the Big Dipper constellation in the sky. They gave the Big Dipper a new name: the Drinking Gourd. This constellation became a symbol of freedom.

We will talk more about the Drinking Gourd today when we talk about Harriet Tubman, and how she helped many people escape from slavery. She traveled back and forth, from the North to the South and back again, though it was quite dangerous for her, as a black woman, one who had escaped from being enslaved, herself.

Say, while pointing to the North Star:

This one star does not move much in the Night Sky. The earth rotates and orbits around the sun, but this star, the North Star, is located directly above the North Pole, so it seems to always stay in the same place in the sky. Travelers without a map, a compass, or a GPS can use the North Star to know where they are and where they are going.

For Unitarian Universalists, love is like the North Star.

Now indicate the poster you have made of the seven Sources. Say, in your own words:

We let love and our Sources guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers. We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us answer the big questions about what we believe, just like ancient peoples used the stars.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, this means we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas. Say, in your own words:

Today we are talking about our second Source, "lives of people from long ago and today who remind us to be kind and fair." Harriet Tubman was one of those people.

Distribute (or indicate, if posted) the "Love Will Guide Us" lyrics. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Collect handouts/newsprint for use in future sessions.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: FOLLOW THE LEADER (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

While playing this common game, children consider what makes a good leader and how we each make choices to follow.

Explain the rules: Walk in a single-file line, copying the actions of the leader. Tell the children you will be the leader and ask them to line up behind you. Move around in your room or into other available spaces, varying your motions as you go. For example, you might jog, hop, take baby steps, take huge steps, walk backwards, wave your arms in the air, or waddle like a duck.

After a minute, stop and turn to face the group. In your own words, say:

In life we often follow people who are leaders. When are some times you have followed a leader? What do you suppose makes someone a good leader?

Allow a brief discussion. Resume the game, leading the children for another minute. Stop again and turn to face the group. This time, ask:

What makes someone a bad leader?

Discuss this briefly and resume the game. Stop one final time and ask the children:

What would you do if I tried to lead you right into traffic on a busy street?? Is that a responsible thing for a leader to do?

Say, in your own words:

We make choices about who we will follow. When someone encourages us to do things we know are unsafe, unfair, or unkind, we do not have to follow that person. We can decide not to..

Ask the children:

What are some things that people do that are examples of good leaders?

Allow some comments. Then, lead the children to the storytelling area.

INCLUDING ALL PARTICIPANTS

Take care that your “follow the leader” movements and the pace you set include everyone’s capabilities for physical action.

ACTIVITY 2: SONG – FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Follow the Drinking Gourd Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Optional: A recording of "Follow the Drinking Gourd" and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Follow the Drinking Gourd Lyrics for all participants, or write the lyrics on newsprint, and post.
- Review the location of the Big Dipper and its position, relative to the North Star, on your Night Sky Display. Find Out More of Session 1 offers an explanation.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle. Tell the children the song "Follow the Drinking Gourd" is a code song: a song with hidden messages related to escaping slavery. The enslaved people taught one another the messages. But the slave owners did not know about the codes. By singing to one another, people planning to escape could communicate their plans without the slave owners knowing about it.

Teach the chorus and sing it together a few times. Explain that the chorus refers to the Big Dipper as the drinking gourd. Show the children the gourd, if you have brought one. Say that in rural areas, people might scoop and dry a nice gourd to make a bowl for drinking. Ask if they think it is possible the constellation we call "Big Dipper" might have reminded some of the people who were enslaved of a gourd used for drinking.

Using your Night Sky display, show the children how the Big Dipper can be used to locate the North Star. Because the North Star always stays at the North Pole, someone escaping at night from the South could follow the North Star to make sure they were headed north where they would be free.

Lead the group to sing one verse at a time. After each verse, ask participants what they think the hidden message might have been. As needed, explain that the first verse tells what time the escape will take

place (when the first quail calls...). The second and third verses provide a map of where they will travel (by the river bank).

Sing the chorus together one more time.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY – HARRIET'S FREEDOM JOURNEYS (13 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Harriet's Freedom Journeys](#) (included in this document) "
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as pictures or a book about Harriet Tubman, a ladle, a gourd, railroad items such as trains
- A rain stick, or another instrument with a calm sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: Handout 1, [Follow the Drinking Gourd Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of "Follow the Drinking Gourd" and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times to become comfortable with telling it—and leading the chorus of "Follow the Drinking Gourd" if you plan to use it.
- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

If you did not teach "Follow the Drinking Gourd" to the children but wish to incorporate the song's chorus into the story, teach the chorus to the children at this time.

Now remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story in *Love Will Guide Us*, you will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. In a calm voice, say, in your own words:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I turn the rain stick over, listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the instrument. When the sound has gone, invite the children to sing the chorus of "Follow the Drinking Gourd" with you, as guided in the story. Tell the story, engaging the children to sing the chorus where indicated.

Sound the instrument to indicate the story is over. Guide a brief discussion, using these questions:

- Why do you think Harriet was willing to risk getting captured, or even killed, in order to escape slavery?
- Why do you think Harriet decided to go back to rescue others, knowing that her freedom and her life could be in danger?
- I wonder what things are so important to you that you would risk everything for them?

Affirm about how brave it was for everyone involved with the Underground Railroad. It was very dangerous

to rely on the Underground Railroad to make your escape. It was dangerous for conductors like Harriet Tubman to share their help and friendship, their food, or their home to help someone else. People did it because they knew that people owning other people is wrong. Ask:

- What do you suppose we can do today if we know a rule is unfair and wrong? How could we do something about it?
- How could we follow the example of bravery of Harriet Tubman?

Including All Participants

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "one person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 4: DRINKING GOURD ROLE PLAYS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Drinking Gourd Role Play Scenarios](#) (included in this document)
- Ladle (preferably wooden)

Preparation for Activity

- Download Leader Resource 1, "Drinking Gourd Role Play Scenarios." Select scenarios for the group and/or create your own, and print them out.
- Create an area for an audience and a space for the role plays.

Description of Activity

Gather participants in the "audience" area. Say, in your own words:

Just as enslaved people followed the Big Dipper toward freedom, we can imagine that the Big Dipper and the North Star can guide us to act in loving ways. We will try this by doing some role plays together. For each role play, there will be an unfair or unkind situation. One person will hold the ladle (the drinking gourd) and act as the witness to the situation.

Ask if the children know what a witness is; affirm that a witness is someone who sees something happen. Explain that the role-play volunteers will have a few moments to act out the scene, then you will raise the ladle and call out: "Follow the drinking gourd!" The performers will freeze, and you will ask the witness to offer ideas for how they could help the person who is being treated unkindly or unfairly.

For each scenario, assign two volunteers to be the role players and another volunteer to be the witness. If the group is large, invite two or three children to share the witness role. Read the description aloud. Give participants a chance to ask any clarifying questions and then begin the improvisational role play.

When the role play reaches a point where the unfairness or unkindness is very clear, raise the ladle and call out "Follow the Drinking Gourd!"

Invite the witness(es) to suggest actions they might take to stop the unfairness or unkindness. Then invite the role players and audience to share ideas. Guide the group to articulate a few possible actions. You might ask how difficult each action might be, or how much courage it might require. Then, invite each role-player to debrief the scenario. Ask how they felt, acting in their role. Invite the role-players to leave the role they were playing behind by spinning in place and then returning to the audience.

Role play as many scenarios as you have time for.

Including All Participants

If you know children in the group have bullied or been bullied in real life, do not ask them to play that role in a scenario.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 7, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star – Wise People](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils or markers
- Taking It Home section
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Session 7, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Wise People. Copy for all

participants, plus one to place on the Night Sky display. Cut out the stars.

