

# **Teacher Development**

## **Renaissance Module**

### **LEADER'S GUIDE**



UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
ASSOCIATION

By Betty Jo Middleton and Gaia Brown

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## About the Authors

**Betty Jo Middleton** is a retired Minister of Religious Education who has served eight congregations in the greater Washington, DC, area and on the field staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association. She has created religious education materials for all ages. Betty Jo has led dozens of Renaissance modules, including every version of this one, and has helped to develop several of them. She and her husband, J. Howard Middleton, have lived in Alexandria, VA, since 1968. They have two children and four grandsons.

**Gaia Brown**, CRE/ML, has been a religious educator since 1975, serving congregations in New Jersey and Illinois before retiring from congregational work and moving to Reno in the Sierra Nevada. Gaia is the author of *UU Super Heroes* and *Super Heroes—Bible People* and co-author of *Treasure Hunting—Take Two* and *Compass Points*. She has been leading Renaissance Modules and helping revise them since 1984. She and her husband have a blended family of five children and six grandchildren.

## Introduction

The Teacher Development Renaissance Module is designed to help religious professionals and lay leaders attend to their own faith development journeys as they guide volunteers in their development as relational, faith-filled teachers in the context of Unitarian Universalist religious education. Participants will gain experience to use and adapt the module's material and activities for their own religious education programs.

This module is divided into five sessions. The first is two and a half hours in length; the second, third, and fourth are three hours in length; and the final 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 and to meet your particular needs. Especially if your module is taking place over a week's time, rather than two or three days, you may wish to use the small group ministry (SGM) model. If you decide to do so, see the small group ministry resources in Appendix 1.

PowerPoint slides are included in this module. Plan ahead so you will have the necessary equipment to use them. Use newsprint as an alternative to the slides if appropriate equipment is not available.

The reader for the module is Parker Palmer's [\*The Courage to Teach\*](#). Advise participants to obtain the book as early as possible for maximum time to complete the reading.

There are a considerable number of handouts that participants will need to use in print or on a laptop during the module. Include information about them in your welcome letter.

Find links to PowerPoint slides and handouts/appendices for this module on the [Module Resources page](#) of the UUA website.

### Goals for Participants

- To reflect on religious education philosophy and relate that philosophy to the faith development of teachers
- To participate in a community of religious educators through study, worship, creating, and networking

- To gain understanding of teachers' contributions and needs
- To increase understanding of child development and its relationship to teaching and learning
- To understand issues related to safety and ethics
- To explore and develop strategies for recruitment, support, appreciation, and recognition of volunteers
- To work together to develop a sample teacher development program

### **Supplies**

- Computer, projector, and screen for PowerPoint slides (38 slides) for every session
- *Singing the Living Tradition*—at least one copy for every two participants
- *Singing the Journey* (optional: the only songs used from it are “Meditation on Breathing,” which can be taught easily without the book, and “Morning Has Come,” the lyrics for which are on Slides 34-35)
- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED battery-operated candle
- Centering table and decorative cloth
- Chime
- Letter-size paper, white and colored
- 4x6" index cards
- Easel and newsprint
- Pens and pencils
- Decorative craft items, such as bits of ribbon, star stickers, embroidery thread, yarn, pipe cleaners, etc.
- Markers, a variety of sizes and colors

- Crayons
- Scissors, including left-handed ones
- Glue
- Sticky notes

## **List of Handouts**

*Encourage participants to read, the handouts listed in **bold type** before the workshop to enhance the workshop experience.*

### **Session 1**

- 1 Introduction to the Renaissance Program and Religious Education  
Credentialing
- 2 Preparation for Module Evaluation
- 3 Schedule of Sessions
- 4 Module and Session Goals**
- 5 The Mutuality of Making a Difference
- 6 Shared Praxis**
- 7 Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis
- 8 Tom Groome's Shared Praxis in Action
- 9 Reflections on *The Courage to Teach***
- 10 Reflection Questions**

### **Session 2**

- 11 The Soul Only Avails: Teaching as a Spiritual Act**
- 12 Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain  
Volunteers**
- 13 Channing on Teachers
- 14 The Care and Feeding of Volunteers: Part One**
- 15 Tips for Successful Recruiting
- 16 Recruitment Skits
- 17 Safety, Health, and Ethics in Congregations

- 18 Code of Ethics Sample
- 19 Sample Health and Safety Guidelines

### **Session 3**

- 20 Faith Development Outline
- 21 Abbreviated Summary: Child Development
- 22 Abbreviated Summary: Adolescent Development
- 23 Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences
- 24 Seven Ways Congregations Can Embrace People with Disabilities**
- 25 Sample Referral Form for Individuals with Special Needs
- 26 The Children of Jowonio
- 27 The Paradoxes of Space
- 28 Creating an Environment of Acceptance and Mutuality**
- 29 Discipline in Sunday School: What Would a UU Do?**

### **Session 4**

- 30 Support Checklist
- 31 The Care and Feeding of Volunteers: Part Two**
- 32 Sample Religious Education Teacher Contract
- 33 Team Teaching
- 34 A Fictional (But Not Unrealistic) Teaching Team Rotation
- 35 Leader Reflection and Planning
- 36 Sample Teacher Check-in Form
- 37 How to Be Sure the Teacher Development Workshop Goes Home with Your Teachers
- 38 Tapestry of Faith – Spiritual Preparation
- 39 Creating Covenants
- 40 Children's Covenant
- 41 Teacher Dedication

## **42 Group Project and Presentation**

### **Session 5**

43 Selected Online Resources

### **Appendix 1**

Unitarian Universalist Teacher Development Using a Small Group Ministry Model, by Gail Forsyth-Vail

Small Group Ministry and Lifespan Faith Development, by Rev. Helen Zidowecki

### **Appendix 2**

Meditation with Children: A Guide, by Susan Freudenthal

Writing Prayers, by Tracey L. Hurd, Ph.D.

## **List of PowerPoint Slides**

### **Session 1**

- 1 Welcome: Gathering Activity
- 2 Welcome to the Teacher Development Renaissance Module
- 3 Please share
- 4 Orientation
- 5 Renaissance Program
- 6 Think of a teacher...
- 7 Thomas Groome: Shared Praxis
- 8 What? So what? Now what?
- 9 What?
- 10 So what?
- 11 Now what?
- 12 Focusing Activity
- 13 Critical Reflection



- 14 The story/vision of the faith community
- 15 Dialectic
- 16 Invitation to response, action, decision
- 17 *The Courage to Teach*
- 18 Session 1 Reflection Questions
- 19 SLT #118, “This Little Light of Mine”

### **Session 2**

- 20 Session 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers
- 21 SLT #389, “Gathered Here”
- 22 Quotation from *The Courage to Teach*
- 23 Safe Congregation Practices
- 24 Session 2 Reflection Questions

### **Session 3**

- 25 Session 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers
- 26 Reflect about the role of space...
- 27 The Paradoxes of Space
- 28 Session 3 Reflection Questions

### **Session 4**

- 29 Session 4: Toolkits for Teachers – Empowerment for Learning and Seeking
- 30 Planning a Teacher Development Event
- 31 Presentation should include...
- 32 Session 4 Reflection Questions
- 33 STJ #1009, “Meditation on Breathing”

### **Session 5**

- 34 Session 5: Group Presentations and Closing Worship
- 35 A new day dawns...
- 36 Collective Reflection on Projects

- 37 Session 5 Reflection Questions
- 38 Closing

**List of Leader Resources**

- 1 Sample Welcome Letter from Leaders to Participants
- 2 Church Bulletin Bloopers
- 3 Suggestions for Openings and Closings

## Leader Resource 1: Sample Welcome Letter from Leaders to Participants

*Leaders or Module Organizers: Send a welcome letter to each participant as soon as they register, to give them ample time to prepare.*

Dear Teacher Development Module Participants,

We look forward to gathering on \_\_\_\_\_ [day, date] at \_\_\_\_\_ [location] for the Teacher Development Renaissance Module. This letter will help you prepare to make the most of our time together.

