

Curriculum Planning Renaissance Module

LEADER'S GUIDE



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Introduction

The Curriculum Planning Renaissance Module is designed to help religious professionals and lay leaders understand the curriculum planning process and introduce the UUA lifespan curriculum series Tapestry of Faith. The focus of the module is curriculum, defined as a planned learning opportunity which can take place anywhere, anytime. Curriculum planning is a process that brings together our Unitarian Universalist principles, our religious education philosophy and goals, our religious education leadership, and our human and material resources to provide for religious growth and learning for all ages in our congregations.

Participants come to this module eager for resources; they want to be able to sample curricula available from the UUA, from independent curriculum writers, and from other sources. If possible, arrange for a curriculum and resource display. If there is a regional or congregational library where the module is being held, ask that someone bring current curricula and other resources. Invite participants to bring resources (or the sources of those resources) that they have found particularly valuable.

It is important to have Internet access available so that online resources can be explored during the sessions, and so that teams can utilize it while working on their final projects. Encourage groups to prepare reports electronically rather than on paper, and to distribute their work to the large group at the end of the module. Many leaders create a shared folder using programs such as Dropbox in which participants can locate handouts and reader material prior to the module. After the module, this serves as a place to share final projects, photos taken during the module, and other shared resources (be sure to check with participants at the start to get permission to take and share photos).

This module is divided into five sessions--the first is two and a half hours in length; the second, third, and fifth are three hours in length; and the fourth session is three and a half hours in length—for a total of 15 hours of workshop time. You will need to adjust times to accommodate breaks.

PowerPoint slides are included in this module. You will need to plan ahead for the necessary equipment to use them. Use newsprint as an alternative to the slides if appropriate equipment is not available. If you wish, [download this optional PowerPoint](#) to incorporate one or more break slides into your module PowerPoint.

The reader for the module is *Fashion Me a People* by Maria Harris. Participants should obtain this book as early as possible to allow maximum time to complete the reading. A [guide to the reader](#) is also provided with important background information. *Fashion Me a People* is both deep and rich. The late Maria Harris wrote it from her perspective as a (liberal) Catholic. The guide helps make this book more broadly accessible by translating both the Christian theology and the Greek terminology into universal insights for faith development. Unitarian Universalists, and others, can find many areas of common ground with Harris.

Participants are also responsible for saving or printing their own copy of the handouts. Information about the reader, the guide and the handouts should be included in your welcome letter. Links are available on the [Module Resources page](#) of the UUA website.

Goals

The goals for participants in the Curriculum Planning Module are:

- To clarify and expand understanding of curriculum, religious education, and faith development

- To learn about Tapestry of Faith as a core UU curricular resource; how to adapt and use it with various models and many different contexts for lifespan faith development
- To learn about other curriculum sources and where to find them
- To understand the curriculum planning process and consider strategies to use the process effectively in one's own congregation
- To practice evaluating and adapting curricular plans
- To learn how to use curriculum choices and implementation to foster inclusive, multicultural, and multigenerational faith communities
- Working in teams, to develop useable curricular projects to show congregations
- To network with other religious educators and be affirmed and nurtured by a supportive community

Supplies

- Name tags
- Newsprint, markers, and easel
- Masking tape (preferably blue)
- 3X5" index cards and/or 3X5" sticky notes
- Notebook paper
- Pens
- Construction paper (in various colors)
- Thin tipped markers (in various colors)
- Scissors (including left-hand scissors)
- 3-hole punch
- Craft pipe cleaners and/or malleable clay

- Display table(s)
- Chalice (unless leaders bring a chalice), candle, and matches (or LED candle)
- Curricula and other resources for display
- Internet access, laptop and projector
- Music player and music (optional)

List of Handouts

Session 1

- 1 Group Covenant
- 2 Introduction to Renaissance and RE Credentialing
- 3 Preparation for Module Evaluation
- 4 Curriculum Module Goals
- 5 Curriculum Module Outline
- 6 Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

Session 2

- 7 Tapestry of Faith Vision Statement
- 8 Four Strands
- 9 Four Strands Exercise
- 10 Curriculum Planning Resources

Session 3

- 11 Curriculum Planning – An Ongoing Process
- 12 Teacher Feedback – A Weekly Evaluation Template
- 13 The Curriculum Planning Process Chart
- 14 UU Curricula Eras
- 15 Reckless Borrowing or Appropriate Culture Sharing?
- 16 Considerations for Cultural Borrowing
- 17 Multicultural Education
- 18 Curriculum Planning to Make Us Whole

- 19 Honoring Different Ways of Learning in Curriculum Planning
- 20 Community Story and Vision for Religious Education
- 21 Guidelines for Curriculum Planning Teams

Session 5

- 22 Guidelines for Feedback

List of PowerPoint Slides

Curriculum Planning PowerPoint Slides

Session 1

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Sophia Lyon Fahs quote
- 3 Introductions
- 4 Orientation Game
- 5 Covenanting
- 6 Renaissance Program
- 7 Curriculum Planning Module Goals
- 8 Curriculum Planning Module Outline
- 9 Defining Curriculum
- 10 Journal and Discuss
- 11 Explicit Curriculum
- 12 Group Work
- 13 Planned Learning Opportunities
- 14 What is Religious Education?
- 15 Journal
- 16 Religious Education Definitions

Session 2

- 17 Questions
- 18 Tapestry of Faith
- 19 David and Goliath Activity and Five Smooth Stones

Session 3

- 20 The Curriculum Planning Process
- 21 UU Curriculum Eras
- 22 Extending Radical Hospitality
- 23 Journaling
- 24 Curriculum Planning Teams

Session 5

- 25 Group Presentations and Worship

Note: If you decide to insert optional "[break slides](#)" into your PowerPoint," the number sequence of your Renaissance module slides will shift.