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants (or plan to email it to all families after the session).
- Write the words for the second UU Source on newsprint, and post:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.
- Optional: Prepare to teach and lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, and post. Plan to store handouts or newsprint for re-use.
 - Learn the song so you can teach it to the group. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to learn the song with you and help you.
- Set the cut-out Source Stars with pencils or markers on work tables.

Description of Activity

Gather the children at work tables. Invite them each to decorate a Source Star to take home and share with their family. You might suggest they draw about an example of courage or bravery they have learned from someone from long ago. Suggest Harriet Tubman, or another historic or contemporary figure whose loving courage they know about. As children work, attach one star that says "We learn from Wise People" to the Night Sky.

When children are done, gather them in a circle. Say:

Today we talked about how we learn from wise women and men who can show us how to be kind and fair. We learned about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, how she always followed the North Star to guide people out of the Southern states toward the north to escape from slavery and be free.

Indicate the second Source words you have posted on newsprint. Invite the children to follow along quietly as you read aloud:

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from the people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.

Pause and invite volunteers to give an example of what that Source means.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute Taking It Home and thank participants.

Save the Night Sky display and the handouts/newsprint for re-use.

Including All Participants

At this age, children have a wide range of reading ability. Do not put individual children on the spot to read aloud.

FAITH IN ACTION: FAIR TRADE CHOCOLATE SALE WITH S'MORES

Materials for Activity

- Fair trade chocolate (See [Global Exchange website](http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/) (at www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/) for a list of fair trade chocolate suppliers.)
 - Marshmallows (You can purchase vegan marshmallows online from [Vegan Essentials](https://store.veganessentials.com/dan-dies-air-puffed-vegan-marshmallows-by-chicago-vegan-foods-p2607.aspx) (at <https://store.veganessentials.com/dan-dies-air-puffed-vegan-marshmallows-by-chicago-vegan-foods-p2607.aspx>.)
 - Graham crackers
 - Skewers
 - A gas stove, preferably a portable camping stove
 - Optional: Information about chocolate, slavery, and fair trade (see links in Preparation for Activity, below)
 - Optional: Materials to make a Fair Trade Chocolate display: poster board; markers; scissors; tape or glue sticks; Fair Trade chocolate packaging; downloaded pictures or magazines to cut up for pictures

Preparation for Activity

- Learn about modern-day slavery used to produce chocolate and find out which producers offer Fair Trade chocolate. Read a

Fortune magazine article that illuminates the relationship between [international chocolate production and modern slavery](http://fortune.com/big-chocolate-child-labor/) (at <http://fortune.com/big-chocolate-child-labor/>). On the Stop Chocolate Slavery website, find a list of dozens of brands of chocolate produced without slavery; <http://www.slavefreechocolate.org/ethical-chocolate-companies>.

- Investigate an organization to whom you can donate proceeds, if you will make this event a fundraiser.
- Work together with your minister, religious educator, and/or social action committee to plan your Fair Trade Chocolate & S'mores event. Look for a launch date that coincides with worship and congregational action plans that focus a relevant theme, such as modern day slavery, child slavery, or fair trade. Identify and arrange to use a gas stove or an outdoor fire pit location where you will be able to stage and supervise safe S'mores-making. Publicize the event in your congregation and the larger community. Invite your minister to preach about fair trade efforts during a worship service prior to your sale.
- Find a source of Fair Trade chocolate you can sell as a fundraiser. Check out [Equal Exchange: https://shop.equalexchange.coop/collections/chocolate-bars](https://shop.equalexchange.coop/collections/chocolate-bars)
- Enlist children to help sell chocolate and adult volunteers to supervise making S'mores.
- Work with children to create an informative poster or display about fair trade chocolate.
- Set up table with fair trade chocolate and poster/display.
- Set up S'mores ingredients by gas or camp stove.
- Optional: Identify someone in your congregation or a neighboring congregation who has been involved in international anti-slavery or child advocacy or fair trade work. Arrange a time for them to speak to the children or the entire congregation. Be sure they understand the age range they will be addressing.

Description of Activity

Engage the whole congregation to learn about modern-day slavery and encourage children to work for justice by choosing to consume Fair Trade

chocolate and educating others to do the same. You may wish to sell Fair Trade chocolate to raise funds for an anti-slavery or international child advocacy organization.

Before the S'mores event, sit down with the Love Will Guide Us group and explain in simple but honest language that slavery still exists in many parts of the world. You can say something like:

We learned about Harriet Tubman who knew that slavery was wrong and helped people escape from it. Because of the courage of people like Harriet Tubman, slavery is illegal all over the world. Nobody is allowed to own another person or make them work for free.

Even though it isn't allowed, slavery does still exist. There are people called traffickers who find someone who needs a job and trick them into coming to a place where they are forced to work without getting paid. They trick them by promising a good job. But it's a lie.

Before it is made into candy, chocolate comes from cocoa plants. Some chocolate companies buy chocolate from cocoa plantations that have slaves. Other chocolate companies will only sell chocolate that has been grown and harvested without slaves. That is called "Fair Trade chocolate."

Explain that you are going to work against slavery by selling Fair Trade chocolate and teaching other people about Fair Trade chocolate. Invite the children to ask questions. Answer simply but honestly, emphasizing that you are going to work together to stop modern-day slavery.

Host your Fair Trade Chocolate & S'mores event. Sell chocolates from your sales table and encourage buyers to look for Fair Trade chocolate whenever they shop. During the sale, enjoy Fair Trade S'mores together, made by heating the marshmallows on the skewers and eating them with Fair Trade chocolate in a graham cracker sandwich.

After the event, gather participants in a circle and process the activity with questions such as:

- I wonder if you learned something surprising or new today?
- I wonder how you felt to learn that some of the chocolate you might eat could have a connection to slavery? How do you feel about chocolate being harvested by people who are forced to work for no pay?
- I wonder if there is anything more we can do, to continue our work to end slavery?

Including All Participants

Be aware of vegetarians and vegans in your congregation and people with food allergies, sensitivities, and medical restrictions. If any of the children are diabetic or allergic to chocolate, provide an alternate treat for them to enjoy. Most marshmallows are made with animal products, so, for vegetarians/vegans, obtain vegan marshmallows. Vegans can eat many dark chocolates that are made without dairy products.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team leaders and your religious educator. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who wasn't and why might that have been? How could they be better included next time?
- How was the timing? What might need to be done differently to work better within our time frame?
- Are we creating a program characterized by inclusion, respect, and welcome? What can we do differently?
- What opportunities did this session give us to model or affirm that we are a community guided by love? How did we turn these opportunities into experiential learning for the children?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our religious educator?

TAKING IT HOME

I had reasoned this out in my mind, there was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other. — Harriet Tubman, conductor on the Underground Railroad

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we learned about the second Unitarian Universalist Source, expressed in children's language as "The people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair." We played the game Follow the Leader and considered what makes a good leader and what we can do if a leader encourages us to make bad choices. We learned the song "Follow the Drinking Gourd," a code song enslaved people in the United States used to

encourage escape attempts. We heard the story of Harriet Tubman, who returned to the South after her own escape, again and again, to lead more than 1,000 other African Americans to freedom. The children thought about ways love calls us to take courageous action. We used role plays to practice responding to unfairness or unkindness.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about... rules and what you can do when they are unfair. Share your own examples of times when you thought rules were unfair and how you responded. Ask your child about times when they have experienced unfair rules. Talk together about ways to help change unfair rules, such as writing a letter, signing a petition, or meeting to discuss it with the appropriate people in authority. Be willing to reconsider family rules; look for an opportunity to involve your child in establishing rules everyone agrees are fair while maintaining emotional and physical safety and health.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

A Family Adventure. The United States and Canada have many tours, museums, and programs dedicated to the Underground Railroad. Find out about a [cross-border experience](#) (at www.motherlandconnections.com/) that historically re-enacts the Underground Railroad in Western New York and Ontario. [Locate one near you](#) (at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/states.htm>) on the U.S. National Park Service website, which hosts the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Listings. .

