

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS
A Tapestry of Faith Program for Children
Grades 4-5



BY GABRIELLE FARREL, NATALIE FENIMORE, AND JENICE VIEW
SUSAN LAWRENCE, MANAGING EDITOR/DEVELOPMENTAL EDITOR
AISHA HAUSER, DEVELOPMENTAL EDITOR

© Copyright 2009 Unitarian Universalist Association.

This program and additional resources are available on the UUA.org web site at
www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS	3
THE PROGRAM.....	4
SESSION 1: LOOKING IN/LOOKING OUT	15
SESSION 2: ME IN FAITH COMMUNITY, FAITH COMMUNITY IN ME.....	28
SESSION 3: WE NEED NOT THINK ALIKE TO LOVE ALIKE	45
SESSION 4: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF FORGIVENESS	61
SESSION 5: THE BLESSING OF IMPERFECTION	73
SESSION 6: ALL AGES OFFER GIFTS.....	88
SESSION 7: LET'S TALK	105
SESSION 8: EYES ON THE PRIZE.....	122
SESSION 9: LEAN ON ME.....	135
SESSION 10: SERVICE IS THE RENT WE PAY FOR LIVING.....	144
SESSION 11: PRIVILEGE IS A BLESSING WE GIVE AWAY TO BE IN COMMUNITY	156
SESSION 12: MAKING VISIBLE THE INVISIBLE	166
SESSION 13: IMAGES OF INJUSTICE	179
SESSION 14: ALL WORK HAS HONOR	194
SESSION 15: PRAYER IS A PLACE TO GROW A SOUL	212
SESSION 16: CHOOSE TO BE UU	241

Note: If you add or delete text in this program, you may change the accuracy of the Table of Contents. The Table of Contents is an auto-generated list; if you change content and want an accurate representation of the page numbers listed in the TOC, click the table and click "Update Field." Then, click "Update page numbers only." Click OK.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Gabrielle Farrell (co-author *We Give Thanks* and *Windows and Mirrors*) is Director of Religious Education at All Souls Church, Unitarian, in Washington, DC. She has a B.S. in Special Education and a B.A. in Elementary Education.

Natalie Fenimore (co-author *Windows and Mirrors*), a master's level credentialed religious educator, is a M.Div. student at Wesley Theological Seminary. She serves as Director of Religious Exploration at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, Oakton, Virginia.

Dr. Jenice View (co-author *Windows and Mirrors*) is a lifelong member of All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, DC. She has a Ph.D from The Union Institute and is an assistant professor in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University.

Tapestry of Faith Core Team

The following UUA staff brought Tapestry to fruition:

Judith A. Frediani, Curriculum Director, Tapestry Project Director

Adrianne Ross, Project Manager

Susan Dana Lawrence, Managing Editor

Jessica York, Youth Programs Director

Gail Forsyth-Vail, Adult Programs Director

Pat Kahn, Children and Family Programs Director

Alicia LeBlanc, Administrative and Editorial Assistant

We are grateful to these former UUA staff members who contributed to the conceptualization and launch of Tapestry of Faith:

Tracy L. Hurd

Sarah Gibb Millspaugh

Aisha Hauser

Pat Hoerltoerfer

Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley

THE PROGRAM

*Mirrors in which they can see themselves,
windows in which they can see the world.*

— Lucille Clifton, African American poet, writer
and educator

Unitarian Universalism views our members' multiple perspectives as a blessing. In spirit, we embrace the contribution of diversity to our collective ability to pursue truth, fairness, justice and love. In practice, however, we often fail to embrace all the experiences and viewpoints in our communities as respectfully or as wholly as we might. Sometimes, we fail to even see differences among us. We seem most prone to gloss over differences when to acknowledge them requires acute self-examination and may lead to pain, shame, discomfort or guilt.

Windows and Mirrors nurtures children's ability to identify their own experiences and perspectives and to seek out, care about and respect those of others. The sessions unpack topics that lend themselves to diverse experiences and perspectives—for example, faith heritage, public service, anti-racism and prayer. The program teaches that there are always multiple viewpoints and everyone's viewpoint matters.

The metaphor of windows and mirrors represents the dynamic relationship among our awareness of self, our perceptions of others, and others' perceptions of us. Beginning in Session 2, an ongoing art activity gives children a way to respond to the metaphor creatively and concretely. Participants do guided work on individual Window/Mirror Panels in each session to explore looking inward and looking outward in terms of the session's topic. As a mirror, the panel reflects the individual child. As a window, it represents their view and connections beyond themselves to the congregation, other communities to which they belong and the world.

An important element of this program is to display participants' Window/Mirror Panels collectively. The group may want to discuss whether, and if so how, they want the congregation to view the panels. The exhibit serves the congregation as a window into each and all of the children's experiences and perspectives. It is also a testament to their learning. Although it is important that each participant complete a panel as an integral part of the program, it is equally important not to lose sight of the journey of each participant. The self-reflection and discussions are the heart of this program. The panels

are the expression of each participant's self-discovery process.

Your plan for creating and exhibiting the Window/Mirror Panels will determine the arts and crafts materials you purchase for this entire program. See Before You Start in this Introduction for planning guidance.

Be mindful of visually impaired participants. While the Windows and Mirrors program is based on a visual metaphor, activities can generally be adapted to incorporate tactile and other senses. Using alternate ways of "looking" will help the whole group understand the metaphor more deeply.

Unitarian Universalism is a faith we live in community, acknowledging and acting on our responsibility toward one another. We encourage one another's search for truth and meaning. We affirm the interdependent web of which we are all a part. In Windows and Mirrors, children will learn that when we come together as Unitarian Universalists, we nurture our individual spirits and work to help heal the world; the two are inextricable.

GOALS

This program will:

- Present Unitarian Universalism as a faith that is lived out through identifying and acting on responsibility toward one another
- Introduce the reality and the impact of multiple perspectives and multiple experiences as we live in this world
- Use the metaphor of a window and a mirror to help children better understand themselves in relation to others
- Present the windows and mirrors metaphor as an effective tool for understanding and living our Unitarian Universalist Principles
- Guide children to identify and respect their own values, views and needs as well as those of others in a variety of contexts; teach that to do so is a faith practice
- Provide children with practice in observation, interpretation and critical thinking
- Develop children's empathy, open-mindedness and respect for differences, seen and unseen.

LEADERS

It is suggested that adult leaders not be new to the congregation or at least to Unitarian Universalism.

Experience or interest in justice issues will be helpful. The ideal teaching team of two adult co-leaders for each session will have some diversity, which might be in gender, age, race or ethnicity, socio-economic class, theological beliefs and/or learning styles. If possible, leadership could include adults comfortable with leading songs or who can contribute musical accompaniment. Additional adult or youth volunteers will be needed to help facilitate small groups in some sessions.

PARTICIPANTS

This program is written for fourth- and fifth-grade children. You may find it useful to think about the developmental norms for this age group. Not all children arrive at each developmental stage at the same time, but knowing what to expect overall can be quite helpful, especially to first-time leaders.

In her book, *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* (Boston : Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005), Tracey L. Hurd lists characteristics of the older school-age child:

- Uses gross and fine motor skills, which are almost fully developed
- Enters puberty toward the end of school-age years (particularly girls)
- Is influenced by media images
- Engages in logical thinking
- Practices cognitive skills of acquiring, storing, and retrieving information
- Develops specific learning styles (auditory, visual, sensory, and/or kinesthetic)
- Exhibits domain-specific intelligence (verbal/linguistic, musical/rhythmic, local/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, or naturalist)
- Engages in gender-specific play.

Faith Development Skills

- Uses student identity and knowledge as sources of self-esteem
- Engages peers and learns through mutual friendship
- Comprehends the perspective of others
- Works on developing racial, ethnic and gender identities and seeks peers' affirmation of these identities

- Shows interest in concrete aspects of faith and religion
- "Does" religion or spirituality by participating in traditions
- Explores religious or spiritual ideas as a way of deepening faith.

Moral Development

- Interested in moral issues/ what is fair and right
- Practices figuring out what is fair when developing rules
- Moral decision making is complex
- Practices reconciling moral ideals with pragmatic realities
- Demonstrates interest in broader moral issues
- Reconciles the violence of the world with personal own moral code (e.g., violent video games)
- Interest in knowing and living out moral ideas
- Uses the Golden Rule (treat others as you would like to be treated)
- Wrestles with moral dilemmas in relationships
- Demonstrates awareness of societal moral issues and interest in helping to solve community problems
- Ponders increasingly complex moral and spiritual questions.

INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

A group can include children with a range of physical and cognitive abilities and learning styles, food allergies, and other sensitivities or limitations. Adapt activities or use alternate activities to ensure that every session is inclusive of all participants.

Be especially mindful of visually impaired participants in this program. Windows and Mirrors uses visual metaphors. Yet, you are often guided, and should always remember, to think and speak broadly about looking, seeing and reflecting.

Activities can generally be adapted to incorporate tactile and other sensory ways of "looking." Find specific adaptations in many activities' Including All Participants sections.

Help visually impaired participants engage with the ongoing Window/Mirror Panel project by providing a variety of tactile materials for everyone's use. For example, include cotton balls, wooden craft sticks, pipe

cleaners and craft glue to the baskets of Window/Mirror Panel arts and crafts materials. Obtain foam pre-cut in shapes and sheets of stickers with both the image and shape of common objects. Make sure you plan a tactile component for your collective Window/Mirror Panel exhibit.

FAMILIES

The loving family unit, of whatever configuration, is the primary source of spiritual nurture and religious education in a child's life. The religious education children experience in Windows and Mirrors will be enhanced by involvement of parents or caregivers. To help, each session includes a Taking It Home section for you to download, customize and share with families as a handout or email.

Taking It Home summarizes the session's content and provides questions and activities to stimulate family conversations and extension activities at home. With Taking It Home, a parent will have enough details to ask an engaging question, for example: "What was your Window/Mirror panel assignment today?" or, "What did you find out about Silly Putty?" or, "Do you remember the story of how Henry Hampton's television show told African American history in a new way?" In this way, parents and children may learn from each other.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

All sessions follow the same structure. Between an Opening and a Closing, activities guide participants to experience and discuss a variety of social justice issues that inform their world. Some issues discussed are privilege, racism and the value of different kinds of work.

Starting in Session 2, children work on their Window/Mirror Panel each time they meet. This work culminates in an exhibit for the congregation of all their panels together. Before you begin this program, decide what you want the final exhibit to look like, including where and how you will display the panels. Then, determine the materials you need to purchase. See Before You Start for detailed guidance.

Each session offers a Faith in Action activity. These activities are optional and the time you will need for them is not calculated into a 60-minute session. Nevertheless, Faith in Action is an important element of Tapestry of Faith curricula. You can incorporate Faith in Action into regular sessions, if you have time. You can adapt Faith in Action activities for the group to complete during additional meetings. You can open them up to multiple age groups in your religious education program, or expand them to the broader congregation. By design, Faith in Action activities often require the involvement of congregants or community members outside your group

and additional meeting times and/or places. Before you commit to a long-term Faith in Action project, make sure you obtain the support of congregational leadership and the children's families.

Every session has at least one alternate activity. You may add these to a session, or substitute one for a core activity if the alternate better fits your group or the time available. Feel free to use alternate activities outside of the Windows and Mirrors program for gatherings such as family retreats, wide agespan religious education meetings or intergenerational dinners.

Quote

A quote introduces each session. You may read a quote aloud to your group as an entry point to the session. However, the quotes are primarily for leaders. Co-leaders may like to discuss a quote while preparing for a session. Exploring a quote together can help you each feel grounded in the ideas and activities you will present and can help co-leaders get "on the same page." Quotes are included in the Taking It Home section for families to consider.