Tapestry of Faith PowerPoint Slides

Session 2

- 1 Tapestry of Faith: Curriculum Renaissance Module
- 2 Tapestry of Faith - introduction
- 3 Tapestry of Faith – introduction continued
- 4 What UUs want from Tapestry
- 5 Tapestry of Faith – outcomes introduction
- 6 Outcomes continued
- 7 The Four Strands
- 8 Content is a valuable tool
- 9 UU Identity
- 10 Examples of UU Identity
- 11 Spiritual Development: The Longing of the Soul
- 12 Spiritual Tidbits from Tapestry

- 13 Ethical Development: Becoming Our Best Selves
- 14 Examples of Ethical Development
- 15 Faith Development: Growing in Faith Together
- 16 Four Strands Exercise
- 17 Methodology: Stories
- 18 Samples of Stories
- 19 Methodology: Praxis
- 20 Praxis
- 21 Characteristics of Tapestry
- 22 Characteristics of Tapestry – continued
- 23 Characteristics of Tapestry – continued
- 24 Special Features of Tapestry
- 25 Children/youth/adults need
- 26 Children/youth/adult programs include
- 27 Other resources to check out
- 28 Other resources to check out – continued
- 29 Faith Development Office Staff
- 30 Tapestry of Faith: Weaving the Fabric of our Faith

List of Leader Resources

- 1 Sample Welcome Letter from Leaders to Participants

Leader Resource 1: Sample Welcome Letter from Leaders to Participants

Dear Curriculum Planning Module Participants,

We look forward to gathering at _____ for the Curriculum Planning Renaissance Module on _____(date). This is a very engaging module because people are guaranteed to go home with ideas they can use right away and still have time to do lots of connecting with colleagues.

To help make this module a success, **please bring the following with you:**

- A laptop or other device to access the Internet
- Materials for note-taking and journaling
- The Reader, *Fashion Me a People*, by Maria Harris (available from bookstores, online, in libraries, etc.) along with its Guide (available on the [Module Resources](#) page)
- The prospectus for this year's religious education programming in your congregation
- A resource you think others should know about: a song, book, curriculum, video, etc. for our resource table (please put your name on it!)
- A goal you have for this module.

And these are also nice to bring if you want:

- A reading, song, game, or brief energizer you would like to share with the group
- A musical instrument to accompany our songs.

If you can't read the whole book before you come, it would be beneficial to read Chapter 3, paying special attention to the questions at the top of page 71, and also the Guide to *Fashion Me a People* ([online](#)). We will be discussing the book during our first session together.

Our dress for the time will be casual, and please note that our plan is to start promptly _____ (when–time and day of week). We will end at _____ (when– time and day of week). Full attendance is required to receive credit for the module.

With anticipation,

Leader and Leader

SESSION 1: What Is Curriculum?

Session-at-a-Glance

Beginnings	40 minutes
Defining Curriculum	65 minutes
What Is Religious Education?	35 minutes
Closing	10 minutes

Total Time: 2 1/2 hours

Beginnings (40 minutes)

Materials

- Slide 1, Welcome
- Slide 2, Sophia Lyon Fahs quote
- Slide 3, Introductions
- Slide 4, Orientation Game
- Slide 5, Covenanting
- Slide 6, Renaissance Program
- Slide 7, Curriculum Planning Module Goals
- Slide 8, Curriculum Planning Module Outline
- Handout 1, Group Covenant
- Handout 2, Introduction to Renaissance and RE Credentialing
- Handout 3, Preparation for Module Evaluation

- Handout 4, Curriculum Module Goals
- Handout 5, Curriculum Module Outline
- Handout 6, Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources
- A copy of the participant list with contact information
- Optional: Newsprint poster of Introductions format

A. Welcome (10 minutes)

Display Slide 1. As participants arrive, ask them to write on one side of a 3X5” card their primary goal for the module; on the other side, write up to three specific questions they would like addressed. Collect the cards and quickly review them in order to refer to them later.

1. *Gathering song*

Singing a song is a great way to gather people together. If you are not comfortable leading singing, ask a participant to volunteer..

2. Welcome and Housekeeping

Welcome participants, and introduce yourselves. Tell participants they will introduce themselves shortly. Orient people to the site and address housekeeping concerns such as bathrooms, meals, transportation, and housing. Answer any questions participants have. (If there is someone responsible for the meeting site, you can ask them to do this.)

Pass around a copy of the participants’ contact information, including their email addresses, and have them make corrections. Make this list available electronically to all participants, as they might want to contact each other in the future. Direct attention to Handout 3, Preparation for Module Evaluation for participants to take notes on as they

progress through the module.

4. *Chalice Lighting*

Display Slide 2. Read (or ask a volunteer to read) the following quote from Sophia Fahs, which speaks to much of what will be discussed in the module:

*Life becomes religious whenever we make it so:
when some new light is seen,
when some deeper appreciation is felt,
when some larger outlook is gained,
when some nobler purpose is formed,
when some task is well done.*

The function of the church for both young and old is not to give us on Sunday certain kinds of religious experiences. . . [but] rather to teach us how to put religious and ethical qualities into all kinds of experiences.

B. Getting Acquainted (15 minutes)

Display Slide 3. A leader should go first to model a very *brief* introduction (30 seconds). The last part—what was left behind—allows people to name anything on their mind that might detract from their experience at this module (a sick child or concern about who is taking their place while they are gone.)

1. *Orientation Game*

Display Slide 4. This game gives leaders a sense of the make-up of the group and it involves leaders and participants. Ask if anyone has difficulty standing up and down. If so, change the directions to “raise your hand.” Keep the pace brisk, but do let people have enough time to see who is saying, “That’s me!”

Below are suggestions. Use as many or few as you have time for. Add others as appropriate for the group.