Family Discovery. Research U.S. slavery and the abolition movement. There are many good children's books about the Underground Railroad and Harriet Tubman. Learn about abolitionist Frederick Douglass who had himself escaped slavery. Read a Tapestry of Faith story about the dramatic [escape of Ellen and William Craft](#) (at <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/session8/109685.shtml>) in the 1850s.

The Winter, 2017 *UU World* Families section has a story-for-all-ages about two black [Underground Railroad conductors](#) who, like Harriet Tubman, helped many people escape into free states and further north on to Canada.

Find out together about the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation, and President Abraham Lincoln. The American Girl book series uses historical fiction to detail the life of Addy, an enslaved African American girl who escapes to freedom and experiences new challenges in the North.

Family Ritual. Read an article by Rev. Hope Johnson to learn about [Juneteenth](#), a holiday that

commemorates the last African American community's learning that their enslavement was over, after the Civil War on June 19, 1965.

<https://www.uua.org/central-east/blog/better-together/what-earth-juneteenth>

Find and attend a community Juneteenth event near you.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, connects with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect.

You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite the children to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Most congregations have policies to guide you in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. Alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arises in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UU SOURCE CONSTELLATION – WISE PEOPLE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 7, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation – Wise People](#) (included in this document)
- Session 7, [Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – Wise People](#) (included in this document)
- Night Sky display and push pins, tape, or sticky tack (Session 1, Opening)
- Gold and silver star stickers
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Review this activity. Plan how to incorporate it into the session Opening.
- Purchase gold and silver star stickers.
- Print Session 7, Handout 1, UU Source Constellation – Wise People, for all participants plus one extra.
- Print Session 7, Leader Resource 1, UU Source Constellation Answer Sheet – Wise People.
- Using the leader resource as a guide, on one copy of the handout use star stickers to mark the two figures holding hands: Place gold star stickers on the outlined stars and silver star stickers on the solid stars. Do not connect the gold stars. Post the constellation on the Night Sky along with the Big Dipper and North Star.

Description of Activity

Use this activity with your Opening to add additional Source constellations to your Night Sky.

Tell the children:

Our Sources are the way we are guided as Unitarian Universalists to help us live our faith.

Ask the children if they remember (or know) what a "source" is. Allow a moment for responses. Then, explain that the definition of source you are looking for has to do with origin, or beginning.

Say in your own words:

Today we are talking about our second Source, "lives of people who remind us to be kind and fair." We will hear about Harriet Tubman, and how she helped many people escape from slavery. She traveled back and forth, from the North to the South and back North again. It was quite dangerous for her, because she was a black woman and had escaped from slavery, herself.

Distribute the UU Source Constellation handout. Say:

We think it's important to learn from people who have shared their wisdom about how to be kind and fair. So we have a constellation to honor this Source. Some of the stars can be connected to look like two people holding hands. Can you find the constellation in our Night Sky?

Give them time to look for the two figures. As children find them, let them show you by tracing with a finger on their own handouts.

Distribute gold and silver stars. Have children stick gold stars on the outlined stars and silver stars on the solid stars on their handouts. Then, invite them to pencil the two people holding hands by connecting the gold stars. Tell them they may take home their own Wise People constellations.

Say, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists, we learn from the lives of people from long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.

- Light the chalice.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: TRUST WALK (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Scarves to cover eyes, one for every two children

Preparation for Activity

- Find a spacious, open area without obstacles or other hazards.

Description of Activity

This activity allows movement and invites children to consider what it takes to lead or to follow someone else in a potentially dangerous situation. Use this activity immediately after telling the story "Harriet's Freedom Journeys" (Activity 3).

Gather in a seated circle. Say, in your own words:

Escaping from slavery was very dangerous. One reason Harriet Tubman was able to lead more than 300 people to freedom was that they trusted her and listened to her. Today we will learn how it feels to trust someone else and how it feels for someone else to trust you.

Explain that children will move around the open space with a partner. The follower will have their eyes closed or covered, and the leader will guide the follower; then they will switch roles.

Emphasize the importance of being trustworthy when leading a partner. Ask what it means to be "worthy of trust." Ask what children will expect from a trustworthy

leader when they are following. Affirm that leaders should move gently, carefully, safely. Tell children if they are not being trustworthy leaders, they will be removed from the activity and another child or an adult will take their place. Monitor this activity closely. It is very important that this trust-building activity not decrease trust.

Form pairs and give each pair a scarf. Have each child take a turn wearing the scarf to cover their eyes while holding hands with their partner, who will lead them around your trust walk area. After five minutes, instruct the children to switch roles.

When each child has had a turn to be both a leader and a follower, gather in a seated circle and discuss:

- How did it feel to be led by a partner?
- How did it feel to lead your partner?
- Was it easier to lead or to be led? Why?
- Why is it important to be able to trust the person leading you?
- When you are the leader, how can you behave so that the person you are leading feels safe and cared for?

Including All Participants

If you add a rule that partners may not talk during the trust walk, a blind child will experience the challenges of leading and being led without sound cues.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION

15:

STORY: HARRIET'S FREEDOM JOURNEYS

(Leader: Invite the group to join you in singing the chorus of "Follow the Drinking Gourd." Teach the words and tune, if needed. Tell them that any time during the story they hear you start to sing, they should join in.)

Harriet Tubman knew that no person should be enslaved. She knew it was wrong for one person to own another person as if they were a cow or a horse or a wagon. She knew it was wrong when she was about seven years old, and her mistress whipped her over and over again if the baby cried at night. She knew it was wrong for one person to work in the fields or the house all day long without getting any pay. She knew it was wrong that owners broke families apart, selling children away from their parents, and wives away from their husbands.

Often Harriet thought about freedom. Sometimes at night she would dream that she was flying. In her dream she would come to a big wall that she couldn't pass. On the other side of the wall there were women wearing white, reaching up their arms to help pull her over it.

(Leader: Sing the chorus of "Follow the Drinking Gourd." Encourage the children to join in.)

When Harriet was a young woman she learned that she and three of her brothers were about to be sold to a plantation owner in the deep South. She would never see her family or her husband again. It was time for Harriet to escape from slavery. She knew escaping was very dangerous. White people would hire slave catchers to chase after the people who escaped. The slave catchers' brought dogs to sniff where people had escaped and find them. If you were caught, you would be cruelly punished, perhaps even killed. But Harriet knew she must be free.

She made an escape plan with her brothers. She did not even tell her husband, John Tubman. He was a free African American and Harriet knew he did not want to leave their home. Harriet thought he might try to stop her. While he was sleeping, she slipped out of their home at night and met her brothers. As they walked through the woods her brothers became very afraid. It was dangerous to try to escape slavery. Finally her brothers insisted they all go back. Harriet tried to encourage them to keep going, but they refused and brought Harriet back home with them.