Introduction

The session Introduction orients you to the session topic. It may include a Mirror question and a Window question to help you focus on developing each child's self-awareness and their awareness of others who are unlike them in terms of the session's particular topic.

The Introduction may describe ways to use particular activities to teach the concepts, highlight alternate activities or suggest an alternate structure for the session. The Introduction will mention whether a session requires visitors, special materials or access to a meeting space you do not normally use. You may also find inclusion adaptations and guidance for handling particular directions the session may take.

Goals

The Goals section provides general outcomes for the session. Reviewing the goals will help you connect the session's content and methodologies with the four strands of the Tapestry of Faith religious education programs: ethical development, spiritual development, Unitarian Universalist identity development and faith development.

Learning Objectives

Each session includes learning objectives—the intended outcomes for participants in the core session activities. As you plan a session, apply your knowledge of the particular group of children, the time and space you have available and your own strengths and interests as a leader to determine the most important and achievable

learning objectives for the session, and choose the activities that will serve them best.

Session-at-a-Glance

The Session-at-a-Glance table lists the session activities in a suggested order for a 60-minute session and provides an estimated time for completing each activity. The table includes all the core activities from the Opening through the Closing. The table also shows the Faith in Action activity for the session. Note that you will need additional time beyond the core, 60-minute session, to include a Faith in Action activity. The Session-at-a-Glance table also presents alternate activities with their estimated times. Alternate activities can be substituted for core activities or added to a core session if you have time.

Spiritual Preparation

Taking five or ten minutes to center yourself within the session's purpose and content will support and free you to be present with the children and provide the best possible learning experience. Each session offers a short Spiritual Preparation exercise to focus you on the Window and Mirror questions put forth in the session and help you reflect on its connection to your own life and your Unitarian Universalist faith. Calling forth your own experiences, beliefs and spirituality will prepare you to bring the topic to the group in an authentic manner and help you experience teaching as an event in your own spiritual growth and faith development.

Session Plan

The session plan presents every element of the session in detail in the sequence established in the Session-at-a-Glance table: Opening, Activities, Faith in Action Activity, Closing, Alternate Activities. Next, the session plan presents a Taking It Home section with extension activities for families. Download Taking It Home and adapt it using your own word processing software.

Following Taking It Home, find all the stories, handouts, and leader resources you need to lead all of the session activities. Finally, Find Out More suggests additional sources to help the leader further explore the session topics. It can be useful to scan Find Out More before you lead a session.

If you are reading Windows and Mirrors online, you can move as you wish among sessions and their various elements (Opening, Activity 4, Story, etc.). Each element occupies its own web page. You can click on Print this Page at any time. However, if you click on Download Entire Program or Download Session, you will have a user-friendly document on your computer that you can customize as you wish, using your own word processing

software. Once you decide which activities you will use, format and print only the materials you need.

Opening: Each session begins with a chalice-lighting and sharing of opening words. To ensure safety, obtain an LED/battery-operated flaming chalice or use a symbolic chalice. The Opening is a time for centering, both for individuals and the group. Take the liberty you need to shape an opening ritual that suits the group, works within space limitations, and reflects the culture and practices of your congregation.

Activities: Generally, the sequence of activities is designed to activate prior knowledge, pique interest, engage children in experiential learning including hands-on interaction with the topic, and help them process and apply their observations and new knowledge. The variety of activities presented in each session addresses different learning styles you may find among participants; you will find variations within many core activities as well as guidance about which alternate activities might be useful for your group. Choose according to the learning styles, developmental readiness, energy level and other aspects of the particular children in the group.

In most sessions, children work on their Window/Mirror panels as the last activity before the Closing. Make sure you leave time to clean up and to gather for a Closing that is not rushed.

Materials for Activity: Provided for each activity, this checklist tells you the supplies you will need.

Preparation for Activity: Review the bulleted preparation "to do" list for each activity at least one week ahead of a session. The list provides all the advance work you need to do for the activity, from securing parent permissions for an off-site walk to downloading leader resources, practicing telling a story aloud and organizing art materials.

Description of Activity: This section provides detailed directions for implementing the activity and a rationale which links the activity thematically to the rest of the session and to the entire program.

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

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

Faith in Action: An important component of the program, Faith in Action activities give children practice at being Unitarian Universalists in the world. When you lead a Faith in Action project, you create an opportunity for participants to actively express faith values.

Faith in Action activities engage leaders, participants, their families, other congregants, and sometimes members of the wider community, often outside the group's regular meeting time and place. They can provide a way for children to meet, inspire and be inspired by others in the congregation and strengthen multigenerational bonds.

Let the ideas offered in each session stimulate you to devise short- or long-term Faith in Action activities to reinforce and implement session themes for the children in your group. Take advantage of the expertise and interests of members of your congregation, opportunities for service and education in your community, and the Internet. Most Faith in Action activities will require you to make arrangements in advance. As you begin planning a Faith in Action project, you may find it useful to develop a materials checklist, a list of preparation steps, and a detailed activity description, as we have done for the core and alternate activities in this curriculum.

Taking It Home: The Taking It Home section is designed to help parents extend and share in their children's religious education experiences. The Taking It Home section may include games, conversation topics, ideas for incorporating Unitarian Universalist rituals into the home, or book or online sources families can use to further explore themes or stories. Customize the Taking It Home section to reflect the actual activities you have included in each session. Print and photocopy it for children to bring home, or send it as a group email.

Alternate Activities: You can substitute an alternate activity for a core session activity or add it to the session. Some alternate activities are simpler versions of a core activity; some require more time than a core activity; some are particularly suited to be inclusive of children with developmental or ability differences. Materials, preparation, and descriptions for alternate activities appear in the same format as they do in Openings, Closings, and Faith in Action activities.

Stories, Handouts and Leader Resources: Following Taking It Home and any Alternate Activities, you will find the stories and other resources you will need to lead every element of the session:

The full text of the session's central story and any other stories you will need for session activities

Any pages you need to print out and photocopy for participants to use in the session (handouts)

Any additional materials you need to plan, prepare for and lead the session activities. These might include illustrations to offer participants to include in a session's Window/Mirror Panel, a letter to parents requesting permission or supplies or detailed instructions, such as a recipe, for a particular activity.

Find Out More includes resources to further explore session topics. Scan this section before leading a session for relevant books, DVDs and websites; audio links to music that could enhance the session; and background such as biographical information about and excerpts from sermons by Unitarians, Universalists or Unitarian Universalists mentioned in the session.

LEADER GUIDELINES

It is expected you will adapt sessions to fit your resources, time constraints and group of children. However, take care to preserve the intent of a session and its purpose in the overall program.

Read each session ahead of time, several days before leading it. Getting a feel, doing extra research and following your interests will make the sessions better.

Preparing with co-leaders is very important. Set up the meeting room, ensure the materials and equipment are ready, and be very familiar with the session. Do the Spiritual Preparation exercise together or take a moment before children arrive to share briefly about your expectations for the session.

Keep in mind, and share with co-leaders, all you know about children's family situations and personal sensitivities, and how these might intersect with the day's topics. For example, if a child's family experiences a financial crisis close to a session on privilege or money, both you and the child may encounter an unintended learning experience. Be ready.

IMPLEMENTATION

These sessions can be used at any time of year. It is recommended they be used in sequence. The order of sessions and the order of activities within each session is designed to help participants with diverse backgrounds and learning styles accumulate and deepen their learning in community. Session 1, Looking In/Looking Out, lays a foundation for the entire program. Session 2 introduces the ongoing Window/Mirror Panel project. Session 16, Choose to Be UU, is an opportunity for children and their families to reflect on the entire program together.

The Session-at-a-Glance section presents core activities for a one-hour session. Be aware of time and the flow of the session, so you can be flexible when a "teachable moment" appears or when you feel the need to tailor

your plan to suit where the group is. For example, if children seem reluctant together, you might expand the games or the artistic or musical expression activities at first, and gradually increase time for sharing insights as sessions proceed. Choose and tailor activities to meet children's need for challenge, physical activity and enjoyable moments to build a sense of community that will draw children into the program.

When scheduling this program, leave room for your congregational traditions around holidays. Being part of the life of the congregation is as important for children as attending religious education sessions with their peers. Don't miss intergenerational services, such as Flower Communion.

The program lends itself well to many aspects of congregational life and encourages many social justice activities. Talk with members of the congregation who are active in social justice issues, including anti-racism initiatives, and invite them to take part in some of the Faith in Action projects.

BEFORE YOU START

Window/Mirror Panels

Decide the panels' format and size. This will be based on how you plan to exhibit the panels at the conclusion of the program, and how many opportunities the children will have to complete their panels. If you will present only five sessions of this program, do not give children huge panels to fill. Canvas board panels, the sides of corrugated boxes, pre-cut plywood or another kind of stiff board could all work.

In Session 2, when you introduce this ongoing project, be sure to engage children in a concept of the collective display and how their individual panels will be included as part of a whole.

For each session, make sure children have the materials they need to complete the Window/Mirror assignment in the appropriate size and scale for their panels. The materials should include reflective paper such as Mylar (R), a variety of other colored papers, stickers, ribbon, permanent markers, scissors, and glue sticks and tape. Gather arts and crafts materials in one or more baskets for use in each session. Access to the same materials will give the children's panels visual continuity.

Have all the arts and crafts materials ready for the first session. In Session 1, participants make outer and inner self-portraits which some may later wish to include in the Window/Mirror Panels they begin in Session 2.

Canvas Boards and Alternatives

Canvas boards come in sizes from 22x36-inch down to 10x14-inch and smaller. They can be ordered

individually or in packages of 12 from MisterArt.com. The largest size would be good if you plan on doing all 16 sessions. You can cut corrugated cardboard panels from the sides of large boxes, or begin collecting the stiff cardboard backs of notepads.

Reflective Frames for Panels

You may wish to prepare panels for participants by making a reflective frame with strips of Mylar or another reflective material. Frames should be attached to the board. Rolls of Mylar are also available at MisterArt.com. You could also cover the entire cardboard with aluminum foil or reflective gift wrap, then take a ruler and mark a three-inch frame around the edge with a black permanent marker.

The Right Adhesives

The best adhesive to use with Mylar would be Mod Podge or an acrylic medium soft gel. Double-sided tape will also work but is sometimes hard to manage. Mod Podge or soft gel will also work well with paper and collage elements. Use a craft stick to apply. For paper, you could also use a good glue stick; UHU Color glue sticks show in color when you apply them but dry clear.

Exhibit for the Congregation

It is important to display participants' panels for the congregation, as a window into the children and their learning. Depending on the number and format of panels, you could:

- Attach panels together on the back with duct tape in the shape of window panes. For example, if you have nine children's panels, tape together three in a row, then tape all three rows together. If you have more, make several "paned windows" and display them down the sides of a corridor.
- Display panels behind a window. Create a "window" with a sheet of plexiglass or by stretching clear, plastic window insulation material over a simple frame you can build with wooden dowels or lengths of molding. Mount the "window" ten or so inches in front of the panels, so viewers look through it to see them.

To enhance the mirror effect, display the panels on a background of reflective material or, if your congregation has them, long closet mirrors.

Tape the panels together with duct tape to stand, accordion-style, on a display table.

A Real Window

If your congregation has one available, consider adapting the Window/Mirror project for children to work

with water-based paints on a real window, adding another artistic reflection/expression in each session. Take a photograph of the completed window to display after the window is washed clean. You may wish to frame and display the photo; consider what a collection of fourth and fifth-graders' Window/Mirror panels would communicate once the congregation uses this curriculum over time.

Materials for Window s and Mirror s Opening

The Opening for this program suggests placing the chalice on a reflective surface, such as a round mirror.

You are invited to dress up the chalice plate with reflective decorations such as stick-on plastic gems, pieces of sea glass or foil confetti.