Tell the group, “Stand up (or raise your hand)

- . . .if your title is DRE
- . . .if you have lifespan responsibilities
- . . .if you work full time
- . . .if you work half time
- . . .if you work quarter time
- . . .if you work as a volunteer in the R.E. program
- . . .if you're an R.E. Committee chair or member
 - if you are a parish minister
- ...if you have a role we have not named yet
- . . .if you've been in your role five years or more
- . . .if you've been in your role for less than one year
- . . .if you know what curricula you'll be using next year
- . . .if you have a curriculum committee
 - . . . if you have studied in divinity school
- . . .if you spend some time writing or revising the curricula you use
- . . .if you know what LREDA is (*if someone does not, have a participant explain*)
- . . .if you're a member of LREDA
- . . .if you're in the Religious Education Credentialing Program
- . . .if this is your fifth module (*note who these people are*)
- . . .if this is your first Renaissance Module (*quickly give those people a round of applause*)

2. *Covenanting*

Display Slide 5. Explain that the purpose of a group covenant of behavior is to make our time together safe and productive. Direct the group's attention to Handout 1, Group Covenant, and invite each participant to read an item. Invite and address questions. Ask, "Is anything missing that would make our learning community safe and productive?" Add suggestions with the group's assent.

C. Module Overview (15 minutes)

1. *Introducing the Renaissance Program* – Display Slide 6. Review Handout 2, which covers a brief introduction of the Renaissance and RE Credentialing programs. Handout 3 discusses the module evaluation process. Online evaluations will be filled out at the end of the module.

Make sure these points are covered:

- The module is a 15-hour, standardized program for religious education leadership
- It is part of a larger program that includes modules for Worship, Administration, Teacher Development, Religious Education Philosophy, Unitarian Universalist Identity, Unitarian Universalist History, Ministry with Youth, Multicultural Religious Education, and Adult Faith Development and Programming.

2. *Direct participants' attention to the module's displays/posters*

- The schedule you have posted or distributed
- The resources available and the sign out sheet for borrowing material
- The sign up sheet(s) you have prepared asking for volunteers for music, energizers, readings, etc.
- The Bicycle Rack/Parking Lot for questions/issues to return to at a later time.

3. *Goals of the Curriculum Planning Renaissance Module*

Display Slide 7. Draw participants' attention to Handout 4, Curriculum Module Goals.

Explain what the module *will* and *will not* cover, referring to the goals that participants identified on their arrival. Many of their expectations will be addressed in the module, especially sources of curricula and the opportunity to network with colleagues. However, some expectations may fall outside of the primary focus of this module. Address this candidly, offering any of the following suggestions that are appropriate:

- “While that is not our focus, one of the working groups may address it if others share your interest.” (for example, starting a high school group)
- “Perhaps the group would like to use mealtimes to form interest tables to talk about some of these issues that are not part of this module.” (for example, teacher recruitment or R.E. credentialing)
- “While we will touch on that topic, it is the focus of another Renaissance Module.” (for example, “Multicultural Religious Education”)

After the first session, make a list on newsprint of all the specific questions from the back of the index cards participants filled out when they arrived. Post this list and address questions as appropriate during the sessions. If no natural time occurs to address some of the questions, make time before the closing to address remaining questions on the list.

4. *Loose ends*

Display Slide 8. Refer to Handout 5 so visual learners can see how sessions will unfold. Ask if anyone needs clarification about what has been covered so far. (Asking the open-ended, “Do you have any questions?” will probably bring up topics that you plan to cover later.)

Defining Curriculum (65 minutes)

Materials

- Slide 9, Defining Curriculum
- Slide 10, Journal and Discuss
- Slide 11, Explicit Curriculum
- Slide 12, Group Work
- Slide 13, Planned Learning Opportunities
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

A. Brainstorm Associations (5 minutes)

Display Slide 9. Ask, what words or phrases come to mind when you hear the word, “curriculum”? Record responses on newsprint.

Responses will vary but will likely include terms such as, “books,” “classrooms,” even “boring.” It is important to get narrow concepts and negative experiences of curriculum out in the open.

Share the following excerpt from *Fashion Me a People*:

The very word ‘curriculum’ conjures up images of boxes piled on top of each other in out-of-the-way places, packed with dull workbooks for children to fill out endlessly in Sunday school. Why would anyone want to write a book on such a topic? How could such a topic deserve a book? – Craig Dykstra, in the Foreword to Fashion Me a People describing Maria Harris’s experience when she told people she was writing a book on curriculum.

Point out that this is not the “curriculum” they are going to talk about and plan for in this module or in their congregations.

B. Journaling Definitions (5 minutes)

Display Slide 10. To introduce or reinforce the understanding that curricula is more than what is in a binder or in the classroom, give the group five minutes to write in their journals in response to this question:

- How would you define curriculum?

After five minutes, or when people have stopped writing, ask volunteers to share their definitions.

Ask, “How does Maria Harris define curriculum?”

Harris defines curriculum as the “entire course of the church’s life” and as, “Curriculum is everything we do in the life of our congregation.” Make Harris’s point that the church *is* the curriculum because everything the congregation does, says, includes or excludes *teaches* something.

C. Explicit, Implicit and Null Curricula (55 minutes)

1. Definition

Display Slide 11. Ask participants if anyone can define and give an example of each – explicit, implicit, null curricula. Be sure to engage more than one volunteer. Write key ideas on newsprint. Clarify the terms as needed with the information provided below.

explicit curriculum
implicit curriculum
null curriculum

Tell participants that these terms originated with Eliot Eisner in his book *The Educational Imagination* and are discussed in *Fashion Me a People* on p. 68:

*The **explicit curriculum** is what we present consciously, intentionally. It is what we intend to teach. It is written in our prospectus, our church bulletin, our church bylaws. For example, “We believe in the worth and dignity of all people.”*

*The **implicit curriculum** refers to the patterns and procedures, attitudes and priorities that surround the intentional curricula. Explicitly, we may say that youth are very important to us in our congregation. But if the youth program has no budget (an action the congregation takes), there is an implicit message that contradicts our stated intentions. Implicit curricula can either strengthen or weaken the explicit curricula.*

*Both the explicit and implicit curricula refer to what we do, whatever we may intend. The paradox of the **null curriculum** is that it is what we do not do. It is the content, themes and points of view that are left out. It is the procedures that are not used. While the null curriculum may be unnoticed, it is still operating.*

For example, if all children are assumed to have a mommy and a daddy on registration forms and in the stories told during worship or the RE program, the null curriculum includes gay and lesbian families and families with single parents or guardians raising the children. The null curriculum is that which is absent, but it is not neutral. Silence, as they say, can be deafening.