Harriet knew now she had to escape by herself. She could not wait any longer or she would be sold. Harriet's father, Ben, had taught her all about the woods. She knew which plants and berries were safe to eat. She knew how to walk silently, without making a sound. She knew how to imitate bird calls. She knew that moss only grows on the north side of trees and how to feel for the moss to help guide her on cloudy nights. Most of all, she knew how to find the Big Dipper, and the North Star so she could follow it north to freedom.

(Leader: Sing the chorus of "Follow the Drinking Gourd." Encourage the children to join in.)

Walking through the woods at night, Harriet only knew one place to go for help: to the home of a white woman who was an abolitionist—someone who believed slavery was terribly wrong and who worked to end slavery. This woman was part of the Underground Railroad.

The Underground Railroad wasn't a real train. It was a network of people in the South and the North, men, women, black, and white, who worked together to help enslaved people escape to freedom. Their homes were the "stations" on the Underground Railroad, hiding places where people could safely rest and eat while traveling north.

Harriet travelled from station to station, walking for hundreds of miles until she finally reached a place without slavery where she could live free.

Harriet was free! She could choose whom she would work for and she would be paid. No one could ever whip her again. She could come and go as she pleased. She could set up a comfortable life for herself and live happily and safely for the rest of her life. But Harriet could not be comfortable knowing there were still more than two million people enslaved. She knew slavery was wrong. She knew she had to go back and help lead other people to freedom—no matter how dangerous it was. Harriet became a conductor on the Underground Railroad.

Harriet Tubman went back to the South again and again. She led more than 300 people out of slavery to freedom by following the North Star and walking to safe stations on the Underground Railroad. Pictures of Harriet were posted throughout the South, where she was wanted as a criminal. She carefully disguised herself so she would not be recognized. Sometimes she dressed in a man's suit, sometimes she dressed like an old woman. The people she helped to flee hid in barns, in secret rooms, and in churches. They

walked, they took trains, or rode in horse-drawn wagons, hidden under blankets or sacks of potatoes and onions.

(Leader: Sing the chorus of "Follow the Drinking Gourd." Encourage the children to join in.)

People would get scared along the Underground Railroad and wonder if they should turn back. They were exhausted and often near starvation. Tubman encouraged them to keep on going to freedom in the North. To keep babies from crying or making noises that might expose a hiding place, Harriet gave them medicine which made them sleep. Sometimes she carried babies them in a cloth bag tied around her waist. Harriet Tubman risked her life over and over

again because she knew that no adult or child should ever have to be enslaved.

Then the Civil War came. When it had ended, slavery was over in the United States. The law had been changed. No longer could any person own another person. Harriet lived for many years after that, working for the rest of her life to help the people who had been enslaved begin their lives in freedom. Once, she gave a speech, where she said, "I was a conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say. I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger."

(Leader: Sing the chorus of "Follow the Drinking Gourd." Encourage the children to join in.)

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 15: HANDOUT 1: FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD LYRICS

Chorus

Follow the drinking gourd,
Follow the drinking gourd,
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom,
Follow the drinking gourd.

Verse 1

When the sun comes back and the first quail calls,
Follow the drinking gourd.
The old man is a waiting for to carry you to freedom,
Follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus

Verse 2

Now the river bank makes a mighty good road,
The dead trees will show you the way.
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,
Follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus

Verse 3

Now the river ends between two hills,
Follow the drinking gourd.
There's another river on the other side,
Follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 15: LEADER RESOURCE 1: DRINKING GOURD ROLE PLAY SCENARIOS

1. One child wants to play a game with their class. The second child is a classmate who responds to that child unkindly and unfairly. The witness is another child in the class who watches the whole thing without getting involved.
2. One child plays a teacher who has made a new rule about what hairstyles are allowed on the school playground. The second child is not allowed to play outside on the playground because their hair is the wrong style. The witness is a child whose hairstyle is allowed, according to the new rule, and who watches the interaction without getting involved.
NOTE: When you debrief this scenario, solicit ideas about what to do when a rule is unfair.
3. One child is going to school with their homework, which took a long time to finish. The second child is a classmate who grabs it and rips it up. The witness is a third child who watches the whole thing without getting involved.
4. Somebody has drawn pictures with permanent markers all over the walls. One child plays someone who did not do it. The second child plays a very angry parent who is ready to punish the first person they see, with or without proof that they did it. The witness is a child who watches the whole thing without getting involved.

FIND OUT MORE

Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

The Winter 2017 *UU World* Families section includes stories of two black [Underground Railroad conductors](#) who, like Harriet Tubman, helped many people escape into free states and further on to Canada.

Check out PBS's [Africans in America](#) website (www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2944.html) and [American Civil War](#) (www.americancivilwar.com/underground_railroad.html).

Explore [Harriet Tubman's story](#) on the Library of Congress interactive website (www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/tubman/aa_tubman_subj.html). or the website [NY History](#) (www.nyhistory.com/harriettubman/life.htm) also talk about Tubman.

Contemporary Slavery

["Bitter Harvest"](#) (www.uuworld.org/2004/06/feature1.html) discusses modern-day slavery in the chocolate industry, in the November/December 2004 issue of *UU World*.

SESSION 16: LOVE IS THE GOLDEN RULE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Descendent of slave and of slave owner, I had already been called poet, lawyer, teacher, and friend. Now I was empowered to minister the sacrament of One in whom there is no north or south, no black or white, no male or female—only the spirit of love and reconciliation drawing us all toward the goal of human wholeness. — Rev. Dr. Anna Pauline (Pauli) Murray (1910-1985), civil rights activist, writer, lawyer, teacher, and Episcopal priest

This concluding session reinforces and celebrates connections among love, Unitarian Universalism, and our Sources. The story "Love is the Golden Rule" encourages participants to hold love as a central guiding force. The children take home a set of UU Source stars or constellations as a reminder to rely on our Sources as they search for truth and meaning and make choices about how they will act.

If you have time, Alternate Activity 2, Rules We Live By, provides an interactive lead-in to the story.

You might invite the adults who have led previous sessions. Their presence will affirm children's recap of their experiences and accomplishments in this program.

GOALS

This session will:

- Review the Unitarian Universalist Sources
- Reinforce connections among Unitarian Universalism, our Sources, and the guiding force of love
- Show that many different religious and cultural settings honor and express the centrality of love
- Emphasize love as the Golden Rule and inspire participants to embrace love as a golden rule in their lives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Demonstrate and strengthen knowledge of the seven Unitarian Universalist Sources, as expressed in child-friendly language

- Explore in both religious and concrete terms what it means to be guided by love as the Golden Rule
- Express understanding of the connections among our faith, our Sources, and love, by creating Love Will Guide Us night sky displays.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	10
Activity 1: 'Remembering Our Sources' Scramble	10
Activity 2: Story – Love Is the Golden Rule	10
Activity 3: Take-Home Night Sky	20
Faith in Action: Sharing the Songs and Readings	
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Concerns	7
Alternate Activity 2: Rules We Live By	10
Alternate Activity 3: UU Sources Quilted Night Sky Wall Hanging	30
Alternate Activity 4: Golden Rule Pledge Stars	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Reflect on previous Love Will Guide Us sessions. What moments of learning touched your heart? Were there frustrating moments? Which stories or activities were meaningful to you? Recall some highlights from previous sessions, especially focusing on children's learning and growth that you have witnessed. Create a mental list of what you are grateful for as a Love Will Guide us leader. Now look at Activity 1, Remembering Our Sources Scramble. How can you adapt it to highlight your group's experiences?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#)
- Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (Hymn 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- Night Sky display (Session 1, Opening)
- Our UU Sources Poster (Session 1, Opening; [Session 1, Leader Resource 3](#))
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Hang the Night Sky display, if it is not already posted in the meeting space. Make sure you have the North Star and the Big Dipper.
- Post the Our UU Sources Poster, if needed. To make the poster, see Session 1, Opening and Session 1, Leader Resource 3.
- Review your Night Sky display and make sure you remember what is represented by the Big Dipper, the North Star, and the other Source Stars (and, if you have used any, each UU Source Constellation). If needed, review previous sessions. Make sure you can state each Source in child-friendly language.
- If needed, copy Session 1, Handout 1, Ten Million Stars for all participants or write the words on newsprint, and post.
- If needed, copy Session 1, Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics for all participants or, write the lyrics on a sheet of newsprint, and post. Optional: Invite someone musical in the congregation to teach and lead the song with you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Distribute Handout 1, Ten Million Stars, or point out the words posted on newsprint. Light the chalice and invite the group to read the words responsively.