This program also suggests an Opening Words Basket, holding a variety of chalice lighting readings on separate slips of paper. Find guidance and resources for the Opening Words Basket in Session 1.

This chart provides a snapshot of Windows and Mirrors for long-range planning:

Session	Central Story	Faith in Action Activity
1 Looking In / Looking Out	Charles Darwin	Congregation Self-Portrait
2 Me in Faith Community / Faith Community in Me	Jelly Beans	Seven Cents a Day
3 We Need Not Think Alike to Love Alike	Thomas Starr King	Congregational Faith Family Tree
4 Building a Community of Forgiveness	Teaching a Thief	International Forgiveness Day
5 The Blessing of Imperfection	The Water Bearer's Garden	Smile Train Fundraiser
6 All Ages Share Particular Gifts	The Children's Crusade	Multi-Generational Congregational Event
7 Let's Talk	The Curse of Babel	Practicing What We Speak
8 Eyes on the Prize	Henry Hampton	Congregational Audit
9 Lean on Me	The First Supporter	Congregational Support
10 Service Is the Rent We Pay for Living	Arjuna's Service to His People	Service Project for Congregation Staff Member
11 Privilege Is a Blessing We Give Away to Be in Community	Juliette Hampton Morgan	Sharing Our Gifts, Skills and Talents
12 Making Visible the Invisible	Yammani and the Soji	Thank You Notes
13 Images of Injustice	Oliver Twist	Changing, Like Scrooge
14 All Work Has Honor	Beautiful Hands	Let Justice Roll
15 Prayer Is a Place to Grow a Soul	Letter to Nancy ; Finding God in Silence	Building and Walking a Labyrinth
16 Choose to Be UU	Dorothea Dix	Plan a Worship Service

PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES

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

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalism (UU) draws from many sources:

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

These principles and sources of faith are the backbone of our religious community.

RESOURCES

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

[*The Gift of Faith*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/): Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children by Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar Second Edition (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2003)

[*Welcoming Children with Special Needs*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=756): A Guidebook for Faith Communities by Sally Patton (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004)

Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2005)

The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book by Bob Greyson (Torrance, CA: Frank Schaffer Publications, Inc., 2001) includes more than 100 group projects, games and activities. These include activities for multiple intelligences and a variety of learning styles. All games are easy to play, require little or no preparation, are adaptable to a variety of situations and skill levels, and provide step-by-step instructions.

Junkyard Sports by Bernie DeKoven (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers, 2005) offers 75 innovative, creative demonstration games that foster leadership, compassion and cooperation as participants adapt games to suit a wide range of ages and abilities. Games are based on six traditional team sports including soccer, baseball and volleyball yet use nontraditional approaches.

The Arts and Spirituality

Tapestry of Faith offers two multi-chapter guidance resources online. [*Spirituality and the Arts in Children's Programming*](#) (at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/spiritualityand/index.shtml) is by Dr. Nita Penfold, creator of the Spirit Play program. [*Making Music Live*](#) (at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/makingmusic/index.shtml), by Nick Page, provides guidance for incorporating music into religious education, including how to teach songs even if you are not a musician.

Scribble Art: Independent Creative Art Experiences for Children by Mary Ann F. Kohl, 2nd revised edition (Bellingham, WA: Bright Ring Publishing, 1994) includes many media: drawing, painting, assemblage, printmaking, collage, sculpture and crafts. It contains open-ended projects that are suitable for almost any age. Each page presents one project and is illustrated with line drawings. Each project is coded to show at a glance how much time and preparation are needed and what age or experience levels are appropriate.

Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

There are seven [*Principles*](#) (at www.uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml) which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

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

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

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

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

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

Unitarian Universalism draws from many [Sources](http://www.uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml) (at www.uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml):

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

Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;

Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;

Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;

Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.

Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

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

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

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

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

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

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

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

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

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

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

SESSION 1: LOOKING IN/LOOKING OUT

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Unitarian Universalists seek always to discover deeper truth and meaning in our lives and in our experience of the world. — Gail Forsyth-Vail

One of the challenges of being human is discerning who we are in relation to the world around us. As we grow and develop, especially in faith, we realize this discernment is a dynamic, lifelong process. Our Unitarian Universalist faith enriches this process for each of us by encouraging us to examine who we truly are. Being comfortable with ourselves grounds us to look openly and caringly at others.

In this introductory session, participants begin to explore how individuality creates the lens through which we view others and all life that shares our planet. In future sessions, participants will develop a heightened awareness of how they bring their own lenses to diverse experiences outside themselves.

The story for this session is about a man who knew he needed to follow his own path. Charles Darwin became famous after writing *The Origin of Species*, his controversial book which proposed that all life evolved from simple organisms which became more complex over time. For some, Darwin's theory contradicted bible-based creationism, the idea that God created the world. Darwin's theory offered a fresh way of seeing—a new lens. Although Darwin's father wanted him to become a doctor, Darwin resisted. He was fascinated instead with the natural world and the animals and plants living in it. Darwin was called to follow his own path, his true, inner self. He made observations and drew conclusions in his own, unique way. As a result his prophetic ideas changed the way we see ourselves in relation to time, life on this planet and, ultimately, the universe.

This program focuses participants on their ability and responsibility to look both within and without—tools for lifelong moral agency. The children experience their Unitarian Universalist faith community as a place to be their true selves and a base from which their observations, reflections and responses to the world around them are accepted and respected. Here we are encouraged to open our eyes, ears and hearts to the ways we are called to live a life of love, caring and service.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the concept of listening to your heart to become more aware of who you truly are and how you perceive the world
- Convey that, as Unitarian Universalists, we look both within and around us to understand what we are called to do
- Present the Unitarian Universalist congregation as a community that nurtures us to examine our truest selves, explore different perspectives of the world around us and honor the validity of perspectives other than our own.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Make observations about themselves which they use to create an outer self-portrait and an inner self-portrait
- Explore their true selves and recognize that the self is a lens through which people view others
- Hear about the work of Unitarian Charles Darwin and appreciate how his unique, inner-guided way of seeing the world has contributed to human self-understanding
- Learn that Unitarian Universalism asks them to be true to their inner selves—to rely on their own observations, values and experiences to know what is right and important to do—and yet, to be ready to question their own perspectives as part of honoring the perspectives of others.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Inner/Outer Self-Portrait	20
Activity 2: Story — Charles Darwin	15
Activity 3: Looking Closely	10
Activity 4: How Do I See?	5

Faith in Action: Congregation Self-Portrait	35
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Looking Closely at Photographic or Fine Art Images	10
Alternate Activity 2: Life-Size Inner Self-Portraits	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- We choose when and how and where to look at the world around us. Think about your own ways of looking—both literally seeing and figuratively paying attention. Where do you look and where don't you look? When do you choose to look carefully? How do you frame what you see?
- How do you look inward? How does your view into yourself affect how you observe the world?
- How do your ways of looking in and looking out reflect your Unitarian Universalist faith? Think about how this awareness might inform your leadership of the group today.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post somewhere everyone can see it.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is

new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: INNER/OUTER SELF- PORTRAIT (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Card stock or construction paper for all participants
- Markers in a variety of colors
- Scissors (including left-handed scissors), glue sticks and tape
- Optional: Magazines with images that children might choose to reflect their appearance/outer selves, or interests/inner selves

Preparation for Activity

- Set markers, paper and other art materials out on work tables.

Description of Activity

The children consider how they appear to others and how they see themselves as they make two self-portraits, one on each side of a sheet of paper.

Invite participants to consider who they are in the world. How might others who are meeting them for the first time see them? Guide them to think about not only their physical appearance, but the ways they like to spend their time. Do they like baseball, ballet, both? Do they like to go to a library, swimming pool, playground, shopping mall, your church? Are they animal lovers, outdoor people, video-game players, fashion lovers, music fans, musicians? Do they think they are smart, funny, shy, a good friend?

You might say:

Think about the way other people in your life see and experience you. What do people see you are interested in? How do people see you interact with others?

Give participants time at least five minutes to work on their outer self-portraits.

In the second part of this activity, participants create an inner self-portrait. Say something like:

We have been looking at our outer selves and how others may see us. Now turn over your paper and think about your inner self. Think about what you know about the inside of yourself. Who is your true self? What are the dreams and thoughts that maybe just a few people—or maybe only you—know? Think about your inner self for a few moments. Then create a self-portrait of the inner you with drawings, words, or symbols.

You will not have to share your inner self-portrait.

Be attentive to the children as they work, but resist commenting on the content or execution of their self-portraits.

Let children know when time is almost up.

Engage everyone in cleaning up. Then gather the group in a circle. Invite the children to share something about their self-portraits with the group if they choose. Ask:

- What are the differences between their inner and outer self-portraits?
- Was there a lot that they chose not to show others about themselves?
- Was one portrait harder than the other to make?
- How does who you are affect how you see others and how you see the world?
- Does anything about your portrait show that you are a Unitarian Universalist?

Have the children take their work home to share with their families.

Including All Participants

If your religious education program does not already have them, order a set of multicultural markers and crayons to ensure children of various skin colors have materials to represent themselves.

Probably some children in your group are approaching puberty. Some may be self-conscious about their inner thoughts, so be clear that the sharing and discussion

part of this activity is voluntary. Some may have problems at home or school that they have kept to themselves, such as a bullying situation or uncomfortable interactions within the family. If this activity alerts you to the possibility that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, speak in confidence with your director of religious education or minister.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — CHARLES DARWIN (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Charles Darwin](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Review the discussion questions and choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Begin a discussion by asking the children to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable. You may say:

Charles Darwin resisted his father's pressure to become a medical doctor. Looking inward, he followed his true self. His love of nature led him to observations that were truly his own. He made an impact on the world, and his theory of evolution changed the way people see themselves.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- In what ways is each of us like Charles Darwin?
- How do your interests make you different and unique?
- What makes up your true inner self?
- Have you ever wanted to follow your own thoughts about something, but could not because your parents think differently? (Example: A child may oppose eating meat for ethical reasons, but parents may insist they eat meat because they feel the protein in meat is important to the child's health.)

ACTIVITY 3: LOOKING CLOSELY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Three or more large magnifying glasses
- Three objects that would be interesting to examine closely, such as a rock, a granola bar, a leaf, a marble or a bowl of marbles or an article of clothing
- Paper and pencils for all participants
- Optional: Solid-color cloths on which to display objects

Preparation for Activity

- Choose three different objects that invite close examination. Set up three stations, each with one object and at least one magnifying glass.

Description of Activity

This activity illustrates the importance of observation and serves as a metaphor for how we each observe the world through our own lenses.

Distribute paper and pencils and invite participants to go to each station and take turns looking at each object with a magnifying glass. Ask that they observe and take notes in silence.

Then, re-gather the group, hold up each object in turn, and ask volunteers to share what they observed about it. Point out the variety in the group's observations. For example, some children will notice what ingredients are in a granola bar, while others may note its colors or texture.

Invite the group to discuss:

- Why did we each see different things?
- Were any observations false? Were any true? What, if anything, can we agree is a fact, taking all of our observations into account?

Including All Participants

Be mindful of vision-impaired participants. Make sure objects can be observed in a tactile as well as visual way. If any participant has vision limitations, encourage everyone to observe by touch.

Some participants may have trouble writing or spelling. Note-taking can be presented as optional so no one feels pressured to write. Note-taking in the form of sketching rather than writing can also be encouraged.

ACTIVITY 4: HOW DO I SEE? (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: To include a vision-impaired participant, a large object that has a variety of textures/shapes, such as a toddler's toy

Description of Activity

This activity demonstrates "framing" as a visual metaphor for how we selectively take in information. Who we are influences how we frame the world.