The reader for this module is *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, by Parker J. Palmer. The entire book is worthwhile; we will look specifically at Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 6. Find a guide to the reader here: [https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/reader\\_teacher\\_guide.pdf](https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/reader_teacher_guide.pdf).

This module also has handouts and additional resources which you can access here: [www.uua.org/careers/re/renaissance/module-resources](http://www.uua.org/careers/re/renaissance/module-resources). Becoming familiar with certain of these handouts prior to the module will be very helpful; the list of handouts designates **in bold** which ones to read ahead of time. Please print or save your own copies of all handouts. Come prepared to take notes and to journal; whether you use paper or an electronic device is up to you.

If you have materials you use in teacher development, such as background check forms, teacher report forms, or tips for teachers, please do share them, either with paper copies or electronically.

If you have a musical instrument and would like to accompany our singing, please bring it!

Please note that we will start promptly at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on \_\_\_\_\_ [day, date] and will conclude each session promptly. Attendance for the **full** fifteen hours of the module and completion of the module evaluation are necessary for credit.

With anticipation,  
[Leader and Leader, including contact information]

## Leader Resource 2: Church Bulletin Bloopers

*These are included to provide energy breaks. We have suggested a few places where you can use these, confident that you can figure out the rest.*

-----  
Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight. Come tonight and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

-----  
Announcement in the church bulletin for a national prayer and fasting conference: "The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer conference includes all meals."

-----  
Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8 pm in the recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.

-----  
Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

-----  
"Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands."

-----  
The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.

-----  
The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

-----  
Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

-----  
Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.

-----  
Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say “hell” to someone who doesn’t care much about you.

---

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

---

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be “What Is Hell?” Come early and listen to our choir practice.

---

Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

---

For those of you who have children and don’t know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

---

During the absence of our pastor, we enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing a good sermon when J. F. Stubbs supplied our pulpit.

---

The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Belzer, the son of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.

---

The Rev. Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.

---

The pastor will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing “Break Forth into Joy.”

---

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* in the church basement on Friday at 7 p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

---

Don’t let worry kill you off—let the church help.

---

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person(s) you want remembered.

---

Let us join David and Lisa in the celebration of their wedding and bring their happiness to a conclusion.

---

The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.

---

The audience is asked to remain seated until the end of the recession.

---

The choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.

---

The music for today's service was all composed by George Friedrich Handel in celebration of the 300th anniversary of his birth.

---

The church will host an evening of fine dining, superb entertainment, and gracious hostility.

---

Ushers will eat latecomers.

---

Potluck supper: prayer and medication to follow.

## Leader Resource 3: Suggestions for Openings and Closings

Plans for each session include suggestions for openings and closings. You do not need to be limited to these, however. Many readings in *Singing the Living Tradition* are suitable, especially readings from the sections for opening words (beginning with Reading 416), chalice lightings (beginning with Reading 447), and benedictions and closing words (beginning with Reading 677). Reading 456 may be used at any time for extinguishing the chalice. Many songs in both *Singing the Living Tradition* and *Singing the Journey* are appropriate and may be familiar to participants. Favorite poems and readings from meditation manuals and other books may be suitable as well. Participants may have suggestions. Check [Worship Web](#) and the [Illuminations](#) app for additional resources.

### Alternate Suggestions from *Singing the Living Tradition*

#### Session 1, Opening

Reading 458, by Walter Royal Jones  
Hymn 360, “Here We Have Gathered”

#### Session 1, Closing

Reading 704 (first two verses), by Alfred Storer Cole, previously attributed to John Murray

#### Session 2, Opening

Reading 418, adapted from Israel Zangwill  
Hymn 407, “We’re Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table”

#### Session 2, Closing

Reading 683, by Theodore Parker  
Hymn 413, “Go Now in Peace”

#### Session 3, Opening

Reading 434  
Hymn 378, “Let Those Who Live in Every Land”

Session 3, Closing

Reading 681, adapted from Gaelic runes

Hymn 414, "As We Leave This Friendly Place"

Session 4, Opening

Reading 447, by Albert Schweitzer

Hymn 391, "Voice Still and Small"

Session 4, Closing

Reading 698, by Wayne B. Arnason

Session 5, Opening

Reading 561, by Margaret Mead

Hymn 381, "From All That Dwell Below the Skies"

Session 5, Closing

Reading 684, by Duke T. Gray

Hymn 379, "Ours Be the Poems of All Tongues"



# **SESSION 1: Teaching and Learning – What Shapes Us?**

## **Session-at-a-Glance**

<b>Gathering Activity: Gift Boxes</b>	15 minutes
<b>Opening and Introductions</b>	20 minutes
<b>Orientation</b>	15 minutes
<b>Making a Covenant</b>	15 minutes
<b>The Mutuality of Making a Difference</b>	30 minutes
<b>Shared Praxis</b>	20 minutes
<b>The Courage to Teach</b>	25 minutes
<b>Reflection</b>	7 minutes
<b>Closing</b>	3 minutes

**Total time 2 1/2 hours**

## **Goals**

This session will:

- Orient the group to the module
- Model a welcoming focus on each participant
- Introduce the concept of mutuality in teaching and learning

## **Learning Objectives**

Participants will:

- Begin to build a community of learners

- Experience creating a covenant
- Draw on their own experiences to understand Parker Palmer's definition of good teaching

## **Gathering Activity: Gift Boxes (15 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Slide 1
- 4x6" index cards, one for each participant and leader, plus a few extras
- Markers
- Variety of decorative items, such as bits of ribbon, star stickers, embroidery thread, pipe cleaners
- Scissors, including left-handed ones
- Glue
- Name tags, pens, markers

### **Preparation**

- Cut two opposite corners off each card, creating the appearance of a box, and draw three lines to indicate sides of the box.
- Test the equipment and queue the slides.
- Show Slide 1 or post on newsprint:
  - Each of us brings gifts to share with the group.*
  - Decorate one of the "gift boxes."*
  - Write on it one gift you bring to the group.*
  - Keep the box with you.*
- Make several example boxes as well as one for each leader.

### **Description**

As participants gather, point to the instructions and ask each person to prepare a gift box using the provided materials. As time allows, they may make more than one. The gift boxes will also be used in the closing of the module.

Also, invite each participant to prepare and wear a name tag.

## **Opening and Introductions (20 minutes)**

## Materials

- Slides 2-3 or newsprint with “Welcome to the Teacher Development Renaissance Module” and information for introductions written on it
- Gift boxes from the Gathering activity
- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED battery-operated candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Chime
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Roster of participants

## Preparation

- Ask for a volunteer to light the chalice.
- Optional: Ask a participant to lead the singing.

## Description

(5 minutes) Show Slide 2. Ring a chime or in some other way call for the attention of the group. Begin singing “Come, Come, Whoever You Are,” Hymn 188 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, singing it through three times or so. You can sing it as a three-part round if you have three song leaders. Add the additional line “though you’ve broken your vows a thousand times” if someone can lead it (it is not in the hymnbook).