Indicate the Night Sky display. Say, in your own words:

In Love Will Guide Us we have learned that people used to look at the night sky and ask big questions like how life began, why we are here, and how we should live.

Invite the children to name other questions people have asked.

Ask a volunteer to point out the North Star. Remind the children, in your own words:

This one star never seems to move in the Night Sky. It always hangs above the North Pole, so travelers use it to determine direction.

Unitarian Universalists believe love is like the North Star—it can always point us in the right direction.

Now say:

We've also been learning about our Unitarian Universalist Sources. Does anyone remember what Sources are?

Explain, as necessary, that a source is a beginning and when we talk about sources of our beliefs we mean great thoughts and teachings that were the beginnings of our beliefs.

Continue, in your own words:

There are six Sources. We have placed a star for each of our Sources in our night sky.

Ask the children to call out the UU Sources they remember. After a few responses, point out the UU Source Stars (and/or UU Source Constellations) and review the Sources, using this child-friendly language:

- The sense of wonder we all share (Direct experience; 1st Source)
- The people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair (Prophetic people; 2nd Source)
- The ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions (3rd Source)
- Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves (4th Source)
- The use of reason and the discoveries of science (Humanism; 5th Source)
- The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life (Earth-centered religions, 6th Source)

Say that some people consider a 7th Source: the faithful words and actions that shape our Unitarian and Universalist heritage.

Explain, or remind the children, that a "source" has to do with origin, or beginning. When we talk about the sources of our beliefs, we are talking about where our beliefs begin and how we get ideas.

Say, in your own words:

We use the wisdom of many Sources to help us know what we believe and how we should live. We let our Sources and love guide us, like stars in the night sky guide travelers.

Distribute Handout 2, Love Will Guide Us Lyrics or indicate the lyrics you have posted. Sing "Love Will Guide Us" together.

Including All Participants

For participants who are not fluent readers, take the time to teach the opening words and the song aurally, so children can come to know them from memory.

Use an LED chalice to avoid a fire hazard and to include participants who are sensitive to smoke or scents.

ACTIVITY 1: REMEMBERING OUR SOURCES SCRAMBLE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Work that the children created in previous sessions or other items to symbolize each Source
- All six UU Source Star handouts:
 - Session 2, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star - Awe and Wonder](#)
 - Session 3, Leader Resource 3, [Source Star - Reason and Science](#)
 - Session 4, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star - Jewish and Christian Teachings](#)
 - Session 6, Leader Resource 4, [Source Star - The Harmony of Nature](#)
 - Session 7, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star - Wise Women and Men](#)
 - Session 10, Leader Resource 2, [Source Star - World Religions](#)
- Optional: Timepiece (seconds)

Preparation for Activity

- Review the sessions you have led, with your co-leaders and religious educator. Choose items the children will recognize as representing each of the six Sources. For some Sources, you might use work one of the children created in a previous session. Place these items out of sight, but where you can easily get them.
- Copy the six Source Stars.
- Prepare a space where participants can sit in a circle with a large work space in the middle.

Description of Activity

Participants review the Sources while acknowledging the work they have done in this program.

Gather the children in a seated circle on the floor. Explain that you will play a game based on the work they have done together in Love Will Guide Us. Randomly place the Source stars and gathered items on the floor in the middle of the circle.

Say, in your own words:

There is a Source star for each of the Unitarian Universalist Sources we have learned about together. And, there are six items I have placed on the floor. Each item matches one of the Sources. When I say "go," you will all work together to match the items with the correct Source star. When you think everything is in the right place, tell me. I will check and see if it is. If it is not, you will work together to figure out which items need to be changed.

(Optional: I will use this stop watch to see how quickly you can do this.)

Ask the children if they have any questions. When everyone is ready, say "go."

When the children tell you they think they are done, check their matches. If any are wrong, do not say which ones. Instead, tell them how many are matched incorrectly. (If time is short, point out which ones are incorrect.) Have the children figure out together which ones to change.

Once all the Source stars are correctly matched to the items, take a moment to name each item. Help the children remember activities that involved the item or invite them to say something they remember from previous sessions.

When you are finished, ask the children briefly whether any items could have been matched with more than one source, and if so, why.

Including All Participants

To include children who are visiting for the first time or have not attended many of the sessions, invite them to make educated guesses as to what ideas and items seem to go together. You can also pair a new or intermittent attendee with a child who attends frequently.

You might also use partnering to include a child with visual or mobility impairment. Have a co-leader or another child communicate about the items so that all children are included in the scramble.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY – LOVE IS THE GOLDEN RULE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Love Is the Golden Rule](#) (included in this document) ”
- A large basket
- Objects related to the story such as a Bible bookmarked at the Ten Commandments, a copy of your group behavior covenant, a copy of membership requirements for your congregation, a copy of your congregation's by-laws, or any picture book or document that lists rules or laws
- A rain stick, or another instrument with a calming sound
- Optional: Box or small table and a decorative cloth cover
- Optional: Fidget basket (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 4](#) (included in this document))

Preparation for Activity

- Place the story-related items and the chime, rain stick, or other sound instrument in the story basket. Place the filled basket in the storytelling area you have designated.
- Read the story a few times. Note: The story provides Leader instructions to stop the story periodically to ask the children what sorts of ways someone would act if they followed a particular rule. As the rules are very similar, the children are likely to give similar answers. Help them notice the similarities. You can also point out any differences based on the different nuances in the rules.

- Optional: To provide a focal point where story-related items can sit while you tell the story, set up a box or table next to your storytelling area and drape it with a decorative cloth.
- Optional: If you have a basket of fidget objects for children who will listen and learn more effectively with something in their hands, make the basket available during this activity. Remind children where it is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. See Session 1, Leader Resource 4, Fidget Objects for a full description of fidget baskets and guidance for using them.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle in the storytelling area and show them the story basket. Say something like, "Let's see what's in our story basket this week."

Tell the group the items in the story basket will be placed on this table after the children have passed them around the circle. Take the story-related items from the basket, one at a time, and pass them around. Objects that are fragile, or which should not be passed around for any reason, can be held up for all to see and then placed directly on the table.

Name each object and ask a wondering question about each one, e.g., "What rules do you see written down?" As items come back to you, display them on the table. Then say, in your own words:

Today we are exploring the wisdom in religions of the world. This is the third UU Source. Unitarian Universalists believe all faiths and beliefs have something important to share. Today we will hear a story from Buddhism, a very old religion, over 2,500 years old.

Remove the sound instrument from the story basket. Tell the children that every time you tell a story, you will first use the instrument to help them get their ears, their minds, and their bodies ready to listen. Invite them to sit comfortably and close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). You may tell them that closing their eyes can help them focus just on listening. If someone is unable to close their eyes or sit still, invite them to hold one of the story basket items or an item from the fidget basket. In a calm voice, say:

As you breathe in, feel your body opening up with air. As you breathe out, feel yourself relaxing.