2. Triads

Display Slide 12. Ask participants to form groups of three with at least one person they do not know or know well. Invite them to discuss the following questions, posted on newsprint or projected by computer:

- What examples of the explicit, implicit, and null curricula can you think of in your congregation?
- What are their implications in your RE visions and goals?
- How do they impact your curriculum planning?

Let participants know every five minutes when it is time for the next person in the group to share. Also give participants two-minute and one-minute warnings before time is up.

3. Large group sharing

Regather the group to share insights and feelings about the explicit, implicit, and null curricula they have experienced.

4. Curriculum as Planned Learning Opportunities

Maria Harris's definition of the church's curriculum as the entire course of the church's life makes an important point. Everything teaches; the lessons of the faith community are everyone's responsibility.

Make the point, however, that we cannot control the entire life of the congregation, and nobody would expect (or want) us to. (Do any participants hold the job title, "Director of the Entire Course of the Congregation's Life"?)

This module focuses on curriculum planning that we *do* control. At the same time, we can be aware of how the total congregational "curriculum" impacts, and is impacted by, our curriculum planning. It explains a lot, including some of our frustrations, as well as some of our visions.

Display Slide 13. The curricula we are responsible for can be defined as:

PLANNED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Explain that each word is significant

Planned: It is OK to identify something worth learning. If we don't think something is worth learning, we are wasting the teachers' and participants' time. We offer curriculum because we are intentional about learning something of value in our congregations.

Learning: To learn is to change; not all changes are equally significant. Some changes are so significant they are transformational. What do we think is worth learning as a faith community?

Opportunities: Carl Rogers has written, "You can't teach someone; you can only facilitate their learning." (paraphrased) A curriculum provides *opportunities*; it cannot guarantee participation or specific outcomes. Different people will always learn different things; however, a well-designed curriculum will maximize the likelihood that participants will learn something intended and valuable.

Example:

A planned learning opportunity from [Wisdom from the Hebrew Scriptures](#), a multigenerational Tapestry of Faith curriculum:

- The **Plan:** Share, then act out, the story of David and Goliath. Give participants the opportunity to identify the sources of their courage and paint symbols of each source on five smooth stones.
- The Intended **Learnings:** to identify one's sources of courage; feel strengthened in one's ability to access courage; nurture one's ability to look inward and achieve self-understanding; identify with the experiences of others.

- The Learning **Opportunity**: addresses different types of learning styles (oral, verbal, kinesthetic, artistic) to maximize the effectiveness of this opportunity to learn.

What Is Religious Education? (35 minutes)

Materials

- Slide 14, What is Religious Education?, or newsprint with the question: What was your most significant religious education experience?
- Slide 15, Journal
- Slide 16, Religious Education Definitions
- Journals and pens/pencils

A. Journaling (10 minutes)

Display Slide 14. Ask participants to respond in their journals to the question. While participants are writing in their journals, display Slide 15.

Do not explain what you mean by a religious education experience. Each participant will answer the question as they understand it. The experience may be at any age and any context they choose.

Tell them they will have about ten minutes to write their thoughts in their journals before sharing.

B. Sharing in Pairs (10 minutes)

Display Slide 16. When you sense that people are ready, but after no more than ten minutes, ask participants to form pairs, preferably with someone they do not know well, to share their journaling.

Signal after five minutes to change speakers.

C. Large Group Sharing (10 minutes)

Call participants' attention back to the whole group. Ask for volunteers to share anything they learned about religious education from this exercise:

- Were most of the significant religious education experiences in a religious community?
- Were they positive, negative, or both?
- At what ages did people have these significant experiences?
- What are the implications for curriculum planning?

D. Journaling (5 minutes)

Invite participants to spend five minutes finishing this sentence:

Religious education is....

Encourage participants to journal outside the session about any insights or questions they have about the nature of religious education.

Tell the group they will be asked to read their definitions in the next session.

Closing (10 minutes)

Description

Say:

The Reverend Susan M. Smith has written, “[T]here is no such thing as a ‘children’s’ story in a community of faith. The child, the youth, the newcomer, the elder all need a constant diet of shared imagery. Teach them forgiveness by teaching them “Grudgeville.” Teach them abundance by teaching them “Stone

Soup.” Teach them the nobility of the human spirit by teaching about a little girl hiding in an attic who could say, ‘In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.’ Tell them the story of all ages. Tell them again and again.”

Then, share the following story for all ages:

A woman dreamed she walked into a brand-new shop in the marketplace, a shop she had never seen before.

To her surprise, God was standing behind the counter.

“What do you sell here?” she asked.

“Everything your heart desires,” said God.

Hardly daring to believe what she was hearing, the woman decided to ask for the best things a person could wish for.

“I want peace of mind, and love and happiness and wisdom and freedom from fear,” she said.

Then, as an afterthought, she added, “Not just for me. For everyone on earth.”

God smiled. “I think you’ve got me wrong, my dear. We don’t sell fruits here. Only seeds.”

Say, “In the next session, we will start looking at the seeds, and how we plant them.”

SESSION 2: Tapestry of Faith: Planting Seeds

Session-at-a-Glance

Ingathering	10 minutes
Sharing Definitions of Religious Education	20 minutes
Tapestry of Faith: An Introduction	2 1/2 hours
Closing	5 minutes

Total Time: 3 hours

Ingathering (10 minutes)

Preparation

- Before the start of the opening, you may wish to distribute copies of the chalice lighting reading below and have volunteers read each section aloud.

A. Song

Gather the group with the song, “Gathered Here,” or another of your choosing.