Ask the volunteer to come forward and light the chalice. Say:

*We light this chalice as we enter into the spirit of community.  
May we speak, listen, share and learn,  
That we may grow together in love and wisdom. (Gaia Brown)*

Then say something like this, with pauses so that it has the flavor of a meditation:

*Each of us brings gifts to the group... You have had a chance to think about a gift you bring to share with the group... At this time let’s bring them forward, one at a time.*

One of the leaders should model this; as you rise and place your gift box on the chalice table, say something like:

*I’m Betty Jo, and I bring the gift of experience.*

Note: Gather and save the participants' gift boxes for the closing worship of the final session.

(15 minutes) Show Slide 3 or post the newsprint you have prepared with information for introductions:

- Name
- Congregation or setting
- Role or position in congregation
- Number of years in Unitarian Universalism
- Number of years in the field of religious education/ministry
- Number of Renaissance Modules taken
- RE Credentialing status (level completed or in progress)

Have a leader model the first response. As the participants introduce themselves, have one leader keep eye contact while the other jots notes on the list of participants: For whom is this module a first? Their fifth? Who is brand new to working in this field? Who is a layperson; who is a professional? Who has flown across the country to be there and may not know anyone? This kind of information will help you facilitate the participation of individuals in the group.

## **Orientation (15 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 1, Introduction to the Renaissance Program and Religious Education Credentialing
- Handout 2, Preparation for Module Evaluation
- Handout 3, Schedule of Sessions
- Handout 4, Module and Session Goals
- Slides 4-5 or newsprint with "Orientation" and Renaissance Program information written on it
- Sticky notes for Parking Lot
- Newsprint and markers
- Optional: Basket for church bulletin bloopers, if using

### **Preparation**

- Arrange for someone on-site to provide logistical details.
- Prepare newsprint for Parking Lot and volunteer sign-up.
- Optional: Decide whether you want to use the church bulletin bloopers provided in Leader Resource 2. Print them out (preferably on a flashy color of paper), cut them into strips, and put them in a basket on or near your chalice table. Laughter, being the best medicine, can be a great energizer. Invite participants to grab one and read it if they feel the group is sagging. You will also find that if you have two or three participants start reading these aloud at the end of a break, your group will hasten from all directions and be attentive, ready to work.

### **Description**

(5 minutes) Show Slide 4. Invite the designated person on-site to review logistics such as policies about use of the meeting room (moving furniture, using tape, etc.), location of bathrooms, meal and snack times, and Internet access.

(10 minutes) Show Slide 5. Referring to Handout 1, and keeping in mind the group's mix of Renaissance "alums" and newcomers, briefly describe the Renaissance program and the credentialing process. Then, referring to Handout 2, explain that Renaissance module evaluations, for participants as well as leaders, are now online. In order to receive credit for the module, participants must submit their evaluation within a week after the module concludes. Invite them to give feedback about the meeting site, lodging, or food arrangements to the module coordinator or the on-site contact. Encourage participants who perceive a problem with facilitation or group dynamics to speak directly to one of the leaders as soon as possible so that the situation can be remedied.

(5 minutes) Review the schedule of the module on Handout 3, adding times for breaks as needed. Review the goals of the module on Handout 4. Identify other resources for this module, including:

- "Parking Lot." Explain that this is where questions or issues not directly related to the session topic should be posted. At the end of each session the leaders will check the Parking Lot and decide whether, how, and when to address them.

- Resource tables. Invite people to peruse brochures, programs, and other materials in their free time and to add items they have brought to share.
- Newsprint for volunteers to sign up to light or extinguish the chalice, offer chalice lighting words, or lead songs at the beginning or ending of each session.
- Optional: Basket of church bulletin bloopers. Explain how you plan to use them during the module. For example, you may invite participants to take one and read it to the group if they see energy flagging or say that the leaders will use them to bring the group back together after a break.

## **Making a Covenant (15 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Newsprint and markers

### **Description**

Explain that because the making of classroom covenants and covenants among teachers is so important in religious education, it is beneficial to experience the entire process, rather than starting with a template, as is usually done in Renaissance modules (because of time constraints). Ask the group to brainstorm some guidelines to create a safe and healthy sharing space, being sure to include maintaining confidentiality, welcoming differences, sharing without dominating the group, honoring boundaries, and respecting the group's process, plus whatever else is important to the group. Remind them to frame points in the positive as much as possible. Create the list together, and review and edit it until members of the group agree on the concepts and wording. Then say the covenant together and post it in a prominent place. Mention that classroom covenants will be covered further in Session 4.

## **The Mutuality of Making a Difference (30 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 5, The Mutuality of Making a Difference
- Slide 6

## Preparation

- Decide how you will create small groups of four persons—by counting off, self-selection, or other means.
- Ask two participants to prepare to read aloud the quotes on the handout.

## Description

(15 minutes) Say something like:

*We will break into small groups for work or reflection in this module, but we want to point out that not all work done in small groups fits into the model of small group ministry, which implies ongoing groups where relationships may deepen over time. In the module we will want to you have an opportunity to be in groups with different people. There are resources about small group ministry and suggestions for using it with your teachers in Appendix 1 in your packet of handouts. Before we divide into groups, let's look at Handout 5, which has two quotes from The Courage to Teach. Let's now hear the quotes read aloud. [Volunteers read.]*

(15 minutes) After hearing the quotes, show Slide 6. Say something like:

*Now we are going to break into small groups for reflection on these words and this question. You will have a little time to think about the question, and then each of you will have a chance to share your thoughts. After your time of reflection in small groups, we will take a little time in our large group for reflection and sharing.*

Give the small groups some time, and then gather again in the larger group and ask if there are those who would like to share from the different groups.

## Shared Praxis (20 minutes)

### Materials

- Handout 6, Shared Praxis
- Handout 7, Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis
- Handout 8, Tom Groome's Shared Praxis in Action

- Slides 7-16

### **Preparation**

- Review the handouts and slides.

### **Description**

(10 minutes) The shared praxis approach described by Thomas Groome is a classic approach in religious education that undergirds many Unitarian Universalist curricula, even when not explicitly stated. Ask who is familiar with it. Ask if anyone intentionally uses it in their program. Briefly review the shared praxis approach, inviting participants to look at Handout 6 and follow along with the pie graphic in Handout 7. Point out that the graphic has six sections, corresponding to Groome's description of a focusing activity and then five steps, or movements.) A strength of the graphic is that it shows how shared praxis is a continual process. You may wish to continue through Slide 16 for a simplification. After showing the slides, invite participants to take a look at one or more of the session plans in Handout 8 as concrete examples of how shared praxis works.

(10 minutes) Ask participants to form groups of three or four. Make sure each group includes both more experienced and less experienced participants. Ask them to discuss how knowledge of shared praxis might help teachers in their programs, and how that in turn could benefit the children. Leave two or three minutes at the end to share ideas as a whole group.

## **The Courage to Teach (25 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 9, Reflections on *The Courage to Teach*
- Slide 17
- Index cards
- Pens and pencils

### **Preparation**

- Distribute index cards and pens or pencils as needed.