Repeat this once or twice and then say:

When I hit the chime (turn the rain stick over), listen as carefully as you can. See how long you can hear its sound. When you can no longer hear it, open your eyes and you will know it is time for the story to begin.

Sound the chime or other instrument. When the sound has gone, begin telling the story "Love Is the Golden Rule." Read or tell the story. Use the chime again to indicate that the story is over.

Then, ask:

- I wonder why Maya only wanted one rule?
- I wonder if you agree that Love is the golden rule?
- I wonder what our world would be like if everyone followed love as the golden rule?

Including All Participants

Make sure everyone has an opportunity to experience the items in the story basket, whether by sight or touch.

You may wish to make fidget objects available to children who find it difficult to sit still while listening to a story or can focus better with sensory stimulation. Remind children where the fidget basket is before you begin the "centering" part of this activity. (For a full description and guidance, see Session 1, Leader Resource 4.)

Consider using rug squares in the storytelling area. Place them in a semi-circle with the rule "one person per square." This can be very helpful for controlling active bodies.

ACTIVITY 3: TAKE-HOME NIGHT SKY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Multiple copies of [North Star](#), [Big Dipper](#) (included in this document) and the six UU Source Star handouts, to make a complete set for each participant:
 - Session 2, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Awe and Wonder (included in this document)
 - Session 3, Leader Resource 3, Source Star – Reason and Science (included in this document)
 - Session 4, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Jewish and Christian Teachings (included in this document)

- Session 6, Leader Resource 4, Source Star – The Harmony of Nature (included in this document)
- Session 7, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Wise People (included in this document)
- Session 10, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – World Religions (included in this document)

- Black or dark blue poster board — a sheet for each participant
- Scissors (including left-handed scissors) and glue sticks and cellophane tape
- Materials to decorate a Night Sky display, such as gold or silver glitter glue; white or yellow chalk; white, yellow, gold, or silver paint markers; star and planet stickers; or aluminum foil
- Optional: Glow-in-the-dark paint and paint brushes, smocks, and newspaper or drop cloth
- Optional: Multiple copies of the UU Source Constellation handouts - a complete set for each participant: Session 2, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation - Our Sense of Wonder](#); Session 3, Handout 2, [UU Source Constellation - Reason and Science](#); Session 4, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation - Jewish and Christian Teachings](#); Session 6, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation - The Harmony of Nature](#); Session 7, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation - Wise Women and Men](#); Session 10, Handout 1, [UU Source Constellation - World Religions](#)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the leader resources listed above to make a full packet of nine images for each participant to glue on a Night Sky. (If the children have used UU Source Constellations, you may wish to provide the optional handouts also, or instead.) Consider the size of the poster board sheets the children will work with—make sure their Night Sky displays will accommodate all the Source stars and/or constellations you provide. You can download leader resources and handouts and adjust the image sizes on your computer.
- Optional: Cut out the Source stars and/or constellations for children.
- Set out the poster board sheets and the decorating materials at work tables.

Description of Activity

Participants each make a Night Sky display for home, to remind them about the ways our Unitarian Universalist Sources guide us to love.

Gather the children at work tables. Say they may each create a Night Sky display to bring home, like the display in the meeting room.

Give each child a packet you have prepared and invite them to cut out the UU Source stars, North Star, and Big Dipper and glue or tape them to their poster board. Encourage them to refer to the group's Night Sky display for orientation of the Big Dipper and the North Star.

Invite children to use the other materials to decorate their Night Skies. Some may wish to paint over the stars and words with glow in the dark paint.

As children, ask questions such as:

- Do you have a favorite Source? Why?
- Do you have any favorite memories from our time together in Love Will Guide Us?
- What sorts of ways will you behave when you are guided by love?

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Session 1, Leader Resource 3, [The Sources of Our Unitarian Universalist Beliefs](#) (included in this document)
- Taking It Home section
- Pencils or markers
- Optional: Session 1, Handout 3, [Our Sources Lyrics](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Our Sources](#)" (at img.uua.org/tapestry/lovewillguideus/audio/Our_Sources.mp3) and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the text of the seven Sources in child-friendly language (Session 1, Leader Resource 3, [The Sources of Our Unitarian Universalist Beliefs](#)) for all participants.
- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants, or plan to email it to families after the session.
- Optional: Prepare to lead the song "Our Sources."

- Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics or write the words on newsprint, and post.
- Learn the song. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or someone in the congregation comfortable leading songs to help you.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle. Thank each individually for joining you as part of the Love Will Guide Us group.

If you wish to sing "Our Sources," distribute Session 1, Handout 3 or indicate the newsprint where you have posted the lyrics. Teach/lead the song, with a musical volunteer if you have invited someone to help. You might play the music clip of "Our Sources" for the children to sing along.

Distribute the Sources of Our Unitarian Universalist Beliefs text and Taking It Home, and thank participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: SHARING THE SONGS AND READINGS

Materials for Activity

- Session 1, Handout 1, [Ten Million Stars](#) (included in this document)
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, or Session 1, Handout 2, [Love Will Guide Us Lyrics](#) (included in this document) (Hymn 131)
- Our UU Sources Poster (Session 1, Opening; [Session 1, Leader Resource 3](#) (included in this document))
- The UU Source Star handouts included in this document:
 - Session 2, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Awe and Wonder (included in this document)
 - Session 3, Leader Resource 3, Source Star – Reason and Science (included in this document)
 - Session 4, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Jewish and Christian Teachings (included in this document)
 - Session 6, Leader Resource 4, Source Star – The Harmony of Nature (included in this document)

- Session 7, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – Wise People (included in this document)
- Session 10, Leader Resource 2, Source Star – World Religions (included in this document)
- Optional: A recording of the song "[Love Will Guide Us](#)" (at beemp3.com/download.php?file=2769073&song=hymn+love+will+guide+us) and a music player
- Optional: A recording of the song "Our Sources" and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange with your minister, religious educator and/or leaders in a younger RE group for the children to share their learning in a worship service or with younger children.
- Arrange a time for participants to rehearse.
- Write all readings and lyrics on newsprint, to post.
- Optional: Plan to play a recording of "Love Will Guide Us" or, invite a member of the choir or another musical volunteer to accompany the song or help you lead it.
- Optional: Prepare to lead the song "Our Sources."
 - Copy Session 1, Handout 3, Our Sources Lyrics, or write the words on newsprint, to post.
 - Learn the song. Listen to the song online to familiarize yourself with it. You might invite a member of the choir or a congregational song leader to help you.

Description of Activity

Participants deepen their learning through sharing what they have learned with others. They help build multigenerational community as the larger congregation engages with their work.

Practice the songs and readings. Select volunteers to read aloud each of the seven Unitarian Universalist Sources and the accompanying Source Star phrases. You might have children each prepare to share a way people will behave when they are guided by love.

Create an order in which songs and readings will be shared. Rehearse in the space where children will perform, so they will know where to stand.

In the worship service or with a younger group of children, have participants sing "Love Will Guide Us," share the seven Source stars, name the seven Sources in children's language, read "Ten Million Stars," and sing "Our Sources." You might have children each share a way in which people will behave when they are guided by love.