Begin by telling participants that how we see things depends on how we are looking. Say something like:

Now we are going to experiment with perspective. We will look at different things around the room and pay attention to what we observe.

Ask participants to look around the room and describe what they see.

Next, ask them to make a frame with their hands. The left hand will make an "L" and the right hand will make a backward "L." Put these together for a square frame. Give participants time to look through their frames. Help the group reflect on this exercise about points of view by asking:

- What do you see through your frame?
- What is left out when you look through your frame?
- Your frame creates a point of view. Do you all have the same point of view? Why or why not?
- What other frames do we bring to the way we look at things? Do you and your parents have the same point of view? Do you and your classmates frame the world in the same way? Why and why not? (It is likely that participants will identify experiences of both shared and diverse points of view with other people in their lives.)

Including All Participants

If any participants have impaired vision, invite the group to explore framing in a tactile way by providing a large, multi-textured object for all to observe tactilely.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

- Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)
- Taking It Home handout

Preparation for Activity

- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Review Leader Resource 2 so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of Namaste and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and that we will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean up their own area and the materials they were using first, and then to clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or a sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses, allowing individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1 Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group will say goodbye with "namaste," explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in saying goodbye with the bowing gesture that accompanies the word "namaste."

Distribute copies of the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: CONGREGATION SELF-PORTRAIT (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Notepads and pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Make arrangements with the religious educator and parish minister to join the group for all or part of a walking tour of the congregational facility.

Description of Activity

This is an opportunity for the group to understand more about their faith community.

Post blank newsprint. Brainstorm with the group questions they have about the congregation and its building, members, and history. Some questions you may want to suggest are: What is the name of the congregation? Has the name ever changed, perhaps from "church" to "congregation"? Why or why not? Where is the congregation located? Is it in an urban, suburban, or rural area? How does its geographical location affect who joins the congregation? Have members ever seen a homeless person near or around the congregation's facility? Is the building surrounded by land—is there a parking lot? What are some of the social justice activities the congregation is involved in? Where in the building are windows located? Are they decorative, designed to allow in natural light, or covered to keep rooms quiet or private?

Lead the children on a tour of the facility. Invite them to take notes on what they observe.

If your religious professionals or lay leaders join you, they can answer some of the group's questions. Bring the questions with you on the tour and suggest visiting adults answer them at appropriate locations in the building.

Including All Participants

Make sure all areas to be visited are fully accessible. This activity is not recommended if the entire group cannot participate fully.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we improve a sense of community within this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Unitarian Universalists seek always to discover deeper truth and meaning in our lives and in our experience of the world. — Gail Forsyth-Vail

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

The children heard the story of Charles Darwin, who followed his own path to become a naturalist despite his father's expectations that he become a physician. Darwin's way of perceiving the world gave humankind the gift of his observations and conclusions about life on Earth and our place within it.

We talked about being true to oneself. We explored the unique and changeable nature of how we view the world. The children made an outer self-portrait (how others see them) and an inner self-portrait of thoughts, wishes and dreams.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER.

Talk about what it means to observe carefully and why and how we each use a unique lens as we look at our world. What does it mean that each person sees things differently?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER.

Try a family activity. Everyone gets a clean sock. Decorate the outer part of the sock with buttons, ribbon, and other materials found around the house. For the inside of your sock, write or draw on little pieces of paper your thoughts, wishes and dreams. Fold these and place them inside. You might like to fill each sock in a ceremonious way, with a candle-lighting to begin and words for each person's sock-filling such as:

Bless (family member), beloved inside and out.

Invite family members to share what they have written on the paper and talk about what it reveals.

FAMILY ADVENTURE

Walk through your home together and examine your windows. Are they framed as decorations or "dressed" in a way that encourages people to look outward? Or walk outside. Do your windows invite looking in or are they closed to outside passers-by?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: LOOKING CLOSELY AT PHOTOGRAPHIC OR FINE ART IMAGES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A variety of complex fine art images (see [Leader Resource 3](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: To include a vision-impaired participant, tactile art objects, such as sculpture or fabric weaving
- Optional: Tape or putty to post images on walls or attach to table surfaces

Preparation for Activity

- Print the images provided in Leader Resource 3, Photographic or Fine Arts Images or obtain other images you wish to use. Display the images on work tables or on walls.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to examine each image and consider:

- What do you notice about it?
- What do you think it is a picture of?

Then gather the group. As you hold up each image, invite the children to share their observations. Point out the variety in their observations. Ask: Why did we each see different things?

Including All Participants

Be mindful of vision-impaired participants. If any in the group have vision limitations, make sure objects can be observed in a tactile way and encourage all to observe by touch.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: LIFE-SIZE INNER SELF-PORTRAITS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Large roll of brown paper, pencils and scissors (including left-handed scissors)
- Markers in a variety of colors
- Optional: Paints, paintbrushes, bowls for water, clean-up supplies
- Optional: Arts and crafts materials such as stickers, colored paper, glue sticks, and magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Make sure you have enough floor space or work tables to accommodate all participants working on large self-portraits.
- Cut sheets of paper large enough for the children to lie on while someone traces their bodies.
- Gather the art materials.

Description of Activity

Participants will create "inner" self-portraits of their dreams, hopes, wishes and feelings by writing and drawing on life-size outlines of themselves.

Give each child a large piece of paper. Have the group divide into pairs and take turns tracing the outlines of each other's bodies on the paper. Then, invite the children to create an inner self-portrait inside their body outlines. Suggest that they draw and write about their dreams, wishes, hopes, feelings, or goals. They might also include the people, animals, and things they most care about and love. Decide whether to ask the children to work in silence or to let them discuss the process as they work.

When portraits are completed or time is almost up, invite participants to describe their inner self-portraits to the group. Have each child who volunteers share without interruption or comment from others. Display the portraits in the room. Avoid praising or criticizing the content or execution of the self-portraits. Instead, affirm the variety and point out that our Unitarian Universalist faith community helps each of us know and express our true selves.

Including All Participants

If accessibility issues will prevent any child from fully participating in this activity, skip the body outline and simply use 8 1/2 X 11-inch paper for the portraits.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 1: STORY: CHARLES DARWIN

Adapted from "Charles Darwin" in [*Stories in Faith: Exploring Our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources Through Wisdom Tales*](#), by Gail Forsyth-Vail (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2007).

From the time he was a little boy, Charles Darwin was an explorer. He loved to roam the fields and hills near his home in Shrewsbury, England. He was fascinated by the movements of small animals and insects and knew each wildflower by name. He was curious about everything he saw and heard and touched, wondering at the lives of ants and butterflies, examining and collecting rocks, delighting in the grasses, trees, leaves, and flowers that provided homes for his very favorite creature—the beetle.

Curiosity about the world and the place of humans in it was a gift given to Charles by both his grandfathers. They were Unitarians and believed that human beings did not yet know all the answers to life's great questions. The clues were to be found in observing the world around them.

When Charles was eight, his mother died. Not long after, his father decided to send Charles away to school, where he might learn the things that young gentlemen in his day were expected to know: Greek, Latin, and ancient history. But Charles was more interested in the workings of an anthill or the mysteries found in a rock pile than he was in what was taught at school. At every opportunity he took long walks outdoors—watching, listening, and collecting. He delighted in figuring out how creatures behaved and how the natural world worked.

This wasn't at all what Charles's father had in mind. He was worried. What would young Charles do when he grew up? What kind of man would he be?

When Charles was fifteen, his father sent him to medical school to become a doctor like his father and grandfather. But he was not interested in medicine. Instead, he found people who would teach him all about

different kinds of plants. He began to draw these plants in great detail, labeling all the parts, learning to tell one variety from another.

Two years later, Charles left medical school; it was clear that he didn't want to be a doctor. His father was furious and thought that the endless hours Charles spent outdoors were a waste of time. Determined that Charles would make something of himself, his father sent him to Cambridge University to become a minister.

Charles was not unhappy with that decision; in those days, ministers often did science experiments and observations in their spare time. Charles planned to find a small church in the countryside and spend most of his time observing and drawing plants, animals, rocks, and insects.

He was still very interested in collecting beetles. One day, Charles tore a piece of bark off a tree and saw two rare kinds of beetles. He had one in each hand when he saw a third that he wanted to add to his collection. He quickly popped one beetle into his mouth in order to grab the third—with very bad results. The beetle squirted something nasty-tasting and Charles was forced to spit it out.

At Cambridge, Charles discovered what his life's work would be and he began to call himself a naturalist.

Charles went on a journey around the world and as he traveled, he filled notebooks with drawings and notes. He stayed open to the curiosities of the natural world as they presented themselves: frogs, salamanders, armadillos, insects, and lots of fossils. When he returned to England five years later, he understood how plants and animals evolved from one form to another over the course of many, many thousands and millions of years.

Twenty-two years later Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*. Scientists, preachers, and teachers took notice, and so did the press. The boy collector with the gift of wonder, a spirit of adventure, and openness to new ideas had become the scientist whose theory responded to the "mystery of mysteries." Today, people still take notice and debate what Charles Darwin had to say.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 1: OPENING WORDS FOR BASKET

The authors of these readings have given approval for their use.

After downloading, add opening words alternatives commonly used in your congregation or other readings you like. Print them and cut so each reading is on a separate slip of paper.

We gather this hour as people of faith
With joys and sorrows, gifts and needs
We light this beacon of hope, sign of our quest
For truth and meaning,
In celebration of the life we share together.

— Christine Robinson, Reading 448, Singing the Living Tradition

Life is a gift for which we are grateful. We gather in community to celebrate the glories and the mysteries of this gift.

— Marjorie Montgomery, Reading 452, Singing the Living Tradition

May the light we now kindle
Inspire us to use our powers
To heal and not to harm,
To help and not to hinder,
To bless and not to curse,
To serve you,
Spirit of freedom.

— from a Jewish Passover Haggadah, Reading 453, Singing the Living Tradition

We are Unitarian Universalists
With minds that think (hands tap head lightly)
Hearts that love (hands tap heart lightly)
And hands that are ready to serve (hands outstretched).

— David Herndon (from Rejoice Together)

We light this chalice to celebrate the love within us, among us, and all around us.

— David Herndon (from Rejoice Together)

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 2: NAMASTE

Adapted from an article on [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namaste).

Namaste is a Sanskrit word that is a common spoken greeting in India and other South Asian countries. Literally, it means "I bow to you." When spoken to another person, it is commonly accompanied by a slight bow made with hands pressed together in front of the chest, palms touching and fingers pointed upward. The word and accompanying gesture express deep respect. The gesture can be performed wordlessly and carry the same meaning. Namaste is also used as a friendly greeting in written communication.

In everyday life, *namaste* is not necessarily a religious gesture. However, many consider it a spiritual one, recognizing a common divinity within the other person.

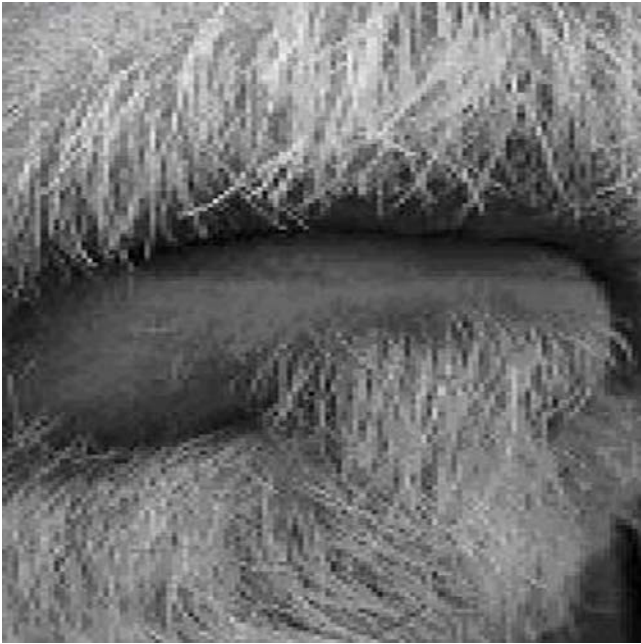
When greeting a peer, a namaste with the hands in front of the chest and a slight bow is considered polite. To indicate deep respect, one may place the hands in front of the forehead. Reverence for a god or the holiest of persons may be indicated by placing the hands together completely above the head. In the gesture of bringing both hands together with palms touching, one hand represents the higher, spiritual nature, while the other represents the worldly self. The person making the gesture is attempting to rise above their differences with others and connect with the other person to whom they bow. The bow is symbolic of love and respect.