B. Chalice Lighting

Begin with, “We Are Called,” words by religious educator and parish minister, Natalie Fenimore, from the UUA collection, [*Voices From the Margins: An Anthology of Meditations*](#), Jacqui James and Mark Morrison-Reed, editors (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2012):

We are called.

Called by the wind, the rushing water, the fireflies, the summer sun.

*Called by the sidewalk, the playground, the laughing children,
the streetlights.*

Called by our appetites and gifts – our needs and challenges.

*Called by the bottle, the needle, the powder, the pill, the
game, the bet, the need,
the want, the pain, the cure, the love, the hope, the dream.*

*Called by the Spirit of Love and Hope, and visions of God's
purpose for our lives.*

We are all called.

What do we choose? How do we answer?

C. Housekeeping

Share announcements, review bicycle rack/parking lot, etc.

Sharing Definitions of Religious Education (20 minutes)

Materials

- Slide 17, Questions
- Newsprint, easel, and markers
- Participant journals

A. Sharing

Invite each participant to read their definitions of religious education. As they do so, record key words and phrases on newsprint.

B. Discussion

Display Slide 17. Lead a discussion with these questions:

- What are the commonalities among these different definitions?
- What was your source of your definition?
- What is the relationship between religious education and faith development?
- What terms are used in your congregation for “religious education” and why?
- Does your congregation share your understanding of what constitutes religious education?
- Think back to the most significant religious education experience you identified in the last session. What does that say about your understanding of religious education?
- At the most basic level, what is it all about? What is the purpose?

Tapestry of Faith: An Introduction (2 1/2 hours)

Materials

- Slide 18, Tapestry of Faith
- Slide 19, David and Goliath Activity and Five Smooth Stones
- Tapestry of Faith PowerPoint Slides (1-30)
- Handout 7, Tapestry of Faith Vision Statement
- Handout 8, Four Strands
- Handout 9, Four Strands Exercise
- Handout 10, Curriculum Planning Resources

A. Background (15 minutes)

Share the following points:

- Tapestry of Faith is the UUA's era of curricula for all ages. (Note that the history of curricula eras is summarized in Handout 14, UU Curricula Eras, to be discussed later.)
- It was envisioned by UUs, developed and written by UUs for UUs in UU congregations and other UU communities in response to the expressed needs of UUs through surveys, focus groups, and other formal and informal modes of feedback.
- By far the largest curricular resource in our history (14,000 pages and counting), it provides not only core curricula for children and youth and adults, but serves as a library of resources for creating your own curriculum, and for many religious contexts such as worship, social action, retreats, leadership training, outreach, identity groups, and so on.

Invite participants to share some of their experiences with Tapestry of Faith. Ask:

- Who has used any Tapestry of Faith programs? Which ones?
- Briefly, what was your experience?
- What successes have you had? What challenges did you face?

Explain that the activities in this session will help participants use Tapestry of Faith curricula and resources more effectively to meet their own goals. Ask participants to review Handout 7, Tapestry of Faith Vision Statement and Handout 8, Four Strands.

B. Overview: PPT Presentation Part One (45 minutes)

1. Present Slides 1-15 (Tapestry of Faith PowerPoint Slides)
2. Stop on Slide 16 for the Four Strands Exercise:

Take questions about the strands
Distribute Handout 9, Four Strands Exercise
Create four small groups and assign each one of the strands
Take clarifying questions about the assignment
Tell the story
Give small groups five minutes to develop their activities.
Gather the large group.
Invite each of the four groups to report.
Invite learnings, remaining questions.

C. Overview: PPT Presentation Part Two (15 minutes)

1. Present Slides 17-30 (Tapestry of Faith PowerPoint Slides). Explain that participants will now get an opportunity to experience Tapestry of Faith.

D. Tapestry of Faith: A Sample (45 minutes)

1. Display Slide 19. This sample is taken from Wisdom from the Hebrew Scriptures, a multigenerational Tapestry of Faith program. It uses just one activity from one workshop, but is an opportunity to discuss many of the ways that Tapestry of Faith can serve as a resource in many different contexts. Leaders can choose a different story and activity if they choose.

2. Divide the story, David and Goliath, into sections so that the story is read aloud by a number of voices. If it is feasible, give readers copies with their section marked ahead of time so they can become familiar with their part. Save the first section for a leader to start and model dramatic reading.

3. Begin by saying, "Today's story is about fear and courage. David and Goliath is one of the most well-known and beloved stories of the Hebrew scriptures. It is an adventure

story which seems to be aimed at every child who can hardly wait to grow up and do something so brave, skillful, and important that they become heroic.”

4. Read the first section in a story-telling voice, then have volunteers follow until the story is told.

5. Lead a discussion (10 minutes) with questions such as:

- What gave David courage? Why was he able to be brave, going in to meet Goliath with no armor and carrying only a slingshot with five smooth stones?
- What makes you brave in the face of danger?
- Where do you go for courage?
- David’s bravery came from his confidence that he was fighting for what was right and that God was on his side. What do we, as Unitarian Universalists, believe? Do we believe that when people stand up and fight for what is right that the justice of their cause makes them braver? The 19th-century Unitarian minister, Theodore Parker, said, “The arc of the Universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” He, too, believed that there was some deep and powerful force in the Universe that stands behind the weak and the small when they fight against the more powerful.

6. Five Smooth Stones Art (25 minutes)

Materials

- Small, flat stones from a craft store or outside in nature (at least five for each participant)
- Acrylic paints, brushes, and cups of water for rinsing OR fine-point permanent markers in a variety of colors

Preparation

- Set up a table for painting. Cover the table and floor to prevent stains.
- Set out materials on work tables.

Description

Ask participants:

- What would you do if you had to confront something or someone you are afraid of?
- What are sources of courage for you?

Invite participants to paint or draw on stones symbols or pictures of up to five things they would want to take with them to give them courage.