## **Description**

(5 minutes) Show Slide 17. Direct participants to look at Handout 9 and say something like:

*The reader for this module is Parker Palmer's The Courage to Teach. Handout 9 provides an overview of themes and serves as a guide to the reader. If you have not had time to finish reading the book, we encourage you to do so as soon as you can. This is a book you will want to keep on your professional book shelf for future use and reference. As religious educators, we are teachers—of the teachers we work with, of children and parents alike, and of others in our congregations. So this book has relevance for us, as well as for the teachers in our religious education programs. Palmer says, "I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy." But, he adds, there are other moments when he despairs of being a teacher at all. Perhaps you have had such extreme moments as well. Palmer suggests looking at these opposites as paradoxes, seeing that the gifts we bring to teaching may also "go hand in hand with a liability. Every strength is also a weakness."*

*Let's form groups of three. [Allow one or two pairs if necessary; it is better to have smaller groups than larger.] First, think about a moment of joy you have had in teaching, where you felt that you were born to teach; and second, think about a moment of despair you have had in teaching. Now, on one side of your card, jot down the moment of joy, and on the other, the moment of despair.*

(10 minutes) Say something like:

*In your small group, you will take turns sharing what you have written as your moment of joy. Others in your group will then help you identify the gift or the strength you brought to that moment... Is it the same gift you suggested you bring to this larger group?*

*We have ten minutes for this part of the activity, so we can devote three minutes to each person's sharing and the identification of gifts. Then take one minute to silently reflect on your moment of despair in teaching; we won't get into problem solving about that!*

(5 minutes) When all are back together in the large group, take a few minutes to talk about the experience of sharing moments of joy and identifying gifts. How might they use this exercise with volunteers?

(5 minutes) Review any questions that have been posted in the Parking Lot and respond as appropriate. Ask if there are any closing thoughts about this session. Suggest that participants make notes about the session to prepare to complete the online evaluation.

## **Reflection (7 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 10, Reflection Questions
- Slide 18

### **Description**

(7 minutes) Show Slide 18 and introduce Handout 10, saying something like:

*Whether or not you are enrolled in the Religious Education Credentialing Program, it is a good practice to write a brief reflection shortly after a learning experience. Time is allotted at the end of each session for you to get started on the reflection questions and to address other issues or questions that have come up for you during the session.*

*We encourage you to use these reflections for:*

- *a newsletter article (to keep your congregation informed about your professional development)*
- *a report to your congregation's board of management (to ensure congregational leadership knows professional expense money is put to good use) and/or*
- *your credentialing portfolio (to keep a record of the module and reflect on how the module influenced your work)*

## **Closing (3 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Slide 19

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED battery-operated candle

### **Preparation**

- Optional: Ask for volunteers to read the closing reading and/or lead the closing song.

### **Description**

(3 minutes) You might use as a closing these words of Parker Palmer's, from *The Courage to Teach*:

*The work required to "know thyself" is neither selfish nor narcissistic. Whatever self-knowledge we attain as teachers will serve our students and our [own learning] as well. Good teaching requires self-knowledge: it is a secret hidden in plain sight.*

In the order that best fits your situation, read the closing reading, show Slide 19 and sing the closing song, and extinguish the chalice.

Remind participants of the start time of the next session and ask that they review Handouts 11-20. In particular, ask for two volunteers to read the Dr. Seuss-style skit in Handout 16 aloud.

# SESSION 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers

## Session-at-a-Glance

Opening	20 minutes
Reframing Teaching	35 minutes
What Teachers Bring	20 minutes
What Teachers Need	20 minutes
The “Good Teacher”	35 minutes
Recruiting Volunteer Teachers	25 minutes
Safe Congregations	15 minutes
Reflection	5 minutes
Closing	5 minutes

**Total Time: 3 hours**

## Goals

This session will:

- Celebrate the gifts teachers bring to religious education
- Consider what teachers need to be effective
- Explore recruitment strategies
- Focus on safe congregations and the teacher’s responsibility

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Consider the gifts teachers bring to religious education programs and what they need
- Create representations of the “good teacher” for various age levels
- Frame volunteer teaching as a ministry that enriches the volunteer and see how this paradigm shift affects congregational culture
- Reflect on the ways in which they currently support volunteers, to find new and better ways

## Opening (20 minutes)

### Materials

- Slides 20-21
- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED battery-operated candle
- Chime
- “The Great End in Religious Instruction,” Reading 652 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: basket of church bulletin bloopers

### Preparation

- Optional: One or two participants choose a blooper to read.
- Optional: Ask a participant to lead the song.
- Optional: Ask a participant to lead the reading.

### Description

(5 minutes) Show Slide 20. If possible, have a leader greet participants as they arrive. As the group settles, invite those who have chosen to read bloopers to share them. Then ring the chime.

In the order that makes sense for you, read the reading, show Slide 21 and sing the song, and light the chalice.

(15 minutes) Invite participants to reflect on the first session, especially on what they experienced or learned. Then ask them to share an “aha moment”—something that occurred to them during the session or after it that was a new learning, changed their point of view about something, raised a new question, etc. Ideally this sharing should not be rushed.

Before moving along you might remind participants that the schedule, goals, and objectives of the session are on Handouts 3 and 4.

## **Reframing Teaching (35 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 11, The Soul Only Avails
- Handout 12, Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers

### **Description**

Ask participants to take out Handouts 11 and 12 (which they were asked to read before this session). Say something like:

*One of the most important things we can do is to help our congregations begin or affirm a volunteering culture which frames teaching as a spiritual practice. Rev. Barry Andrews, in his essay “The Soul Only Avails,” says, “Teaching the young, then, is not about filling their heads, but expanding their horizons; it is not about charting a course for them, but about being companions with them on their own journey in life. I am convinced that in religious education ‘the soul only avails,’ and that teaching is a spiritual practice requiring a certain discipline or adherence to fundamental principles. Perhaps you have others to add to the list, but here are the seven principles I would suggest as essential to the spiritual practice of religious education.”*

Form seven groups and assign each group one of the principles described in Handout 11. Ask groups to take a few minutes to discuss the meaning of that Principle for teaching as a spiritual practice and then to prepare a brief presentation for the larger group. Referring also to Handout 12, Teaching in Faith, ask each group to consider (1) how that Principle gets embodied (or doesn't) and (2) tools for teachers. After each group presents, allow a few minutes for full group discussion.

## **What Teachers Bring (20 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 13, Channing on Teachers
- Slide 22
- Easel and newsprint
- Markers (black or brown, plus three brighter colors)

### Preparation

- Think about what you yourself bring—intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually—to this group of participants.
- Ask a participant to be the group’s scribe, preferably one who can write clearly on the easel pad.

### Description

(10 minutes) Introduce this activity by showing Slide 22 and saying something like:

*Parker Palmer says that while we need to know **what** we are going to teach (our subject matter) and **how** we are going to teach (our methodology), we do not often enough ask about the **who**, the self that teaches. The teaching self has three parts: the intellectual, the emotional, and the spiritual. In *The Courage to Teach*, he says, “Reduce teaching to the intellect, and it becomes a cold abstraction; reduce it to emotions, and it becomes narcissistic; reduce it to the spiritual, and it loses its anchor in the world. Intellect, emotion, and spirit...are interwoven in the human self and education at its best.”*

Have participants turn to a neighbor and in pairs (or triads if necessary) share one strength in each of these aspects that they bring to volunteer teachers in their programs.

(10 minutes) Regather the large group and invite them to continue thinking about these three aspects of the teaching self—intellectual, emotional, and spiritual—and consider what gifts teachers bring to the children, youth, and adults in religious education settings. Brainstorm a list and have a volunteer record it on easel paper, using black or brown marker. People will have to be able to read this list, so ask the volunteer to write clearly in large letters, and not to be shy about using several pieces of paper. When you have your list, go back and decide which of the three

categories each of these gifts fits into. (Many might fit into more than one category, which is fine.) Indicate the category of each gift by writing its initial letter (I, E, S) in one of three bright colors. When you are done, ask participants to look at the list. Are there any surprises or learnings there? How do they think the teachers (or potential teachers) in their congregations would respond to such a list? Ask for a volunteer to take a picture of the newsprint and share it with the group. End by referring participants to Handout 13, Channing on Teachers and ask them to compare Palmer's three categories to the qualities Channing describes. Allow about five minutes for discussion.