Including All Participants

Some children are very shy about standing in front of groups of people. Find a way for a reluctant child to participate that does not require a solo reading role.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take a few minutes to evaluate the session with your co-leader immediately afterward, while it is fresh. Share your thoughts with any other team teachers and your director of religious education. You might find it helpful to consider these questions:

- Were all children actively engaged? If not, who was not and why? How could they be better included next time?
- Were there any behavior issues? If so, how can we address them in the future? Do we need more information or help in this area?
- How was the timing? What needs to change for a session to work better within our timeframe?
- Are we successfully creating a program characterized by inclusion, diversity appreciation, respect, noncompetitive environment, and welcome? What could we have done differently?
- What questions or issues arose in this session that we might like to discuss with our director of religious education?

TAKING IT HOME

Descendent of slave and of slave owner, I had already been called poet, lawyer, teacher, and friend. Now I was empowered to minister the sacrament of One in whom there is no north or south, no black or white, no male or female—only the spirit of love and reconciliation drawing us all toward the goal of human wholeness. — Rev. Dr. Anna Pauline (Pauli) Murray, civil rights activist, feminist, writer, poet, lawyer, teacher, and ordained priest

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we reviewed all seven Unitarian Universalist Sources and remembered

highlights from our sessions together. Our story, "Love is the Golden Rule," showed how the centrality of love is expressed many ways in different religious and cultural settings. We created Night Sky displays to take home to remind us how our Sources guide us to act with love.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about... their Night Sky display your child made, and the seven Unitarian Universalist Sources, expressed in child-friendly language as:

- The sense of wonder we all share
- People of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair
- The ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions
- Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves
- The use of reason and the discoveries of science
- The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life
- Faithful words and actions that shape our Unitarian and Universalist heritage.

Take some time to talk about what each Source means. How does, or can, your family learn from that Source. How do, or can, you let it guide you to act with love?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try... creating a list of your family rules. Discuss each rule and how it might, or might not, be an extension of love as the golden rule. Remember that love can be applied to oneself in the form of self-care and healthy habits. See if you can choose one overarching rule for your family to live by.

A Family Adventure: Source of the Day. Plan a week of Source days to focus on each Unitarian Universalist Source in turn. For "the sense of wonder" you might go to a place that invokes awe and wonder, such as a waterfall, cave, or museum exhibit. For "people of long ago and today..." research a hero or heroine together and talk about how their words and deeds can guide us to love. For "world religions," visit a house of worship such as a Buddhist temple; read a story together from Hindu, Islamic, or a Native American tradition; or take a yoga or tai chi class together. For "Jewish and Christian teachings" you might visit a synagogue or a Christian church you have not visited before, look up the sayings of the 12th-century rabbi [Maimonides](http://www.spiritus-temporis.com/maimonides/quotes-from-maimonides.html) (at [www.spiritus-temporis.com/maimonides/quotes-from-](http://www.spiritus-temporis.com/maimonides/quotes-from-maimonides.html)

[maimonides.html](http://www.spiritus-temporis.com/maimonides.html)), or watch "[Veggie Tales](http://www.hubpages.com/hub/VeggieTales-Episodes-Based-on-Bible-Stories)" (at [hubpages.com/hub/VeggieTales-Episodes-Based-on-Bible-Stories](http://www.hubpages.com/hub/VeggieTales-Episodes-Based-on-Bible-Stories)) videos together and then read the Bible stories they are based on. For "the use of reason and the discoveries of science," spend the day reading Magic School Bus books, do a few simple [science experiments](http://www.sciencebob.com/experiments/index.php) (www.sciencebob.com/experiments/index.php), or take a magnifying glass outside to explore nature and record your observations. For "the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life," take note of the life around you—including yourselves, pets, and house or yard plants—and talk about where each living thing is in its lifecycle. For the seventh Source, "our UU faith heritage," share what you know about Unitarian, Universalist, and contemporary Unitarian Universalist actions for social justice—a legacy that began with those who strove for religious freedom in Europe, continued through the fight to abolish slavery and promote full suffrage in the United States, and continues with advocacy for equal marriage, just immigration policies, and environmental protection. If you can easily get online, start at the [UUA website](http://www.uua.org/) (at www.uua.org/) and follow links to learn about our faith's history. Each day, identify how the "Source of the Day" can help guide you toward love in your beliefs and actions.

Family Ritual. Collect readings, poems, and prayers that reflect each of our Sources. Every night at dinner, read one. See who can identify the Source. Discuss briefly how the message of the reading matches your Unitarian Universalist beliefs. Two helpful books: *A Child's Book of Blessings and Prayers* by Eliza Blanchard Sunday and *Everyday: My Little Book of Unitarian Universalism* by Patricia Frevert, both at the UUA Bookstore.

The [UUA bookstore](http://www.uua.org/bookstore) also offers:

Aisha's Moonlit Walk: Stories and Celebrations for the Pagan Year by Anika Stafford

Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher by Lynn Tuttle Gunney

Born With a Bang: the Universe Tells its Cosmic Story, From Lava to Life: The Universe Tells Our Earth Story, and Mammals Who Morph: The Universe Tells Our Evolution Story by Jennifer Morgan

Ayat Jamilah, Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents by Freda Crane and Sarah Conover

Harmony: A Treasury of Chinese Wisdom for Children and Parents by Sarah Conover and Chen Hui

Kindness: A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents by Sarah Conover

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt candle-and-flame board (see Session 1, Alternate Activity 1)
- A basket of felt "flames" and a basket of felt "candles"
- Optional: LED/battery-operated tea lights or candles

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make a felt board by stapling or nailing a large piece of dark-colored felt around a piece of cardboard or wood. Find instructions in Session 1, Alternate Activity 1, Sharing Joys and Concerns.
- If needed, cut flame shapes and candle shapes from a variety of colors of felt. Place the felt "flames" in one basket and the "candles" in the other.
- Set the felt board in a secure place where children can easily use it. Place baskets nearby.

Description of Activity

This activity invites children to experience a ritual enacted in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Sharing joys and concerns can deepen a group's sense of community. It gives participants a chance to share a portion of their lives in a unique way, encourages listening to others and, in many cases, makes a link with the adult worship experience.

Introduce the concept of sharing joys and concerns by saying something like:

As a community of caring people who are kind to each other, we want to know what has made you very happy or what has made you sad. You are invited to put a flame on one of these felt candles, place it on this felt board, and then share your joy or concern. Everyone in the room is asked to listen with respect. You do not have to say anything at all, if you do not want to.

Invite the children to come forward one at a time. As children share, listen without comment.

Including All Participants

If any children are reluctant to stand to address the group, allow them to speak joys and concerns from where they sit or invite them to light a candle silently.

This sharing circle can be a vital part of congregational ministry. Many congregations have in place a safe congregation policy in the event a participant reveals they are being hurt by someone. It will be important to alert your religious educator, minister, or Board president to any troubling issue that arise in this sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: RULES WE LIVE BY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper and pens/pencils
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Set paper and pens/pencils on work tables.
- Optional: Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Invite children to sit at work tables, addressing each child by name. If you do not remember a name, ask the child, then remind that child of your name using the address you prefer (for example, a title and your last name, or, your first name). Say to each child, in your own words:

This is a place of respect where we care about each other. How are you feeling today?

Listen to their answer and respond appropriately.

Indicate the paper and pens/pencils on the tables. Invite children to make a quick list of rules they follow in their lives. They may write the rules or draw picture symbols.

Give the children several minutes to write or draw. Then invite volunteers to share the rules they have written down. Point out themes as they emerge, for example:

- Rules that are for our health
- Rules for physical safety
- Rules that involve social manners
- Rules that involve being together with people who might have different needs than you (noisy/quiet, active/settled, abilities differences).