7. Tapestry as Versatile Resource (30 minutes)

Display Slide 19. The following list of activities from this one David and Goliath workshop indicates the versatility of Tapestry of Faith as a resource. Note the variety of learning styles/opportunities addressed in this workshop:

- Story: David and Goliath
- Dramatized retelling of story
- Whole Group Discussion of what makes you brave
- Deep reflective discussion/Bible study
- Confronting bullies role plays using participants' experiences
- Five Smooth Stones art
- Creating worship
- Experiencing worship together
- Interact with guest congregants about their experiences of courage
- Identify and recognize courageous acts in your community
- Put on a David and Goliath drama in the congregation

- Being David/Making slingshots

Tapestry of Faith can be used in many ways and settings. Ask participants how they use (or might use) Tapestry of Faith outside of structured RE programs on Sunday morning. Share these points if they do not come up in the discussion:

- multigenerational events such as retreats
- mid-week gatherings
- different types of worship
- committee retreats and trainings
- youth groups
- covenant groups
- intersessions
- summer RE

Tapestry of Faith materials can be adapted for any model of RE. Ask participants to raise their hand if they are using any of these models as you read this list:

- theme-based ministry
- workshop rotation
- “way cool Sunday School”
- Small group ministry
- “one room schoolhouse”
- Something else?

Refer to Handout 10, Curriculum Planning Resources which contains more information on each of the models (as well as resources for topics covered in the next session).

Closing (5 minutes)

Description

Close with a song, or the following reading by Rev. William F. Schulz, Reading 459 in

Singing the Living Tradition:

This is the mission of our faith:

To teach the fragile art of hospitality;

To revere both the critical mind and the generous heart;

To prove that diversity need not mean divisiveness;

And to witness to all that we must hold the whole world in our hands

SESSION 3: Growing the Program

Session-at-a-Glance

The Curriculum Planning Process	30 minutes
UU Curriculum Eras	30 minutes
Extending Radical Hospitality	55 minutes
Curriculum Planning Teams	55 minutes
Curriculum Planning Teams at Work	25 minutes

Total Time: 3 hours

The Curriculum Planning Process (30 minutes)

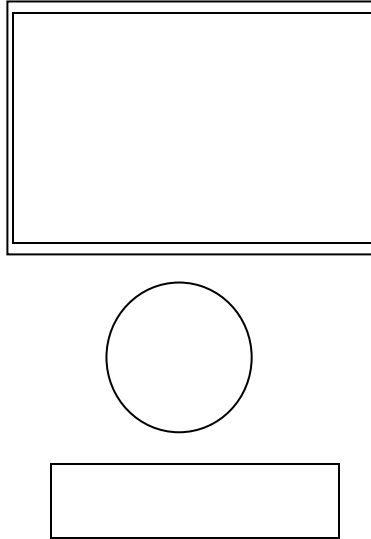
Materials

- Slide 20, The Curriculum Planning Process
- Handout 11, Curriculum Planning – An Ongoing Process
- Handout 12, Teacher Feedback – A Weekly Evaluation Template
- Handout 13, The Curriculum Planning Process Chart

A. The Curriculum Planning Process (15 minutes)

Display Slide 20. Draw attention to Handout 11, Curriculum Planning – An Ongoing Process.

Also post a picture of this graphic (in its complete form) so everyone can focus on the same place.



Say:

We look at this graphic of the curriculum planning process first, to remind ourselves that this is an ongoing process. It is built on the foundation of our philosophy of religious education and every aspect of it is continually or periodically being evaluated.

Provide an overview of the curriculum planning process, inviting participation and clarifying questions. You are defining, not discussing at this point; allow two minutes per item. Explain that there will be time for discussion in greater depth.

1. The **religious education philosophy** of the congregation and its religious education leadership is the foundation of all curriculum planning. We operate out of our RE philosophies whether or not we have written them down or have articulated them. But ideally, we will be intentional about our religious education philosophy, and we will know the value of revisiting and evaluating it periodically.

2. Before we set goals and choose curricula, we **assess the needs** of the people in our program. RE leaders do this formally and informally. *Informal assessments* can include observation, listening during social events, and talking with all RE participants – teachers, parents, children, youth, adults. *Formal assessments* can include written or telephone surveys of teachers, parents or participants, special meetings for parents or other stakeholders, or focused RE committee time devoted to needs assessment.

3. On the basis of the needs we have identified, we **set goals**. Many of our goals are ongoing, but every year we should add to, drop, or modify our goals in response to the changing needs of our congregations. As we set goals, we should think ahead to evaluation: How will we know if these goals are accomplished?

4. With an idea of what we want to accomplish, we **review resources** that address the goals. Resources include, but are not limited to, published curricula. They also include people with special talents, museums and parks, musical instruments and so on. The Internet, of course, is an invaluable resource in itself, and also a resource to find other resources. We can also ask for help on the UUA email lists, such as [REACH-L](#). While we might develop some resources ourselves, a thorough search will help us avoid reinventing the wheel.

5. We develop a **curriculum plan**—that is, we *select* curricula and other resources, *adapt* curricula and other resources, and/or *develop* our own curricula and other resources to meet our needs. Our plan necessarily includes both content and process. It is an overall plan for the ages we are responsible for. It is connected to last year and next year. It includes processes for evaluation, however informal. While we are probably refining an ongoing plan, this might be where we decide to adopt a new model or revolutionize our whole program.

6. We **implement the program** with volunteers. This, however, is not the focus of this particular module.

7. We **evaluate** the religious education experiences in terms of our goals. Are we accomplishing what we set out to do? How do we know? We evaluate formally and informally, much like our assessment of needs. Ongoing evaluation is crucial if we want to be able to make midcourse corrections.

Direct attention to Handout 12, Teacher Feedback – A Weekly Evaluation Template, which shows the way one religious educator was able to get continual feedback from program teachers. Participants are welcome to look at it more closely on their own. Point out that Tapestry of Faith programs include a “Leader Reflection and Planning” segment in each session.