## **What Teachers Need (20 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Newsprint and markers
- The list of teacher "gifts" from the prior activity
- Scissors

### **Preparation**

- Determine how many groups you can have if each one has about four participants.
- Cut the list from the last activity into as many sections as you have groups. Try to have a fairly even number of items on each section.

### **Description**

(12 minutes) Form groups of about four. Give each group a section of the list from the prior activity, a piece of newsprint, and a marker. Say something like:

*We aren't all Parker Palmer, and even he might have a hard time living up to all the items on this list. Taking a look at the gifts that you have on your section of the list, come up with ideas of what can be done to help teachers acquire the ones they don't have (or maybe don't realize they have), or how they can otherwise compensate for what they lack. For instance, if one of the gifts is singing, what can you offer to teachers who don't feel they are musical? If one of the gifts is enthusiasm, how can you help a teacher who feels tentative?*



Ask them to come up with a variety of solutions, including ones that do not require an inordinate amount of the religious educator's time. They might have several ideas for one gift but be stumped by others. Have each group designate a scribe and write down the difficulty and, briefly, possible remedies on newsprint. For example, the scribe might write "Can't sing: maybe another member of the team can, ask a choir member to help out, recorded music," or "Feels tentative: pair with experienced teacher."

(8 minutes) Call the participants back to the whole group and ask each small group to share their ideas. They will probably have about two minutes each. Then have them post their newsprint with their list of solutions. Be sure their names are included, so that other participants who look at these lists later will know who to ask if they want more information. Ask for a volunteer to take pictures of the lists and email them to participants.

## **The "Good Teacher" (35 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Newsprint
- Markers and crayons
- Buttons, yarn, glue, and additional supplies of your choice

### **Preparation**

- Divide participants into small groups for five different age groups. Note: Since there is an entire Renaissance module on Adult Faith Development, you may choose to form only four groups.

### **Description**

(20 minutes) Say something like:

*Let's divide into five [or four] groups. Each group will create a picture or other representation of a good teacher for a different age group: preschool children, elementary-age children, middle-school children, older teens, [and adults].*

(15 minutes) After about 20 minutes, call the whole group together to share the representations and for general conversation about them. Post them and ask for a volunteer to take pictures and share them with the group.

## **Recruiting Volunteer Teachers (25 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 14, The Care and Feeding of Volunteers: Part One
- Handout 15, Tips for Successful Recruiting
- Handout 16, Recruitment Skits
- Newsprint and markers

### **Preparation**

- Ask two participants to read the Dr. Seuss–style skit in Handout 16 aloud. (It’s best if they can practice before the session.)

### **Description**

(5 minutes) Invite the volunteers to read the Dr. Seuss–style recruitment skit in Handout 16. Then ask if anyone has a particularly successful recruitment story they would like to share. (If no one has one, share your own.)

(20 minutes) Although we have reframed teaching in a Unitarian Universalist religious education program as a positive opportunity, there are still plenty of obstacles to recruitment. Ask participants to name some of them, and write them down on newsprint. You don’t need an exhaustive list. Ask participants to look at the list and suggest ways to overcome the obstacles. They might want to refer to Handouts 14 and 15. Other tips:

- Find others to help with the task. Suggestions for recruits might come from the minister, the Religious Education Committee, the Membership Committee, or other teachers (who might want to teach with a friend or someone they would like to know better).
- Don’t ask someone outright to teach; ask them to *consider* teaching. This adds a bit of a buffer, because the recruit is not asked to decide immediately, only to consider the idea.

- Honor longtime teachers by inscribing their names on a plaque in a prominent place. Make a big deal about these stars and let it be known that when others have taught for enough years (maybe five or six), they too can have their names inscribed.
- Think about diversity! Look beyond parents to young adults, elders, and people without kids. And it's important to have diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and so on among teachers, to model inclusion.

Also have participants discuss whether or not parents should be expected to teach. Some congregations succeed in asking this of all parents, but we know that some parents have strengths that would better serve other aspects of the religious education program or the wider congregation. Participants may also wish to discuss how soon newcomers, whether they are parents or not, should be asked to teach.

Remind participants that the handouts for this session can be inspirational. They might want to call some of them to the attention of their Religious Education Committee (and maybe potential teachers), so that they can help in reframing volunteer teaching for the rest of the congregation.

## **Safe Congregations (15 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 17, Safety, Health, and Ethics in Congregations
- Handout 18, Code of Ethics Sample
- Handout 19, Sample Health and Safety Guidelines
- Slide 23

### **Description**

It is not the role of the volunteer teacher to establish policies for safety in the congregation, but it is vitally important that teachers be made aware of all such policies and that they carry them out and participate in ongoing conversations about their effectiveness. Safe congregation policies will require volunteer teachers to:

- Provide personal information as requested when they are recruited

- Abide by the requirement that at least two adults be present in the classroom at all times (which protects the teacher as well as the students)
- Report any incidents that make them concerned about safety

Show Slide 23 and ask participants:

*What are your thoughts about these? And what other things can you suggest?*

After general discussion, refer participants to Handouts 17-19, which address safety considerations.

## **Reflection (5 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 10, Reflection Questions
- Slide 24

### **Description**

Show Slide 24. Refer participants to the reflection questions for this session and maintain silence for five minutes for reflective journaling.

## **Closing (5 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED battery-operated candle
- Chime
- “Gardeners of the Spirit,” Reading 691 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

### **Preparation**

- Optional: Ask a participant to be the reader.

### **Description**

After some reflective silence, sound the chime. Ask participants to share their reflections.

Review any questions that have been posted in the Parking Lot and respond as appropriate. Ask if there are any closing thoughts about this session. Suggest that participants make notes about the session to prepare to complete the online evaluation.

Have the reading and extinguish the chalice.

Ask participants to review Handouts 20-29 before the next session.

# SESSION 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers

## Session-at-a-Glance

Opening	10 minutes
Child and Youth Development	25 minutes
Different Ways of Knowing	25 minutes
Learners and Designated Special Needs	30 minutes
Paradoxes of Space	30 minutes
Keeping the Classroom Covenant	50 minutes
Reflection	5 minutes
Closing	5 minutes

**Total Time: 3 hours**

## Goals

This session will:

- Highlight the development of children and youth
- Review the theory of multiple intelligences
- Consider special needs of learners
- Explore paradoxes in teaching and learning space
- Consider ways to keep a classroom covenant

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Demonstrate understanding of child and youth development by creating representations of different ages

- Be inspired to create welcoming spaces for teaching and learning
- Discuss ways to redirect behavior so that the religious experience is safe and welcoming for everyone

## Opening (10 minutes)

### Materials

- Slide 25 or newsprint with “Spirit of Life,” Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Chime

### Description

Ring the chime to call people together. Show Slide 25 and sing “Spirit of Life.” Invite participants to start this session by picturing children and youth in their congregations. You might say:

*Take just a moment and picture a scene of your congregation—a happy scene or a typical scene.*

- *Where are the children?*
- *What are they doing?*
- *Where are you in relation to that scene?*
- *And how do you feel?*

## Child and Youth Development (25 minutes)

### Materials

- Handout 20, Faith Development Outline
- Handout 21, Child Development
- Handout 22, Adolescent Development
- Newsprint and markers
- Additional supplies, such as colored paper, glue, scissors, etc.

### Preparation

- The handouts refer to six stages of development, but you want to have four groups. Depending on the interests of the participants, decide how to divide them up. For instance, your four groups might

focus on ages 3-7, 8-11, 12-15, and 16-18; or on ages 3-5, 6-9, 10-13, and 14-18.