In recent times, and more globally, the term namaste has come to be associated with yoga and spiritual meditation. In this context, it takes on a number of meanings tied to the spiritual origins of the word. It may be expressed as "I honor the Light/Spirit/Divine in you which is also in me," or "All that is best and highest in me greets/salutes all that is best and highest in you."

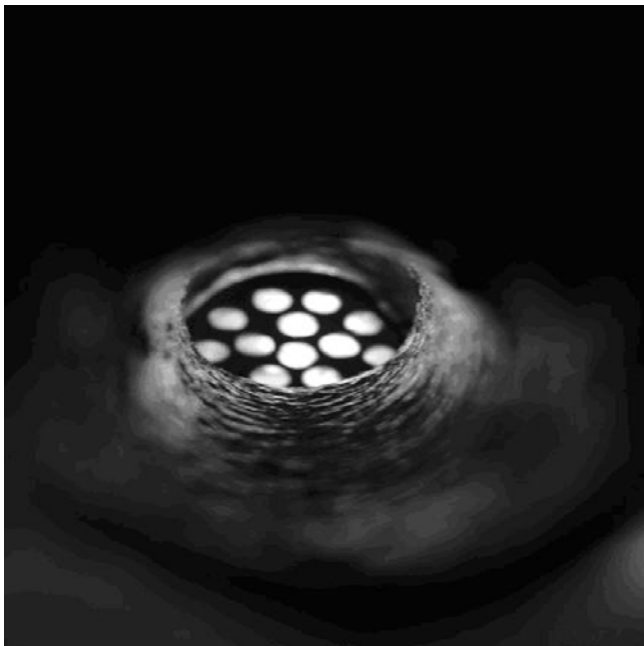
WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 3: PHOTOGRAPHIC OR FINE ART IMAGES

Photographs "Beard" and "Light at the End" by Elizabeth Stidsen, from her [website](#). Used with permission.

Beard



Light at the End



FIND OUT MORE

Charles Darwin's most famous work is [The Origin of Species](http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/origin.html) (at www.talkorigins.org/faqs/origin.html); he is also the author of [many other books](#) (at www.literature.org/authors/darwin-charles/) — find a list on the literature.org website.

A good online source for information about [Charles Darwin](#) (at

www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/darwin_charles.shtml) is the [BBC's history page](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/darwin_charles.shtml) (at www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/darwin_charles.shtml).

For more about evolution, check out a [University of California at Berkeley web page](#) (at www.evolution.berkeley.edu/evolibrary/search/topicbrowse2.php?topic_id=41).

SESSION 2: ME IN FAITH COMMUNITY, FAITH COMMUNITY IN ME

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*It matters what we believe.
Some beliefs are expansive
and lead the way to wider and deeper
sympathies.
Some beliefs are like the sunshine,
blessing children with the warmth of happiness;
some beliefs are bonds in a universal
brotherhood,
where sincere differences beautify the pattern;
some beliefs are gateways
opening up wide vistas for exploration.
Some beliefs nurture self-confidence and
enrich feelings of personal worth;
some beliefs are pliable like the young sapling,
ever growing with the upward thrust of life.
It is important what we believe.
And what a child believes is also a serious
matter — not a subject for jest or sentimentality.
— Sophia Lyon Fahs*

*Children, though natural questioners, are not
skeptics, for whom doubt is an end in itself.
Children are as open to belief and faith as they
are to questioning. They are looking, as we are
all looking, for things on which they can depend,
values they can faithfully live by, ideas that
make sense, things to believe in. — Rev. Earl
Holt in Religious Education at Home*

In our Unitarian Universalist congregations, we attend to our beliefs and values by coming together. We support one another and look to our shared Principles to guide us in making just, ethical choices about how to live and how to treat others. When parents bring their children to our congregations and religious education programs, they know that rather than a specific set of beliefs, children will gain tools to help them pay attention to what they believe. They know their children will be encouraged to articulate their beliefs and values, and be guided to translate their beliefs and values into attitudes and real-life actions.

Many children come to church without complaint; many enjoy coming. This session helps all children understand why it matters that they come to church. They ask a mirror question: "How does my coming to church help me live and grow?" and a window question, "How does coming to church help me see the world, and my place in it?"

Children who do not come regularly may not have friends in their religious education group. In this and other sessions, pair "regulars" with newer children to build feelings of connectedness and belonging.

The Faith in Action activity provides an opportunity to extend the story's direct teaching—feed your enemies—and reinforce that your congregation is a place where lessons like this are learned. You may like to split this session across two meeting times to ensure the Faith in Action is included.

For Activity 4, A Church Journey, you will need several adult volunteers. Invite the adults well in advance. Use the guidelines provided in Leader Resource 1, Guide for Adult Participants, to prepare them. Confirm their participation a few days before the session.

If you have time, Alternate Activity 1, Walking Meditation, nicely follows Activity 4. Instead of returning directly to the room after speaking with adult congregants, bring children to a large, open area that has space to accommodate everyone. Guide them to use the walking meditation to reflect on the session's mirror and window questions, or simply to review the ideas they have heard about why adults in the congregation come to church, and why it matters that children come, too.

GOALS

This session will:

- Guide participants to consider a variety of ways they do, or might, find meaning and value by participating in religious education and congregational life
- Introduce the concept of church (congregational) relevance and its uniqueness in purpose
- Demonstrate that adult Unitarian Universalists value congregants who are children
- Challenge participants to connect their participation in religious education and the life of the congregation to other parts of their lives, and guide them to envision personal problems as opportunities to exercise their faith beliefs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Begin creating their individual Window/Mirror Panel for a group display
- Play a game while getting to know others in the group
- Hear a story in which a lesson from church helps a child solve a problem, and extrapolate how their own religious education can be relevant to their own, daily life experiences
- Hear adults express where they find meaning at church and why children are important to the congregation
- Identify and express their individual appreciation of their Unitarian Universalist congregation and the time they spend involved in it
- Optional: Explore the congregational facility by touring it together.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Starting Our Window/Mirror Panels	10
Activity 2: Story — Jelly Beans	10
Activity 3: Jelly Bean Trade	5
Activity 4: A Church Journey	20
Activity 5: Window/Mirror Panel — Postcards from the Journey	5
Faith in Action: Seven Cents a Day	30
Closing	5

Alternate Activity 1: Spiritual Practice — Walking Meditation 15

Alternate Activity 2: Church Matters Collage 30

Alternate Activity 3: History Timeline — The Church's and Mine 20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable and light a candle to mark the time as different from your other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes; perhaps repeat a word or phrase to separate you from the activities of the day. After opening your eyes, consider:

- In what ways does the time you spend involved in your Unitarian Universalist congregation add meaning to your life?
- How does your involvement with your congregation affect how you live your life?
- How do you perceive the children in the group feel or think about the congregation or their religious education?
- What are your hopes for the children of your congregation? How would you wish for them to feel about coming to church?
- Remind yourself that what children believe matters. Prepare yourself to convey, while leading this session, that children's presence at church, their beliefs, and their faith development matter very much to you and to other adults in your congregation.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymn book, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer to use, on newsprint, and post.
- If needed, obtain a basket to hold slips of paper with alternate opening words. Download and adapt Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words. Print it and cut so that each reading is on a separate slip of paper. Place slips of paper in basket.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds each participant of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather children in a circle near the table with the chalice. Invite children to take a deep breath and release it, to create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to choose a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read the selection aloud. As the words are read, invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

You may follow the chalice lighting with a hymn. Invite participants to sing a hymn or refrain commonly done in your congregation. This is a way to help children grow in their understanding of and belongingness to congregational life. Many congregations sing "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. If you do not sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

If you are extinguishing the chalice now, ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from the UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: STARTING OUR WINDOW/MIRROR PANELS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A blank canvas board or a sheet of thick, corrugated cardboard for all participants
- Large baskets or plastic bins, one for each work table, filled with:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil, and other reflective papers
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape), and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon, and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Review the program Introduction, including the Before You Start section, to make sure you are prepared to describe the Window/Mirror Panel project and its purpose.

- Obtain pieces of canvas board, sheets of heavy corrugated cardboard, or blank panels of another material for all participants, plus a few extra. You will find canvas board in various sizes at any large arts and crafts store or online. If you have not yet done so, co-leaders and your director of religious education should together decide the size of the panels children will make and the materials the children will use, being mindful of how and where the panels will be combined and exhibited. The Introduction provides a few of the many possibilities for displaying the panels for your congregation.
- Obtain large baskets or bins to hold art materials and fill a basket or bin for each worktable or small group to share.
- Identify a place where Window/Mirror Panels can be stored between sessions.
- Make reflective frames for the Window/Mirror Panels. Measure the perimeter of one blank panel to see the length of framing material each panel will need. Cut long, 3- to 4-inch strips of silver Mylar or another reflective material. Paste strips to make a frame for each panel, using strong adhesive or double-sided tape to stick your frame onto the board securely. Alternatively, cover the entire board with reflective gift wrap and then mark a three-inch frame with a permanent marker around the edge.
- Cut out a variety of shapes from colored Mylar or other reflective materials or have large sequins to write on.

Description of Activity

Explain that each person brings a unique self to this group. Each person may be drawn to different ideas, may have different skills, likes and dislikes, and ways of doing things. To represent their uniqueness, each participant will work on their own panel during the Windows and Mirrors program. Tell participants:

As you work on your panel, it can be a mirror where you see yourself as you are in this program, and how your experiences and thoughts here reflect you or affect you.

When we display our panels together, they can be a window for others to look in and observe each of you and the group. They may be able to see and understand how you see yourselves. Others may find a mirror for themselves in your panels, too.

Hold up a sample panel. Describe your plan for how and where the panels will be displayed together at the end of the program. Tell the children:

This is one way for the congregation to get a window into what you have been doing and learning. The panel will be a way to share with the whole church community. When we display our panels together, the exhibit might help some viewers see our congregation in a new way.

Invite the children to take a Window/Mirror Panel and write their names on the back with permanent marker. Show them where you will store their panels between sessions. If you have not glued on the frames, help children do this now.

Then lead them to begin decorating their frames. Suggest they recall their Outer/Inner Self-Portrait from Session 1. If you have these, return them to the children now. Invite them to consider using the ideas or perhaps the actual portrait as part of their Window/Mirror Panel; they may cut up their self-portrait to incorporate parts of it. Revisit the questions from Session 1, Activity 1. You might say:

Consider who you are in the world. You might include some "outer" features, such as your physical appearance, your interests and skills, the places you spend your time. You might also express your "inner" self, including some aspects of your personality, some of your feelings, some wishes or fears.

Direct participants' attention to the Window/Mirror Panel basket(s) you have prepared. Invite them to use pre-cut Mylar pieces, the permanent markers and other materials to write or draw along the Mylar frame of their panel to represent at least ten things they think make up who they are. Suggest they could cut shapes from the pieces of reflective material and then use adhesive to attach them where they wish along the outer Mylar frame. If they need help, assist them. If children are using permanent markers, make sure the ink is dry before they glue the pieces onto their frames.