Say:

Remember, a religious education program is like a living organism. It must adapt to a dynamic environment if it is to thrive. We should take the need for changes as an opportunity for growth (of all kinds) rather than as a criticism of the job we've been doing.

B. Sharing Our Experiences -- Large Group Discussion (15 minutes)

Direct attention to Handout 13, The Curriculum Planning Process Chart. Post elements of curriculum planning so that there is a focal point for the group:

<u>Curriculum Planning</u>
<u>Process</u>
Develop RE Philosophy
Assess Needs
Set Goals
Review Resources

The purposes of this discussion are:

- to give participants an opportunity to identify and discuss which step or steps are the most challenging for them in their congregation
- to hear how others successfully address those challenges
- and to leave with ideas of how to improve their own processes.

Referring to the handouts, ask the group what part of the planning process they could use help with. Lead a problem-solving discussion on ways to improve the process for their congregation. For example, someone may be doing all the curriculum selection or adaptation alone and needs help with this process from the RE Committee. Someone else may have an RE Committee so attached to old curriculum choices, the religious educator cannot make innovative changes. What are some strategies for the challenges identified in the group?

UU Curriculum Eras (30 minutes)

Materials

- Slide 21, UU Curriculum Eras
- Handout 14, UU Curricula Eras

- Optional: A curriculum sample from each era

Preparation

- Review Handout 14 so you are familiar with each era. Notice that each summary of the curriculum era contains a snapshot of what was going on in the larger culture of which UUs are always a part. It lists the characteristics of each era and some sample programs of each era.
- The handout also asks, “In what ways was this curriculum era a product of its time, and in what ways was it prophetic?”

Review of Eras

Display Slide 21. Invite participants to review Handout 14 together.

For each era, ask volunteers to share their experience with representative curricula from that era. If you have brought a sample of each, pass them around at the appropriate time.

After discussing each era, ask the group:

- What did you learn from this discussion? Any surprises?
- Does this history explain anything about Unitarian Universalism for you?
- In what ways is your religious education program a product of our time?
- In what ways is your program prophetic?

Extending Radical Hospitality (55 minutes)

Materials

- Slide 22, Extending Radical Hospitality
- Slide 23, Journaling
- Handout 15, Reckless Borrowing or Appropriate Cultural Sharing?
- Handout 16, Considerations for Cultural Borrowing

- Handout 17, Multicultural Education
- Handout 18, Curriculum Planning to Make Us Whole
- Handout 19, Honoring Different Ways of Learning in Curriculum Planning
- Handout 20, Community Story and Vision for Religious Education

A. Reading (10 minutes)

Introduce this segment with the following reading, which can be done with multiple voices or as a responsive reading by the whole group. In either case, you will need multiple copies:

This piece was written for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Jowonio School, in Syracuse, NY. Jowonio (an Onondagan word that means “to set free”) was the first school in the country to systematically include children who were labeled as “autistic” in regular classrooms with “typical” children.

What the Children of Jowonio Know

The children of Jowonio know – not because they have been told – but because they have lived it

That there is always room for everyone – in the circle and at snack time and on the playground – and even if they have to wiggle a little to get another body in and even if they have to find a new way to do it, they can figure it out – and so it might be reasonable to assume that there’s enough room for everyone in the world.

The children of Jowonio know – not because they have been told – but because they have lived it

That children come in a dazzling assortment of sizes, colors and shapes, big and little and all shades of brown and beige and pink, and some walk and some use wheelchairs but everyone gets around and that same is boring – and so it might be reasonable to assume that everyone in the world could be accepted for who they are

The children of Jowonio know – not because they have been told – but because they have lived it

That there are people who talk with their mouths and people who talk with their hands and people who talk by pointing and people who tell us all we need to know with their bodies if we only listen well – and so it might be reasonable to assume that all the people of the world could learn to talk to and listen to each other

The children of Jowonio know – not because they have been told – but because they have lived it

That we don't send people away because they're different or even because they're difficult, and that all people need support and that if people are hurting, we take the time to notice, and that words can build bridges and hugs can heal – and so it might be reasonable to assume that all the people on the planet could reach out to each other and heal the wounds and make a world fit for us all

Discussion: Who Is Really Welcome? (20 minutes)

Display Slide 22. With the Jowonio reading in mind, lead a discussion:

- What are your challenges for including the diversity of children, youth, and adults who come through your doors?
- How have you met these challenges? What has worked and not worked?
- Who are your allies in this effort?
- What resources are available?

C. A holistic (and holy) way of looking at curriculum planning. (25 minutes)

1. A new paradigm for religious education curriculum planning. (3 minutes)

Direct participants' attention to Handout 18, Curriculum Planning to Make Us Whole.

The graphic way of seeing the curriculum planning procedure has another element, the use of an anti-bias lens, at every point. It impacts the evaluation of the program everywhere, all the time.

2. Journaling (7 minutes)

Display Slide 23. Invite participants to take a few minutes to write in their journals about their response to this concept of applying anti-bias, inclusive lenses to curriculum planning.

3. Large group discussion (15 minutes)

Regather the group and ask for insights from the journaling.

Point out the handouts that can be helpful in building a more inclusive program:

Handout 15, 18, and 20 offer more supplementary material; Handout 17, Multicultural Education is a summary of a model by Dr. James Banks; and Handout 19, by Sally Patton talks about honoring different ways of learning.

Curriculum Planning Teams (55 minutes)

Materials

- Slide 24, Curriculum Planning Teams
- Handout 21, Guidelines for Curriculum Planning Teams
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Description

Note: The good news is that the projects these teams will work on tend to generate a lot of enthusiasm. The challenge is to give each enthusiastic group enough time to deliver their report and get feedback from the other participants (who are also energized by the reports). Therefore, it is advised to limit the number of teams to four. Having more means you must limit the groups to less than half an hour for their reports (and the response) and that is not realistic. Reports will run long; plan to schedule a break.