### **Description**

(10 minutes) Start by noting that in this section we will focus on children and youth; let participants know that there is an entire 15-hour Adult Faith Development module. Divide participants into groups to consider four different age ranges. Encourage them to use the handouts on child and youth development and faith development as they discuss what the children or youth in their chosen age range are like: physically, cognitively, socially, morally, and spiritually. They are then to make a representation of a child or youth that illustrates their findings and be ready to share this representation in a three-minute presentation.

(15 minutes) Have each group present its representation, following each presentation with brief comments from the rest of the participants.

Tell participants that the outline chart is really just an overview of development at different stages. Encourage participants to obtain a copy of *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*, by Tracey Hurd. This book has summaries of development and ways to support children and youth at the close of each chapter. These summaries of each age group can also be found in Tapestry of Faith programs online.

## **Different Ways of Knowing (25 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 23, Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences
- Index cards
- Easel and paper
- Color markers for drawing
- Tape

### **Preparation**

- Select a familiar rhythmic song for the rhythm band activity, such as “Jingle Bells.”



- Prepare a slide or newsprint with the lyrics of the song you have chosen.
- Review your own knowledge of multiple intelligences.

### **Description**

(5 minutes) Say something like:

*Most of us have different ways of learning different things. Skills such as swimming and riding a bike are learned primarily by doing, although observation and instruction play a part. Learning specific information or mastering a body of knowledge may involve reading, searching the Internet, hearing lectures, discussing with others, and a variety of other methods. Life learnings—how to deal with success and failure, loss and grief, for example—are more complex. In all of these areas, individuals also have their own ways of knowing. Howard Gardner has identified multiple forms of intelligence. How we think people learn will influence our teaching; awareness of multiple intelligences prompts us to offer a variety of learning experiences in our programming. Let's look at Handout 23.*

(7 minutes) Say something like:

*We would like you to organize yourselves into a rhythm band, with some members seated and some standing. You will need to have all members of each section near each other. First, we need some key shakers—a few people have keys? Okay, now we need some folks playing rhythm sticks—you can use pens or pencils for that. And we need hand clappers, knee slappers, toe tappers, and tummy patters. Some of you will need to do more than one thing in order to have all of these in the group.*

Let the group organize itself, with leaders responding to questions about what instruments are needed but not making suggestions or giving directions.

(5 minutes) Tell participants the name of the song you've selected, direct their attention to the slide or newsprint with its lyrics, and ask them to sing it through twice, playing their instruments all the while.

(5 minutes) After the singing, say something like:

*Now quickly draw a stick figure of yourself with your instrument and tape it onto the newsprint in the same position you held in the orchestra.*

(3 minutes) Ask:

*What intelligences did you see in action in this?*

They will no doubt have observed bodily-kinesthetic and musical intelligence, and perhaps interpersonal (in organizing themselves), spatial (in organizing themselves and in placing the cards on the poster), and linguistic (in reading the lyrics). Ask if they can think of ways other intelligences could have been included.

Conclude with this quote from Howard Gardner:

*As much as possible, we should teach individuals in ways that they can learn. And we should assess them in a way that allows them to show what they have understood and to apply their knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.*

Tell the participants that this quote and much more information about multiple intelligences can be found on the Multiple Intelligence OASIS website (OASIS = **O**fficial **A**uthoritative **S**ite of Multiple **I**ntelligences), which is listed in Handout 23.

## **Learners and Designated Special Needs (30 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 24, Seven Ways Congregations Can Embrace People with Disabilities
- Handout 25, Sample Referral Form for Individuals with Special Needs
- Handout 26, The Children of Jowonio
- Index cards
- Pens or pencils

### **Description**

(5 minutes) Say something like:

*Often religious educators are the people most directly involved in welcoming families who have members with special needs. Sally Patton's book Welcoming Children with Special Needs has good ideas for proactively setting up a congregational support committee to set in place mechanisms to ensure that the congregation is able to welcome families and children well. The book is available free [on the Unitarian Universalist Association's website](#). We are going to do an exercise by Sally Patton called "God Makes No Mistakes: Creating Beloved Community for All Our Children." It will help us to emphasize with the way children (and adults!) with (or without!) special needs might feel about themselves and how they are treated.*

(10 minutes) Distribute index cards (and writing utensils, if needed) to all participants. Ask participants to write the heading "deficits" on one side of the card, and under it list one or two things they do not like about themselves. Then instruct participants to write the heading "gifts" on the other side of the card, and under it list three or more things they like about themselves.

(5 minutes) When all are ready, say something like:

*Hold the card against your chest with the deficit side facing out. Close your eyes and take a few minutes to imagine that everyone you meet sees only this side of you. They only talk to you from this perspective. What would the conversations be like? How would you feel? When you want to talk about something you feel good about, the person only responds to what they see on the front of your card...they only see the deficits, and they probably try to fix you. How do you think you would react and treat them? Now release these thoughts to the universe...*

(5 minutes) After a moment, say:

*Now hold the other side of the card, the gift side, facing out. Take a few minutes to imagine that the people you meet can only see this side of you. They only talk to you from this perspective. What would the conversations be like? How would you feel? They see all your strengths and gifts and think you can take care of yourself. They do*

*not try to fix anything. How do you think you would react and treat them?*

(5 minutes) After a moment, ask for responses to the exercise. How did it make people feel? Any insights or “aha” moments? Read these words from Sally Patton:

*Part of a spiritual journey is to find the people and places that allow us to spread our wings and be ourselves. How can you make your congregation such a place?*

Close by pointing out Handouts 24-26. If time allows, have participants read Handout 26, The Children of Jowonio responsively.

## **Paradoxes of Space (30 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 27, Paradoxes of Space
- Slides 26-27
- Blank paper for each participant, plus a few extra sheets
- Pencils, pens, markers

### **Preparation**

- Ask for six volunteers to read the six paradoxes.

### **Description**

(5 minutes) Show Slide 26 and invite participants to reflect briefly about the role of space in teaching and learning in faith. What, beyond safety, is important in an environment? What makes a teaching and learning environment in a faith development setting welcoming? Encourage a few participants to briefly share their ideas.

(10 minutes) Hand out sheets of paper and pencils, pens, or markers. Invite participants to quickly—in not more than five minutes—sketch the floor plan of a welcoming, safe environment conducive to faith development. After five minutes, ask what they included in their drawings, what they saw as essential to the space. Say something like:

*It is important to prepare the environment. Perhaps your Sunday morning practice includes going around the space and checking that things have been set up properly; perhaps teachers or someone else does this... It is especially important when space is shared (as with a preschool) that things be ready for Sunday morning (or Saturday evening) classes. Having an appropriate, intentionally prepared classroom environment not only enhances teaching pleasure and interest in learning, it can also help diminish behavioral issues.*

(15 minutes) Say something like:

*When Palmer talks about “space” in education, he is talking about something more than a floor plan; while working on our floor plans, we have considered some of these aspects as well.*

Read this quote from *The Courage to Teach*:

*I mean a complex of factors: the physical arrangement and feeling of the room, the conceptual framework that I build around the topic my students and I are exploring, the emotional ethos I hope to facilitate, and the ground rules that will guide our inquiry.*

In addition to physical space, Palmer talks about emotional space. Show Slide 27 and ask the six volunteers to each read aloud one of the paradoxes shown on the slide. After they have finished, pause for a moment’s reflection. Then ask participants to take out Handout 27, The Paradoxes of Space. Invite reflection on the paradoxes. You might conclude this time by asking:

*Do you see any of these aspects in this module? What is missing?*

## **Keeping the Classroom Covenant (50 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 28, Creating an Environment of Acceptance and Mutuality
- Handout 29, Discipline in Sunday School
- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pens

## Preparation

- Ask a participant to be the scribe.