Keep your instructions brief. Explain that they have a short time to work now, but will add to the panels later today (Activity 5) and in future sessions.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — JELLY BEANS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Jelly Beans](#)" (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story, "Jelly Beans," a few times. Practice telling it dramatically rather than reading it from the page. Try adopting different voices for different characters. The stories are appropriate for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.
- Create a storytelling ritual. Set a mood that is different from other segments of the session. For example, adjust the lighting and position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.
- Review the discussion questions and choose some you think will help the children interpret the story and relate it to their own lives.
- If the group is very large, plan to form smaller groups for the discussion with an adult leader facilitating each small group.
- Consider what this story means to you in the context of this session and be prepared to share your understanding briefly with the group at the end of the discussion. Be ready to volunteer your own example of something you learned in your congregation and later used elsewhere.

Description of Activity

Before you begin, ring the chime or other noisemaker. Make eye contact with each participant.

Read or tell the story. Sound the chime again at the end.

Invite the children to think about the story silently for a few moments.

Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills. As we find out what one another thought about the story, both skills are needed to understand the story better from the multiple perspectives in the room.

Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Remind them not to assume others think or feel the same way. You may suggest that a brief silence follow each person's comment.

Invite the children to retell the story briefly. What children recall and relay tells you what they found most meaningful or memorable. Then use these questions to facilitate discussion. Make sure every child who wants to speak has a chance.

- Have you ever been like John in this story—bothered by someone who is mean to you?

- What have you done when "your Bob" has bothered you?
- Has it worked?
- Have you ever behaved like Bob? Bothered someone else?
- Does this ever happen in this room?
- What is an enemy?
- Does anyone here have an enemy?
- Are there enemies in this room?
- What does "feed your enemy" mean? (Affirm answers like "being kind to someone even if they are mean to you," "thinking about what someone needs, even if they are being mean," and "being nice to someone who is against you or being mean.")
- Why might this work?
- How did it work in this story?
- How do you think Bob felt when John was nice to him?
- Has anyone ever tried this with an enemy or with someone being mean? Can you think of a situation where you might try it?
- Why might you not want to try it?
- What else, besides feeding, might work as an act of kindness?
- Where did John hear the story of "feeding your enemies"? (Point out that the story came from religious education and was shared at home among the family.) What is special about this kind of story, the kind of story you hear at church?

Share one or two sentences articulating what this story teaches about being at church and how it helps us and others (re)make the world. Ask:

- Can you think of any other stories from church that have helped you solve a problem? (If so, ask the children to expand on which stories and what problem. Don't be surprised if no one volunteers. Be ready to volunteer your own example.

Besides bullies and enemies, what other kinds of problems might be good to learn about here? Can you think of stories or ideas we can talk about at church that might make your life more peaceful, more useful, or happier?

ACTIVITY 3: JELLY BEAN TRADE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Jelly beans, in a variety of colors, at least ten for each participant
- 5x7-inch manila envelopes with clasps for all participants

Preparation for Activity

- Purchase jelly beans that come in multiple colors—at least as many colors as the group has participants.
- Fill envelopes (5x7-inch with clasps work best) with ten different colored jellybeans. If the group is typically larger than ten, plan to have the children trade within two smaller groups.

Description of Activity

Have envelopes in hand. Ask everyone who wanted to come to church today to put his or her thumbs up. Ask those who didn't want to come to church to put their thumbs down. Ask those who indicate that they didn't want to attend: What would you be doing instead?"

After everyone has shared, ask: Who thinks it is important to come to church?

Choose one or two children to tell you why. Thank them and explain that we are now going to play a game.

Pass out the envelopes. Explain that each envelope has ten differently colored jelly beans. The object of the game is to try and get ten jelly beans of the same color by trading with other people, one at a time. The game ends when one person gets ten of a single color. Tell them that before trading, they must exchange names.

At the end of the game invite everyone into the circle to eat jelly beans and discuss the game. Have extra in case some participants don't end up with ten.

Allow trading of favorite colors.

Ask if participants enjoyed the jelly bean trade. Pay particular attention to participants who did not want to be at church today and ask them if they would have wanted to miss playing the game. Receive their answers with appreciation.

Some children may say that they attend because their parents make them. Affirm their feelings, and tell them you are really glad they are here. Thank everyone for their observations and sharing.

Including All Participants

Some children may have restricted sugar, allergies, or vegan diets that exclude items made with gelatin, an animal by-product. Check with parents or your religious education director to make sure all the children can eat jelly beans. If necessary, use another colorful treat or paper cut-outs of jelly beans instead.

ACTIVITY 4: A CHURCH JOURNEY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags for adult participants
- A pencil and a 5x7-inch unlined index card for each participant
- Copies of Leader Resource 1, Guide for Adult Guests, for all adults

Preparation for Activity

- Invite three adult congregants to participate in this activity by sharing with the children their stories about why they come to your congregation. Make sure the individuals have different stories to tell and that they are willing to miss some of the worship service to participate. When you invite them specify when, where, and how long you will need them. Give them a copy of Leader Resource 1. Confirm with them a few days before the session.
- Identify three locations within the building where the children can "find" the three adults. Make sure you can have access to these spaces at the time you need them. The adults may suggest locations (sanctuary, kitchen, front lobby) that are personally meaningful for them.
- Optional: To save time, invite the adult guests to form a panel to share their stories with the group in the meeting space.

Description of Activity

This activity introduces several adult congregants who will express how they find meaning at church and why children are important to the congregation.

If you have instructed adults to wait for the children at different locations, the group will move to find the adults. Line up the group and explain that they are going on a journey to find out "why the heck other people come to church." Explain that at each stop on the journey we will meet someone who will share a word with us. Ask the participants to write these words on their index cards. If any have difficulty doing so, you can help them.

If you are using a panel discussion approach, explain how you would like the children to question the adults.

Ask someone in the group to lead you to the first location. If one of the locations is the sanctuary, then ask the entire group to file in, stand quietly for a moment, look carefully around the space, and then file out. The guest can then speak to the group outside the sanctuary.

Introduce each adult and then invite the group to quickly share their names. Prompt each adult with the same query: Why do you attend church? After they explain why, prompt them to (1) share their word with the group and (2) tell the group why they are grateful the children in the group attend church. Ask the children if they have questions, being mindful of the time.

Model thanking the guest for meeting the group, then ask a participant to lead the group to the next location.

After returning to the meeting space, ask everyone to sit silently at a table with their card for 30 seconds. Use the chime or bell to end the silence. Invite observations or thoughts. Thank everyone for their participation.

Including All Participants

If your building cannot accommodate the needs of participants with mobility limitations, opt for the panel approach and stay in the regular meeting space.

Although there is movement in this activity, some participants may find listening to adults tell stories of their church life challenging. Stay near these participants. If possible, use them as leaders, as a reward for their attention and stillness during the brief discussion(s). Invite them to draw on their cards.

ACTIVITY 5: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — POSTCARDS FROM THE JOURNEY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- 5x7-inch unlined index cards from Activity 4, A Church Journey
- Color pencils and sharpener
- Adhesive or double-sided tape to attach postcards to window/mirror panels
- Optional: Extra jelly beans from Activity 3, Jelly Bean Trade
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror Panel materials:

- Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil, and other reflective paper
- Sheets of plain or construction paper
- Scraps of fabric
- Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
- Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
- Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon, and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint where all can see it.
- Have materials easily accessible.
- Make sure pencils are sharpened.

Description of Activity

Ask the children to recall the stories they heard on their journey and the words the adults shared. Invite them to consider the reasons the adults and they, themselves, come to church and what they find here. Brainstorm a list of words.

Invite them to use as many words as they wish from the list or to choose just one and illustrate a "postcard" as if they had been on vacation. Say something like, "If you wanted to share with a friend or family member what is important about coming to church, what would the postcard look like?"

Keep instructions brief. Explain that they have a very short time to complete this.

Tell them that they will add these postcards to their Window/Mirror Panels. As children finish, distribute the Window/Mirror Panels or invite the children to get their panels from where they are stored. Allow them to choose where the postcard should go on their panel and help them attach it.

You may wish to say, in your own words:

By making this art, you are co-creating the church. You are reminding everyone why church is important. Sharing helps weave the fabric of our faith community.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place where participants can store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Note: There may be times when panels are not be completely dry when it is time to put them away.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- If you plan to use "namaste" as a goodbye, review the leader resource so you can demonstrate the gesture and briefly explain its origin and meaning.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and that now we will work together as community to clean the meeting space. First, everyone should clean up their own area, put away materials they were using, and store their Window/Mirror panel in the spot you have designated. Then they should clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the space is clean.

Bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite participants to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for each of them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses, allowing individuals to speak or "pass."

Ask all to hold hands and say the closing words together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1 Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, you may substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow

their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: SEVEN CENTS A DAY (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Jars with lids for all participants
- Drawing paper
- Pencils
- Markers that will write on the surface of a jar
- A sharp implement to cut the jar lid (leader only)
- Calculators
- 2x4-inch sticky labels, scrap paper
- 7 cents (7 pennies or 2 pennies and one nickel) for each participant
- Copies of [Handout 1](#), (included in this document) Seven Cents a Day, for all participants, plus some extra

Preparation for Activity

- Collect small glass jars with metal, screw-top lids and plastic food storage containers with snap-on lids, for all participants, plus some extra.
- Distribute materials and handouts at worktables.
- Optional: Print out pictures of sample collection jars from the [Hunger No More website](http://www.hungernomore.org/childrens_activities/2003%20edition/activity%202.pdf) (at [www.hungernomore.org/childrens_activities/2003 edition/activity 2.pdf](http://www.hungernomore.org/childrens_activities/2003%20edition/activity%202.pdf)).

Description of Activity

Form small groups and give each group a handout to complete, a calculator, and a pencil. Ask them to fill out the worksheet with the correct amounts in each blank. Offer help to anyone who seems to need it.

After each group has computed the amounts, ask them to report the answers. Ask them if they would like to create a bank and try to collect seven cents a day. If they answer yes, invite them to make banks. If they answer no, ask them to make a bank anyway to give to someone who will try and save seven cents a day.

Ask the children to consider how hunger in this country, let alone others, might be affected by saving seven cents a day. Spend a few minutes gathering their other ideas about helping reduce hunger.

Show the groups the sample bank or the website image. Note that all the supplies needed to make the bank are easily accessible. Ask them to plan their bank labels on scrap paper before drawing or writing on a sticky label to place on the bank. Explain that you will help them put a hole in the lid. After making a hole in each lid, ask the children to screw on the lids and give them each seven cents to put in the bank.

Remind them to save seven cents each day. Tell them:

When you think you have enough saved, after 30 days or perhaps when the Windows and Mirrors program ends, return the bank here and tell us where your family decided to donate the money to an organization that fights hunger.

Follow up in subsequent Windows and Mirrors sessions. Remind children to continue saving seven cents a day. Share information about hunger relief organizations that you learn about.

Encourage the children to find an adult or older child to join the effort to save seven cents a day

Point out that if any of the children had not come to church today, they would have missed this chance to be part of reducing hunger in the world. Claim the importance of their presence at church today. Affirm that church matters!

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Evaluate with your co-leader(s) first. Then share your evaluation with others working with the group. You might find it helpful to consider these questions in a face-to-face meeting or via email:

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- Were new children effectively integrated into the group? How can we do this better?
- When you think about today's session, what connections did you make to the children? What connections did children make among themselves? When was that evident?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- Were there any behavior issues? If so, how can we address them in the future? Do we need more information or help in this area?

- Do we need to follow up on anything with a parent or the religious educator?
- When spiritually preparing for the session, you identified your own expectations for the session. How were they met or unmet?