Point out any rule a child mentions that sounds like a form of the Golden Rule.

Including All Participants

At this age there can be a wide range in writing abilities. Include the option of drawing pictures and symbols. Help children decide how to represent a rule.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: UU SOURCES QUILTED NIGHT SKY WALL HANGING (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Large drawing paper, and pencils
- Fabric in night sky colors
- Fabric in white, yellow, or silver
- Fabric for quilt backing (night sky colors or a printed, night sky pattern)
- Fabric markers
- Optional: Extra fabric; sew-on trim and other decorations; scissors, sewing needles, and thread
- Optional: Sewing machine with all necessary supplies

Preparation for Activity

- Find a quilter in your congregation and invite them to help with this project. Together with this person, design a quilt to include seven fabric squares depicting Source images created by the children.
- Purchase fabric. Cut fabric squares, including 7 night sky-colored squares and 7 smaller, light-colored squares. (You will sew each light-colored square on top of a night sky-colored square so the darker fabric frames the lighter square.)
- Cut drawing paper to the size and shape of each smaller, light-colored square.
- Optional: Set up a sewing machine, accessories, and supplies. Arrange for a quilter to join the group to sew squares together as the children complete them.

Description of Activity

Children integrate their learning about the Sources as they create a quilted wall hanging to display in the religious education space or to present to the congregation for display in a public area.

Assign a child or a team to illustrate each of the seven Sources. Give each team drawing paper and pencils to design an image to reflect their assigned Source.

As the children work, invite them to tell you about the images they are creating. Use questions such as:

- I wonder if you can tell me more about your drawing?
- I wonder what might be a good symbol for ... (fill in the blank with one of the Sources)?
- Do you have a favorite Source?
- Did you have a favorite story we heard in Love Will Guide Us? Which Source did it tell about?
- Do you have any favorite memories from our time together?
- What sorts of ways will you behave when you are guided by love?

When they are happy with their design, have children re-create it on their light-colored fabric square using pencil first, followed by fabric markers. Some children may be able to cut pieces of fabric or other sew-on decorations which they, or you, can stitch onto their square.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: GOLDEN RULE PLEDGE STARS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Golden Rule Pledge Star](#) (included in this document)
- Scissors to share
- Pencils or pens
- Optional: Glue sticks

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the handout for all participants.
- Optional: Cut out the Golden Rule Pledge Stars in advance.

Description of Activity

Participants choose a way their behavior can be guided by love as the Golden Rule. They make a specific promise and state it in brief words on a Pledge Star.

Invite the children to brainstorm ways they can act that reflect love as the Golden Rule. Prompt with questions such as:

- I wonder what sorts of things we do when we are acting in a way that is loving?
- I wonder how we treat one another when we are guided by love? At home? With our friends? At school?
- I wonder what sorts of promises you could make if you were following the Golden Rule of love?

Hand out the stars and pencils/markers. Invite each child to cut out the star, if needed, and then write or draw a picture of a promise they want to make—an

action they will do which is a way to follow love as the Golden Rule.

If children did Activity 3, distribute glue sticks. Encourage the children to add the Golden Rule Pledge Star to their Take-Home Night Sky Display.

Including All Participants

Children may have a wide range of writing abilities. Include all children by writing key words on newsprint for the children to reference, offering the option to draw a promise, or suggesting a child dictate their promise for you to write on the star.

LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 16: STORY: LOVE IS THE GOLDEN RULE

Golden Rule versions from the book *The Golden Rule*, by Ilene Cooper.

Maya was eight years old and had rules to follow all day long. At school there were special rules.

(Leader: Briefly ask the children for examples of school rules. Adapt the following sentence to reflect their contributions.)

At school Maya had to raise their hand to talk. They could only eat if it was lunch or snack time. They needed a bathroom pass if they wanted to go to the bathroom. And, they were not allowed to copy anyone else's work.

Maya also had special rules at home.

(Leader: Ask for examples of rules at home.)

Maya had to go to bed at eight o'clock. They were never allowed to hit their younger sibling (even if their sibling hit first). They had to eat vegetables. And, they could watch television for half an hour every day.

There were also special rules at their congregation.

(Leader: Briefly ask children for examples of rules in your congregation.)

Maya was not allowed to run during coffee hour. They had to talk in an indoor voice. And, they were expected to be friendly and welcoming to everyone. Maya was sick and tired of all those rules! One day, Maya decided they wanted just *one* rule to follow—one very important rule, to take the place of all of those other rules.

Maya asked their Uncle Guna what he thought was the most important rule of all. He told them that in his religion, Hinduism, it is said, "This is the sum of duty: to do nothing to others which would cause them pain."

(Leader: Briefly ask children what sorts of things someone would do if they follow this rule.)

Maya asked their next-door-neighbor, Claire, what they thought was the most important rule of all. Claire told Maya that a teacher from the Buddhist religion had said, "Do not do to others what would hurt you."

(Leader: Briefly ask children what sorts of things someone would do if they follow this rule. Note: It's okay if the children give the same responses they gave to the previous question.)

Maya asked their best friend, Adam, what they thought was the most important rule. Adam told Maya

that at their Jewish synagogue they learned that Hebrew scripture teaches, "You shall love thy neighbor as thyself." Another friend, Maria, told Maya they learned the same rule at her Catholic church.

(Leader: Briefly ask children what sorts of things someone would do if they follow this rule.)

Maya asked their friend, Malik, what they thought was the most important rule. Malik said that in their religion, Islam, people say, "None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."

(Leader: Briefly ask children what sorts of things someone would do if they follow this rule.)

Maya asked their Uncle Greg what he thought was the most important rule. Uncle Greg said that when he does pagan magic he always follows the rule, "An ye harm none, do what you will." He told Maya this means he cannot do anything that would hurt another living being.

(Leader: Briefly ask children what sorts of things someone would do if they follow this rule.)

Maya thought about all of the answers they had heard. Maya wrote them down, one at a time.

"This is the sum of duty: to do nothing to others which would cause them pain." (Hinduism)

"Do not do to others what would hurt you." (Buddhism)

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Jewish and Christian)

"None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself." (Islam)

"An ye harm none, do what you will." (Neo-pagan)

On Sunday morning Maya took the list of rules to their Unitarian Universalist congregation. Maya showed it to the minister, Rev. Marta, and asked Rev. Marta which rule she thought was most important.

Rev. Marta said, "I notice that these rules are all very similar. They are different versions of a rule some people call 'the Golden Rule.' What do you think is the most important rule?"

(Leader: Invite children to answer this question.)

Maya paused for a moment. Then Maya said slowly, "I think love is the Golden Rule. When we are loving, then we do not hurt other people or cause them pain, we wish for others what we wish for ourselves, and we love our neighbors as ourselves."

"That sounds like the most important rule to me!" Rev. Marta agreed. "Love is the Golden Rule!"

**LOVE WILL GUIDE US: SESSION 16:
HANDOUT 1: GOLDEN RULE PLEDGE STAR**



FIND OUT MORE

The Golden Rule

The [Religious Tolerance](http://www.religioustolerance.org/religious_tolerance.htm) website (at www.religioustolerance.org/religious_tolerance.htm) also provides multiple versions of the Golden Rule from different faith traditions.

Our Unitarian Universalist Sources

A book highly recommended for this program is [A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism](https://www.uuabookstore.org/A-Chosen-Faith-P16848.aspx) (at <https://www.uuabookstore.org/A-Chosen-Faith-P16848.aspx>) by John A. Buehrens and F. Forrest Church. Each section includes two essays on the Sources of Unitarian Universalism.