## Description

(10 minutes) Mention that the material in Handout 28 and Handout 29 is related to the coming discussion. Say something like:

*At the beginning of each religious education year, children make covenants with their teachers and peers. Ideally, when a child's behavior did not match the promises of the covenant, the teacher could gently point to the covenant poster on the bulletin board and all would be well. But, of course, our world is much more complex than that!*

Ask participants to name some circumstances that would lead children (or youth) to behave outside the guidelines of the covenant. Possibilities include:

- The child doesn't feel well.
- The child had to sit quietly for the first fifteen minutes of the Sunday worship and now, in the classroom, needs to be active.
- The child fought with a sibling in the car that morning.
- Only one parent is part of the congregation, and the child would rather be home with the other parent.
- The child is bored.
- The child has attended irregularly and has not formed friendships in the group.
- The child arrived in November and has no idea what the covenant is.

(15 minutes) When you have eight or more ideas listed, divide participants into groups of about four and ask them to choose a circumstance that interests them. Each group should flesh out the hypothetical situation, describing the child or youth, the relevant part of the covenant, and how the covenant was broken. For example, they might say, "This is about a nine-year-old girl. She and her older sister had a fight in the car on the way to church and her older sister belittled her. She arrived in the classroom looking sullen and was not paying much attention to what was happening. Halfway through the morning she made a caustic comment to

the new girl in the group. The class covenant says we respect the members of our class.” The group should decide:

- What should be the immediate response of the teacher?
- What should happen if the behavior continues?
- What follow-up, if any, should occur after the class ends?
- What can the teacher do to prevent this kind of thing happening again, with this child or another one?

Give the groups about twelve minutes to discuss their situation, with one person taking notes, and have them create a presentation. Encourage role-playing and other creative ways of presenting.

(15 minutes) Have the groups present their situation and some solutions. Then let the whole group comment on the solutions and add other ideas.

(5 minutes) Conclude with a general discussion of ways to keep things on track in the classroom and ask one or two volunteers to take notes on newsprint. Suggestions might include:

- Teachers need to be prepared so things move along.
- Every child should be greeted by name.
- Teachers should make a point of knowing the children and their interests.
- Curricula should honor multiple intelligences.
- Teachers should never get in a power struggle with a child.

Ask for a volunteer to take a picture of the newsprint and share it with the group.

(5 minutes) Review any questions that have been posted in the Parking Lot and respond as appropriate. Ask if there are any closing thoughts about this session. Suggest that participants make notes about the session to prepare to complete the online evaluation.

## **Reflection (5 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 10, Reflection Questions

- Slide 28
- Chime

**Description**

Show Slide 28. Participants have five minutes to consider the questions and do some reflective writing. Start and end the quiet time with a chime.

**Closing (5 minutes)****Materials**

- Chime

**Description**

Invite participants to share a phrase or sentence they have just written in reflection. Alternatively, if they do not want to share from their journal, invite them to share, in just a phrase, a learning they have gained in this session. Leaders should also share something they have learned. When everyone has had a turn, thank the participants for their participation and ring the chime.

Remind participants to review Handouts 30-42 before the next session.



# **SESSION 4: Toolkits for Teachers – Empowerment for Learning and Seeking**

## **Session-at-a-Glance**

<b>Opening</b>	5 minutes
<b>Nuts and Bolts</b>	25 minutes
<b>Dealing with the Unexpected</b>	20 minutes
<b>Planning a Teacher Development Event</b>	120 minutes
<b>Reflection</b>	5 minutes
<b>Closing</b>	5 minutes

**Total Time: 3 hours**

## **Goals**

This session will:

- Provide practical suggestions to help programming go smoothly
- Consider how teachers may deal with the unexpected
- Facilitate group planning for a teacher development event

## **Learning Objectives**

Participants will:

- Understand the importance of providing teachers with needed information
- Discuss ways religious educators and teachers may deal with unexpected issues and events
- Work with others to plan a teacher development event and a presentation for the last session

## **Opening (5 minutes)**

## Materials

- Slide 29 or newsprint with “Meditation on Breathing,” Hymn 1009 in *Singing the Journey*
- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED battery-operated candle
- Chalice lighting words
- Centering table with cloth
- Chime
- Reading 439 by Sophia Lyon Fahs in *Singing the Living Tradition*

## Preparation

- Prepare newsprint or a slide with the chalice lighting words:  
*We light this chalice for the joy to be found in working together to plan and create programs and events.*
- Optional: Invite one or two participants to lead the singing.

## Description

Call participants together with the chime, show Slide 29, and sing “Meditation on Breathing.” Light a chalice with the words provided. Invite participants to briefly check in. Close with Reading 439.

## Nuts and Bolts (25 minutes)

### Materials

- Handout 30, Support Checklist
- Handout 31, The Care and Feeding of Volunteers: Part Two
- Handout 32, Sample Religious Education Teacher Contract
- Handout 33, Team Teaching
- Handout 34, A Fictional (But Not Unrealistic) Teaching Team Rotation
- Handout 35, Leader Reflection and Planning
- Handout 36, Sample Teacher Check-in Form
- Handout 37, How to Be Sure the Teacher Development Workshop Goes Home with Your Teachers
- Handout 38, Tapestry of Faith – Spiritual Preparation
- Handout 39, Creating Covenants

- Handout 40, Children's Covenant
- Handout 41, Teacher Dedication
- Handout 42, Group Project and Presentation
- Newsprint and markers

### **Preparation**

- Ask for a volunteer to be the scribe.

### **Description**

(20 minutes) Say something like:

*Lots of nuts and bolts are involved in keeping your program running smoothly. The policies, procedures, and processes may be very familiar to the religious educator, the committee, and experienced teachers but be mystifying to new teachers or those who have been away for a while. What are the things teachers need to know? For example, what time classes begin and end, and where the supplies are. Let's do some brainstorming on what teachers need to know, and then we'll talk about how we communicate this information to them. Will someone record as we brainstorm?*

Be sure to include among ways to communicate such tools as a teacher notebook or procedures manual (electronic or printed), and regular (e.g., weekly) notes, etc. Ask the person who recorded ideas to take a picture of the newsprint and share it with participants.

(5 minutes) Refer participants to Handouts 30-41 and say something like:

*We don't have the time in a 15-hour module to go into detail about every topic, so keep these resources handy when you are back in your congregation, and better yet, share them with the RE Committee. You might discuss some in a committee meeting. If you do something that worked particularly well, be sure to share it with colleagues on the Reach email list.*

The Reach email list is for discussion and sharing of UU religious education. A link to subscribe to it is included in Handout 43 in Session 5.

## **Dealing with the Unexpected (20 minutes)**

## **Description**

Say something like:

*No matter how much teachers prepare, it's not uncommon for things to go off track at some point in the year. For example:*

- *A co-teacher doesn't show up.*
- *A child arrives in tears and says her family is moving or her parents are getting a divorce.*
- *A twelve-year-old boy says he is being bullied by public school classmates who tell him he is going to hell because his congregation doesn't preach the saving message of Jesus Christ.*
- *Bad weather means there are two rather than twelve children in a group that day.*

Ask participants to name other difficult situations teachers in their programs have encountered. What were the teachers able to do (or what could they have done) to make the class as successful as possible? What help (if any) could you have given them right then, that day, in that circumstance?