If you identify ways the session failed to meet expectations, take time to explore some alternate approaches. Ask your religious educator for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

It matters what we believe.

Some beliefs are expansive

and lead the way to wider and deeper sympathies.

Some beliefs are like the sunshine,

blessing children with the warmth of happiness;

some beliefs are bonds in a universal brotherhood,

where sincere differences beautify the pattern;

some beliefs are gateways

opening up wide vistas for exploration.

Some beliefs nurture self-confidence and

enrich feelings of personal worth;

some beliefs are pliable like the young sapling,

ever growing with the upward thrust of life.

It is important what we believe.

And what a child believes is also a serious matter

*— not a subject for jest or sentimentality. —
Sophia Lyon Fahs*

Children, though natural questioners, are not skeptics, for whom doubt is an end in itself. Children are as open to belief and faith as they are to questioning. They are looking, as we are all looking, for things on which they can depend, values they can faithfully live by, ideas that make sense, things to believe in. — Rev. Earl Holt in Religious Education at Home

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

We affirmed the relevance and meaning of church attendance for individuals and asked the children to consider these for themselves. We began a long-term project of creating our own individual Window/Mirror Panels, which we plan to exhibit at the conclusion of the program. As usual, we played a game. This time

everyone was a winner of ten jelly beans. Surprisingly enough, the title of today's story was "Jelly Beans." It comes from our Quaker brothers and sisters and reminds us that kindness often is what people need. The story also helped us demonstrate how church and what we learn here can help make our lives happier and better. We asked some adults why they come to church and why it is important that children to come to church, *regularly*. Finally, we began a Faith in Action project to help relieve world hunger by each of us putting aside seven cents a day.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

Ask your child(ren) what they found most meaningful about church today—having this conversation directly after church tends to yield the most information. They may share something that happened outside of the religious education program. That is appropriate. Ask them what they have liked the best during your family's relationship with this congregation, or what they remember most.

Share what prompted your initial attendance and why you are part of our congregation now. Share something your child may not know about your childhood religious upbringing and how it affects the choices you make for them. Explain in a meaningful way why it is important to you that your child attend church with you. Using the phrase "church matters" in the conversation might surprise them.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER . Try...

Create a "seven cents a day" bank for each family member. Place banks where coins are likely to be discovered and added to the bank—grandparents and cousins are not to be excluded! Search the congregational newsletter for other social justice efforts if your church is not involved with hunger work. On the Unitarian Universalist website, research projects that help alleviate poverty and hunger. Talk about where else in your daily lives issues of hunger or poverty arise and where else are you called to attend to them? How does church or religious education attendance connect to your family's response to hunger or poverty locally or in the larger world?

As a family, choose an organization to receive the money you will collect over time.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Develop a Sunday-after-church or Sunday-before-church ritual. Choose one small activity or food treat that your family can include into Sunday morning churchgoing. It is vital that your child (not just you) perceive this as a treat. Involve your child in developing the ritual. Consider realistic timing—before church or

after—especially if the ritual involves a stop for food. Consider the seasonal activities that happen on Sunday, such as sports, that might interfere with the ritual. Some suggestions:

- A trip to a bakery or doughnut shop
- Hot chocolate with whipped cream every Sunday morning
- Riding bicycles or scooters to church
- A stop at a playground or library after church
- Breakfast or lunch at a special place
- Donating non-perishable food to a shelter that has Sunday drop-off times
- Buying flowers for home or for a neighbor
- Singing special funny songs in the car
- Looking for a specific person at church
- Playing after church with a friend you know only from church.

A FAMILY GAME

Church [Charade s.](http://travelwithkids.about.com/cs/travelgamestoys/l/blcharade.s.htm) (at travelwithkids.about.com/cs/travelgamestoys/l/blcharade.s.htm) Charades originated in France . It is a great game to play with your children, as you have to act silly! To play a church-focused version:

- Form two teams (even two can play, pantomiming for each other).
- Each team thinks of a church-related phrase or a congregational activity to be acted out, and writes it on a slip of paper. Examples: grounds and maintenance committee, worship, singing "Spirit of Life," walking in a peace march, coffee hour, reading, playing, holiday pageant, ushering, flower communion, child dedication ceremony.
- Teams collect slips of paper in the bowl or bag and give them to the opposite team. (When two people play together, each should act out their own phrases or activities and see if the other person can guess.)
- Decide on a time limit, or individual time limits, to suit players' ages and pantomime abilities.
- Teams take turns drawing slips of paper. Each time, one team member pantomimes for teammates to guess the word or activity.
- Before you start, review the pantomime descriptors so all can use and understand them:

- "Sounds like..." — Cup your hand around your ear.
- "Little word." — Bring your thumb and index fingers close together. The guessers should now call out every little word they can think of ("on," "in," "the," and, " ...) until you gesticulate wildly to indicate the right word.
- "Longer version of the word." — Pretend to stretch an elastic.
- "Shorter version of the word." — Chop with your hand.
- "Close, keep guessing!" — Frantically wave hands to keep the guesses coming.
- With older children, you can communicate in pantomime how many words and/or syllables are in a phrase they are guessing. For number of words, hold up that many fingers; hold up one finger to pantomime the first word. To show that a word has X syllables, lay X fingers on your forearm. To act out a first syllable, lay one finger on your forearm.
- Score by keeping track of how long it takes each team to guess the right answer; the team with the fewest minutes wins. To make it easier, just keep track of how many correct guesses each team makes before time runs out.
- Then, start acting silly!

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Make congregation-related tee shirts for every member of the family. Purchase some plain tee shirts and fabric paints and/or fabric markers. Spend a few minutes talking to one another about what parts of being a member of this church are fun, meaningful, or special. Help one another create symbols for those feelings or thoughts. Each person designs their own tee shirt with the name (or part of the name) of your congregation and symbols that convey why the church is important. Each person can use the symbols the entire family came up with or only those that are personally meaningful. Wear the tee shirts to a congregational gathering or any other time.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SPIRITUAL PRACTICE — WALKING MEDITATION (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chime or bell

- Optional: Books by Thich Nhat Hanh (see Find Out More)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify an open area that can accommodate all the children walking undisturbed. If you lack a large enough appropriate space, consider sending smaller groups to multiple spaces, each with an adult.
- Read the Description of Activity, and other resources such as books by Thich Nhat Hanh (see Find Out More) if needed, to become familiar with concept of walking meditation and how it is done. See Susan Helene Kramer's Meditation page on BellaOnline for a [walking meditation for children](http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art16091.asp) (at www.bellaonline.com/articles/art16091.asp) and related links.

Description of Activity

This activity will engage participants in mindful concentration and introduce them to walking meditation. Walking meditation can be expanded from the very basic process noted here to include more intentional realization of one's surroundings and intentionality around the physical nature of walking, such as paying close attention to the feet and how they work.

Ask the children what they know about meditation and then what they know about walking meditation. Explain briefly that a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk named Thich Nhat Hanh made walking meditation popular. Nhat Hanh is exiled from Vietnam for his peace activities. Show one of his books, if you have one.

Lead the group in a [walking meditation](http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art16091.asp) (at www.bellaonline.com/articles/art16091.asp) designed for children: Arrange the children either in a line, so they can each cross the room back and forth without interference, or in a widely spaced in a circle, so they can walk clockwise. Explain that they are simply going to walk and breathe but they are going to try and time their breathing to their walking. Tell them:

A walking meditation practice develops concentration and balances the body and mind. Everyone will have some time to try. Then we will answer any questions, and everyone will do it again for three to five minutes without interruption.

Ring the chime to begin the meditation. Then, read aloud:

Take a walk at regular speed while letting your arms swing easily back and forth. When the left foot steps forward, the right arm swings forward;

when the right foot steps forward, the left arm swings forward.

Breathe in on one step and breathe out on the next step. Or take two steps breathing in and two steps breathing out.

While walking, concentrate on breathing evenly in and out. Concentrate only on the breathing. As other thoughts enter your head, notice them, but return to counting your breath as you concentrate.

Let the group walk for about 20 seconds and then stop them and ask if they have any questions. Answer any that you can. Then say you will ring the chime or bell as a signal to begin and then again when it's time to stop, when you would like everyone to stand in silence for 15 seconds. Tell the group you will let them know when the 15 seconds are up. Encourage everyone just to try their best—meditation is something that takes practice. This first time they might get it right only a few times but assure them you will do it long enough so that everyone will get that chance. Ask them to cooperate by simply walking and breathing.

Ring the chime again to start a longer walking meditation. Then, signal the end. Allow the children to stand in silence for 15 seconds, then ring the chime a final time.

To finish, ask everyone to stretch their arms overhead and then bring them down to their sides. Ask a volunteer to lead the group back to the regular meeting space.

Thank them for trying the walking meditation.

Including All Participants

Individuals with restricted mobility can participate in the breathing aspect of the meditation while they remain seated.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: CHURCH MATTERS COLLAGE (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Photographs of church activities—especially pictures with children. Have enough for all small groups to create a collage.
- Magazines and/or scrap-booking items
- Glue sticks, tape and scissors (including left-handed scissors)
- Poster board sheets large enough for a small group to work on together

Preparation for Activity

- Assemble materials so they are easily accessible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Photographs can evoke memories that children may not readily access in a discussion about church relevancy. Creating a collage by individually choosing congregation-related photographs and mixing them with images and/or words they find in magazines can help participants access feelings or thoughts they are not yet able to articulate. This creative process can instill a new understanding of church and faith.

Invite children to form groups of no more than four. Hand out materials and ask children to create a collage poster together that conveys to others what they find meaningful, fun or interesting at church. Ask them to consider a title as well. Ask them to create the poster to show someone who was not here today what everyone learned about why coming to church matters.

Point out the photographs from the congregation and the magazines, and suggest that groups take a few minutes to review the materials and identify some pictures and words to include in the collage. Suggest groups talk a bit with one another about how they should assemble their poster. Tell them how much time they will have to complete their collage, including clean-up. With about two minutes remaining, give a warning.

After they have cleaned up, invite them to hang the posters. If enough time remains after everyone has hung the posters, form the group into a line and review all the posters, asking questions as needed.

Thank them for their participation.

Including All Participants

Children with sight limitations may need to have an adult helper describe photographs to them so that they can choose ones that may be meaningful.

Ask the child to consider what might be in a magazine and let them direct you to find specific elements, in either pictures or words. Help the child place the items or pair the child with another in their group whom they can help, so that the poster is a fully inclusive creation.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: HISTORY TIMELINE — THE CHURCH'S AND MINE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Long roll of blank paper
- Different colors of permanent markers

- Paper and pencils
- Church history resources, such as newsletters, annual reports, or one or two adults who can tell about events over a significant period of time
- Adhesive to hold the timeline onto the wall
- Music from the years of these children's birth up through the present, and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare a timeline by marking a long history line and hash marks for historical events or periods. Begin at your congregation's founding and mark events that are paramount in its history or especially relevant to children, such as the building of a new religious education wing. Leave large spaces for the years that include both congregational history and the years of these children's lives.
- Find a location where half of the children can work on each side of the timeline. Make sure that the permanent markers, if they bleed through, will not damage floors or carpet.

Description of Activity

The children examine the confluence of the congregation's life and each of their lives by creating a picture that connects the children in the group with the larger congregation.

Invite children to separate into groups of up to seven. Give each group blank paper and a pencil, and ask each group to think about their personal history in terms of dates—birthdates; moving dates; the year when school began; the year they started playing sports or learning piano or doing another activity; sibling birthdates; dates of important participatory activities, including those in the congregation, if known (guesstimates are accepted). Ask them to jot down the dates and events on the paper.

Allow each group to add their individual dates to the calendar, leaving room for others. Caution that everyone in the room is relatively the same age, so it is likely the dates will be close together and practicing good manners is necessary. Ask one group to work from one side while the other group works from the other.