Forming curriculum planning teams (30 minutes)

Display Slide 24. Invite participants to form curriculum planning teams of three to six persons. (Groups of four or five are ideal.) Each team will have about three-and-one-half planning hours to research a project and write up a report. Each team should plan on a 20 minute report, followed by 10 minutes for responses from the group.

Process for forming groups:

- Ask participants to think about a curriculum planning project they would like to work on. Ask them to think about both the topic and the age group or groups they are interested in addressing. They might also want to specify what model, if any, they would use.
- When participants have had a few moments to think, ask them to suggest project topics. Be clear that this is not a brainstorm, but more of a nominating process in

which they identify topics they would actually like to work on. Write all the “nominations” on newsprint.

- With luck, the group will generate 8-12 topics—more than enough to choose from, but not so many as to be confusing. Give the group a few minutes to read them and decide which one most interests them. Then say, “If you were to choose now among these projects, which one would you choose? It does not have to be the one you suggested.” Beginning with the top of the list, ask for a show of hands for each topic and write the number of interested people. *Another way to do this is to give each participant two or even three votes (equally weighted). That way, they are more likely to wind up in a group in which they have expressed initial interest.*
- It should then be clear which ideas have more interest and which have little or none. Topics with no votes can be crossed out. The rest is a matter of negotiation. Have faith that the group can work this out. Often two topics are combined or modified to accommodate someone’s interest. As some of the groups take shape, others fall rapidly into place. It is important that the group take responsibility for this decision-making process in order to fully benefit from the teamwork.
- Draw attention to Handout 21, Guidelines for Curriculum Planning Teams. Go over it briefly and answer any questions participants may have.

One important aspect of curriculum planning that this module has not addressed is developmental characteristics of learners at various ages. That doesn’t mean it’s not important! Part of each group’s responsibility is to use the book by Tracey Hurd, [*Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*](#) to inform their project. As part of their project, each team should report on how their curriculum project supports the developmental needs of a particular age group (or groups) they are planning for.

Remind groups that their report itself should be about 20 minutes long, allowing about 10 minutes for the group to respond. (If you have five groups, reports will have to be about 15 minutes long.)

Curriculum Planning Teams at Work (25 minutes)

Description

This time is dedicated to teams working on their projects so they can get some momentum going before they break at the end of the session. Remind participants that leaders will be available to consult throughout the project preparation. Also remind them of the resources available. Remind them to sign the resources out, even if they are not going far, so other groups know where to look for them if they need them. Help the groups find breakout space and tell them how much time they are expected to work (i.e., when does this session end?).

Note: No closing is included here so that teams can continue to work if they are experiencing a surge of energy and ideas.

SESSION 4: Curriculum Planning Teams at Work

Session-at-a-Glance

Ingathering	10 minutes
Curriculum Planning Teams at Work	3 hours 20 minutes
	Total Time: 3 ½ hours

Ingathering (10 minutes)

Description

Chalice lighting by Gordon B. McKeeman in *Rejoice Together*, edited by Helen R. Pickett (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1995):

*We summon the power of tradition and the exhilaration of newness,
the wisdom of the ages and the knowing of the very young.
We summon beauty, eloquence, poetry, music to be the bearers
of our dreams.
We would open our eyes,
our ears,
our minds,
our hearts
to the amplest dimensions of life.*

Check in with the group to answer any questions or concerns they have about their

creative process. Remind everyone that they are to give an oral report (with visuals) that lasts no more than 20 minutes, so that there is time for feedback. Ideally, they will create a document to share with the whole group.

Curriculum Planning Teams at Work (3 hours and 20 minutes)

Description

Teams work independently while leaders make themselves available to assist by answering questions or acting as resources.

SESSION 5: Group Presentations and Worship

Session-at-a-Glance

Check in	10 minutes
Group Presentations	2 hours 20 minutes
Loose Ends	15 minutes
Closing Worship	15 minutes
	Total Time: 3 hours

Check in (10 minutes)

Preparation

- Because you will be having a worship later, this opening can be brief – a song or chalice lighting of your choice.
- Do a final check of your bicycle rack/parking lot and share any final housekeeping instructions, etc.

Group Presentations (2 hours and 20 minutes)

Materials

- Slide 25, Group Presentations and Worship
- Handout 22, Guidelines for Feedback

Description

Display Slide 25. Direct attention to Handout 22, Guidelines for Feedback.

Invite the first two groups to give their reports. Ask them to monitor their time, but also be able to gently move things along if necessary. To be respectful to all the groups, make sure the later groups do not have to rush because earlier groups were allowed to run over the time limit.

Take an energy break if needed so that the last two groups will have an attentive audience!

Invite the last two groups to give their reports.

Loose Ends (15 minutes)

Use this time to review any outstanding questions that have come up during the module.

Closing Worship (15 minutes)

[Feel free to design your own.]

Gathering Song

“Gathered Here” (Hymn 389 from *Singing the Living Tradition*) or “Meditation on Breathing” (Hymn 1001 from *Singing the Journey*) or “May Your Life Be as a Song” (Hymn 1059 from *Singing the Journey*)

Chalice Lighting

My heart is moved by all I cannot save:

So much has been destroyed

I have to cast my lot with those who, age after age,

Perversely, with no extraordinary power,

reconstitute the world. – Adrienne Rich

Fifth module Recognition (if applicable)

(This can be done in a celebratory way.)

Ask those for whom this is the fifth module to rise in body or spirit and lead an ovation.

Something to take home

Invite participants to gather around the chalice, Invite everyone to state something they will take home with them from this module. Leaders should participate, too.

Closing words

Read or have a volunteer read the closing words from Howard Thurman, Reading 498 from *Singing the Living Tradition*:

In the quietness of this place, surrounded by the all-pervading presence of the Holy, my heart whispers:

Keep fresh before me the moments of my High Resolve, that in good times or in tempests

I may not forget that to which my life is committed.

Keep fresh before me the moments of my high resolve.

Closing Song

Lead the group in singing a song of your choosing.