## **Planning a Teacher Development Event (120 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 42, Group Project and Presentation
- Slides 30-31
- Newsprint, paper, colored paper
- Scissors, glue
- Other craft materials as needed

### **Preparation**

- Know what break-out spaces are available for groups.
- Decide how you will place participants in groups (or if they will self-select). You may want to group together those from similar-size programs, or ensure that each group has a mix of experience levels or of introverts and extroverts.

## **Description**

(10 minutes) Ask participants to look at Handout 42 and show Slides 30-31. Describe the project, as outlined on the handout and slides, and answer any questions participants may have about it. Divide participants into four groups.

(105 minutes) Have the groups work on the group project, taking breaks as needed. Leaders should check in with each group occasionally and provide any needed assistance. As planning time ends, ask the groups to regather in the larger group. Remind participants of the start time of the last session. If participants want to use the projector for their projects, give appropriate instructions so that no time is lost in set-up in Session 5.

(5 minutes) Review any questions that have been posted in the Parking Lot and respond as appropriate. Ask if there are any closing thoughts about this session. Suggest that participants make notes about the session to prepare to complete the online evaluation.

## **Reflection (5 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 10, Reflection Questions
- Slide 32
- Chime
- Materials for journaling

### **Description**

Show Slide 32. Sound the chime and maintain silence while participants read the questions and write in their journals.

## **Closing (5 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Slide 33 or newsprint with “Meditation on Breathing,” Reading 1009 in *Singing the Journey*
- Chime
- “Go Your Ways,” Reading 687 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

**Preparation**

- Optional: Ask one or two people to lead the singing.

**Description**

Sound the chime and start with a moment of silence. Then do the reading, show Slide 33 and sing the song, and extinguish the chalice in the order that seems most appropriate to you.

Remind participants of the start time of Session 5 and any instructions regarding equipment.

# SESSION 5: Group Presentations and Closing Worship

## Session-at-a-Glance

Final Group Preparation	10 minutes
Opening	5 minutes
Group Presentations and Feedback	140 minutes
Loose Ends	15 minutes
Reflection	10 minutes
Closing Worship	30 minutes

**Total Time: 3 1/2 hours**

## Goals

This session will:

- Provide ideas for teacher development events
- Tie up loose ends
- Celebrate the time spent together and the good work done

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Present their teacher development events
- Reflect on what they have explored during this module
- Participate in a worship service that highlights concepts from of this module

## Final Group Preparation (10 minutes)

### Preparation

- Be ready to help participants find the materials and prepare the set-up they need.

### **Description**

Direct participants to use this time to rehearse their presentations, gather the supplies they will need, etc.

## **Opening (5 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Slides 34-35 or newsprint with “Morning Has Come,” Hymn 1000 in *Singing the Journey*
- Chime

### **Preparation**

- Optional: Ask someone to lead the song.

### **Description**

Call the group together with the chime. Show Slides 34-35. If you have some participants who particularly enjoy singing, have them lead the song. Then invite each participant to complete the sentence “This morning/right now I feel...”

## **Group Presentations and Response (140 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Slide 36

### **Preparation**

- Determine the order in which groups will present.

### **Description**

(120 minutes) Each group has 25 minutes to present their event, followed by five minutes for feedback. Explain that feedback time will begin with the presenting team speaking about what went well and what they would do differently. Then other participants will offer what they liked and what they would like to have seen more of. End with applause for each team.



(20 minutes) Show Slide 36. Engage all of the participants in a collective reflection, using the following prompts as needed:

- What are the tools teachers need?
- How can we frame teaching as spiritual development?
- What were some of the best elements across presentations?

Ask for a volunteer from each group to email the presentation to everyone.

## **Loose Ends (15 minutes)**

### **Materials**

- Handout 43, Selected Online Resources
- Any remaining Parking Lot items

### **Preparation**

- Review any Parking Lot questions or concerns to determine how best to respond to them.

### **Description**

This is the time to remind participants that they must turn in their evaluations to receive credit for this module. Assure them that you welcome frank feedback and that their responses go directly to the Renaissance Office and are only shared with module leaders in the aggregate. This is also the time to thank your local host and anyone else who has been helpful in preparing for the module or caring for the participants' needs.

Now consider whatever questions are left in the Parking Lot. If there are none, refer to the goals of the module, listed on Handout 4, and ask participants if there are any areas where they still have questions. Or you, as the leader, might feel that some area was not covered as thoroughly as you would have wished; you can raise questions. Ideally, there will be questions from the group as well as from the leaders.

Remind participants that Handout 43 and the Appendices contain additional resources.

## Reflection (10 minutes)

### Materials

- Handout 10, Reflection Questions
- Slide 37
- Chime

### Description

Show Slide 37. Explain that this last reflection time is longer than those in previous sessions so that participants can look back at the entire module (and to give leaders time to set up for the closing worship). Start and end the reflection time with a chime.

## Closing Worship (30 minutes)

### Materials

- Slide 38 or newsprint with the blessing ritual words
- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED battery-operated candle
- Cloth for the centering table
- Chime
- “Gift boxes” participants made in Session 1
- Additional gift boxes, if needed, so that they outnumber the participants and leaders
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, at least one for every two participants

### Preparation

- Set up the chalice on the cloth, surrounded by the gift boxes.
- Decide on closing words (Reading 693 in *Singing the Living Tradition* or other words of your choosing).
- Make sure there is a fairly strong singer to lead the opening song (Hymn 404, “What Gift Can We Bring?”). If an instrumentalist can accompany the song, even better.
- Ask for a volunteer to light the chalice.

- Optional: Prepare newsprint if not using the slide with the blessing words by Parker Palmer.
- Optional: Ask someone to read the chalice lighting words.

### **Description**

If the song “What Gift Can We Bring” is unfamiliar to most participants, and particularly if no one can play an accompanying instrument, teach the song before formally beginning the worship service.

Then, with the chime, invite participants into sacred space.

As the chalice is lit, a leader or participant reads:

What Do Children Need on Sunday Morning?

By the Reverend Lowell Brook

*They need to light a candle, and have a quiet moment to enjoy its mystery.*

*They need to sing a song, to hear their own voice and other voices joined together,*

*And to feel the feelings that are stirred by music.*

*They need to hear a story and have a chance to share their own, remembering that we are each different and also very alike.*

*They need to create something, realizing that by expressing themselves, whether using words or materials, they help to bind the different parts of ourselves and life together.*

*That’s what religion is.*

*They need to be with an adult who is interested in the world and who feels the privilege and responsibility of their trust—one who is glad to be with them, and regards them positively.*

*Into this safe and encouraging context, we may weave the content of our religious traditions.*

*The history and common threads of our identity are important, to be sure, but without this essential loving embrace the education will not be religious.*

Sing Hymn 404, “What Gift Can We Bring?”

Invite each participant to approach the chalice table and choose one of the gift boxes that were made in Session 1, and then to share why they chose that particular gift, what they are taking home, and what they learned. Leaders should go last.

Show Slide 38 (or post the blessing words on newsprint). Ask participants to rise in body or spirit and form a semicircle, so that everyone can see the words of the blessing. One leader should be at each end of the semicircle. A leader begins this ritual by taking the hands of the participant next to them and saying these blessing words from Parker Palmer:

*(Name), may your teaching project the condition of your soul onto your students and bring a blessing to your ways of being together on your spiritual and religious life journey.*

That participant then turns to the person next in line, takes their hands, and blesses them with these words. The blessing is passed down the line in this way, until the leader at the other end of the semicircle takes the hands of the first leader and blesses them to conclude the ritual.

Take a moment to recognize (with applause) any participants who have completed their fifth Renaissance module.

Close with Reading 693 in *Singing the Living Tradition* or another selection of your choosing, and by singing “From You I Receive,” Hymn 402 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.