Help individuals add dates, occasionally asking all to pause while you add an important congregational history event among their personal dates.

Give a two-minute warning. Then guide the group to attach the timeline to the wall, with the invitation to add more information next time you meet (if you may leave the timeline up from week to week).

Ask participants for their observations about the timeline—not how it looks, but what they can learn from it. Ask them:

- Who else's history could be added?
- Have there been local, national, or global events that have touched the congregation in some way?
- Where has our congregation's history intersected your personal history? (Sometimes a congregational event has specific meaning for a child or their family.)

Ask them to help one another clean up, and thank them for their participation.

Including All Participants

For mobility restricted participants, ask someone else to add their history or wait until the timeline is done and the participant can add their information to the timeline after it is posted.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 2: STORY: JELLY BEANS

By Isabel Champ Wolseley. From *Lighting Candles in the Dark: Stories of Courage and Love in Action* (Philadelphia : Friends General Conference, 2001). Used by permission.

A family had all heard a story recently in church that included a verse from the bible that read, "If your enemy is hungry, feed them." It was a confusing idea—be nice to your enemies, treat evil with good. And it seemed a really hard thing to do.

The children who were seven and ten were especially puzzled. "Why feed your enemy?" they wondered.

The parents wondered too.

Day after day, John Jr. came home from school complaining about a classmate who sat behind him in fourth grade. "Bob keeps jabbing me when Mrs. Bailey isn't looking. One of these days when we're out of the playground, I am going to jab him right back—at least."

His parents weren't too happy either, thinking that Bob was really a brat! Besides, they thought the teacher should be doing a better job with kids in the class. The parents sat at the table wondering what they were going to do when John's seven-year-old sister, Amelia, spoke up: "Maybe he should feed Bob."

Everyone stopped eating and stared, with John Jr. asking, "Because he is my enemy?" His sister nodded.

We all looked at each other quickly, clearly uncomfortable with thinking of Bob as an enemy. It didn't seem as if an enemy could be in the fourth grade. An enemy was someone far off in another country, a grown-up.

John looked at us and asked, "What do you think?"

"Well," his parents said, "God said it, so maybe you should try it. Do you know what Bob likes to eat? If you are going to feed him, you may as well feed him something he likes."

Amelia asked, "Does he like goldfish?" which was her favorite snack.

No.

"How about cookies?" his mother who loved to bake asked.

"Maybe, but he can get cookies anywhere," John answered.

Everyone was quiet.

Especially John.

"Jelly beans!" he shouted. "Bob just loves jelly beans."

So John bought a bag of jelly beans to take to school. We would see whether or not enemy feeding worked.

The next day, sure enough Bob jabbed John in the back. John turned around and slapped the bag of jelly beans on his enemy's desk.

When the bus dropped John off at home, his mom was waiting for him. He got off the bus yelling, "It worked, it worked!"

"After he jabbed me, I gave him the jelly beans. He was so surprised he didn't say anything—he just took them. But he didn't jab me the rest of the day."

Or the next day. Or the next. In fact, John became good friends with Bob, all because of a little bag of jelly beans. John also realized that Bob was never really his enemy. He was just someone John didn't know. He was just someone who needed John to show him friendship.

Maybe people whom we think of as enemies are just hungry; maybe not for food, but for acts of kindness. Maybe. I think so. What do you think?

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 2:

HANDOUT 1: SEVEN CENTS A DAY

Adapted from the [Hunger No More](#) website.

Do this worksheet with an adult in your family. A calculator may help.

In 2000, the world's leaders set goals that would make the world a better place for everyone by 2015. One goal was to decrease by half the number of people living in poverty and hunger. If every person in the United States gave seven cents a day, we could achieve that goal.

What would seven cents a day mean for you? How much money would you have at the end of:

- one week?
- the month of February?
- one year?
- in the time since you were born?
- at the end of 2020?

What would seven cents a day mean for your family?

_____ family members x 7 cents = _____ a day

_____ X 7 days = _____ a week

_____ X 4 weeks = _____ a month

_____ X 12 months = _____ a year

What might your family give up in order to give seven cents a day for each family member? Here are some ideas:

- one dessert a week
- one movie (rental or theater) a month
- one special snack a week

What else can you think of?

How much would you be able to give if you gave up one of these things?

How often will you give your money to your church or another organization that fights hunger?

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 2:

LEADER RESOURCE 1: GUIDE FOR ADULT GUESTS

Adapt and distribute to parents at least two weeks before leading this session.

Greetings!

Thank you for agreeing to share your thoughts about being part of this congregation. We want the children to hear about why people come to this church and what it means to them that children are part of the congregation.

Each adult participant will have about four minutes to share their thoughts with the group. Please prepare by thinking about how you will answer these questions:

- Why do you come to church?
- What one word best describes your congregational attachment?
- Is there a location in the church that is particularly meaningful to you or where you will feel most comfortable talking to the children?
- Why is the presence of children at church important to you personally?

FIND OUT MORE

Thich Nhat Hanh and Walking Meditation

Read about Thich Nhat Hanh on the [Plum Village Practice Center](http://www.plumvillage.org/HTML/ourteacher.html) (at www.plumvillage.org/HTML/ourteacher.html) website or [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nhat_Hanh) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nhat_Hanh).

[Walking Meditation](http://www.amazon.com/Walking-Meditation-Thich-Nhat-Hanh/dp/1591794730/sr=1-2/qid=1164813434/ref=sr_1_2/103-4557645-4920647?ie=UTF8&s=books) (at www.amazon.com/Walking-Meditation-Thich-Nhat-Hanh/dp/1591794730/sr=1-2/qid=1164813434/ref=sr_1_2/103-4557645-4920647?ie=UTF8&s=books) (2006) is a mini-book and instructional DVD from Thich Nhat Hanh which features five walking exercises: Conscious Breathing Meditation, Slow Walking Meditation, Walking Meditation in Nature, Walking Meditation in Public Places and Walking Meditation to Embrace Your Emotions.

[The Long Road Turns to Joy: A Guide to Walking Meditation](http://www.amazon.com/Long-Road-Turns-Joy-Meditation/dp/093807783X/sr=8-1/qid=1159534742/ref=pd_bbs_1/104-5808493-7773560?ie=UTF8&s=books) (at www.amazon.com/Long-Road-Turns-Joy-Meditation/dp/093807783X/sr=8-1/qid=1159534742/ref=pd_bbs_1/104-5808493-7773560?ie=UTF8&s=books) by Thich Nhat Hanh is a

small, pocket-sized book with dozens of simple exercises to enhance your practice of walking mindfully.

More about Movement Meditation

The 10-minute ["Walking Meditation"](http://www.mindfulnesscds.com/author.html) (at www.mindfulnesscds.com/author.html) on the CD [Guided Mindfulness Meditation, Series 3](http://www.mindfulnesscds.com/) (at www.mindfulnesscds.com/) by [Jon Kabat-Zinn](http://www.mindfulnesscds.com/author.html) (at www.mindfulnesscds.com/author.html) guides you through a walking meditation that you can do anywhere.

[Meditation 24/7: Practices to Enlighten Every Moment of the Day](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0740747150/ref=pd_sim_b_1/103-3138832-5696668?%5Fencoding=UTF8&v=glance) (at www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0740747150/ref=pd_sim_b_1/103-3138832-5696668?%5Fencoding=UTF8&v=glance) (CD & book) by [C. Maurine](http://www.camillemaurine.com/) (at www.camillemaurine.com/) and [L. Roche](http://www.lorinroche.com/) (at www.lorinroche.com/) has a 7-minute track, "Move It," that helps you move physically with feelings flowing inside you and develop with your kinesthetic awareness. The book suggests ways to use this meditation in your life.

SESSION 3: WE NEED NOT THINK ALIKE TO LOVE ALIKE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

We need not think alike to love alike. — Francis David

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

Unitarian Universalism finds strength in explicitly welcoming diversity. It is well known that many of us bring identities and beliefs that are Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Humanist or Pagan to our Unitarian Universalist religious lives. There are also many lifelong UUs, and UUs with neither training in nor attachment to another theology or faith heritage.

In our congregations, however, diversity of faith heritage and belief is not always visible. Yes, many congregations celebrate holidays and draw from religious practices of a wide variety of faiths. But, do we actively engage and affirm each individual's faith heritage and personal religious beliefs?

This session lifts up our denomination's pluralism of faith heritage and theological belief for participants to examine and affirm within themselves, among the group, in their families and in the congregation. Affirming one another's meaningful faith traditions, theological questions and beliefs is a way to affirm one another as truth-seekers—our fourth Principle. It also expresses our third Principle, that we accept every individual and encourage their spiritual growth.

The session introduces the six Sources that support and nurture Unitarian Universalist faith. Children will explore how the Sources embrace a variety of faith traditions, including Unitarian Universalism itself. A story about Thomas Starr King illustrates that to follow one's own faith path is not only allowed but a core value in Unitarian Universalism.

Faith Heritage Letter to Parents

Children will need information about their family's faith heritage to be well prepared for this session. Some may wish to include photos or other items from home in their Window/Mirror panel or a Faith Family Tree (Faith in Action or Alternate Activity 2). Adapt and distribute Leader Resource 1, Faith Heritage Letter to Parents, at least two weeks ahead. During the session that precedes this one, remind children to ask their parents about their faith heritage.

GOALS

This session will:

- Affirm children as religious beings, with individual religious beliefs and identities
- Introduce the concept of faith heritage as a legacy from parents/caregivers that may shift its role in one's life, as faith develops
- Demonstrate that Unitarian Universalism encourages and guides us to examine our own beliefs, where our beliefs come from, and how those beliefs continue to mesh with our developing faith in an ongoing, individual search for truth and meaning
- Introduce the six Unitarian Universalist Sources; demonstrate how they guide us to look to diverse faith traditions as we develop and affirm our individual and collective faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify their individual faith heritage and some of their beliefs, and explore how these are connected and reflected in their lives as Unitarian Universalists
- Learn about major faith traditions represented in Unitarian Universalism and identify symbols associated with Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism
- Recognize theological and faith heritage diversity in the group and in the congregation
- Understand how embracing diverse faith heritages and beliefs in our congregations honors our fourth Principle, the free and responsible search for truth and meaning, and our third Principle, acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth
- Learn about Thomas Starr King, who brought a Universalist faith heritage with him when his faith journey carried him into Unitarianism.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Window/Mirror Panel, Part I — Diverse Faith Traditions	5
Activity 2: Where Do My Beliefs Come From?	10
Activity 3: UU Sources Inventory	10
Activity 4: Story — Thomas Starr King	10
Activity 5: Window/Mirror Panel, Part II — Diverse Faith Traditions	15
Faith in Action: Congregational Faith Family Tree	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Listening Activity — Supporting Theological Diversity	10
Alternate Activity 2: Our Faith Family Tree	25
Alternate Activity 3: UU Partner Church	

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable, lighting a candle to mark the time differently than you do for other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate you from the activities of the day.

Let your mind sift through your religious beliefs. Which are most important to you? Ask yourself:

- How do your beliefs guide your expectations and choices in life?
- In what ways do you find your beliefs affirmed in Unitarian Universalism, perhaps anchored in some of our Sources? In what ways not?
- Might your beliefs ever change? What might change them?
- Where did you learn your beliefs? If you were not raised a UU, what other faith traditions influenced your beliefs?
- What do you consider your faith heritage? In what ways do you carry your faith heritage into your religious life today? How do you express or affirm your faith heritage in your life in the UU congregation?
- Is it easy or hard for you to see children as religious beings, with beliefs which are as true and powerful to them as yours are to you?

Like adults, children do have beliefs and faith which guide their lives. Today you will ask the children to think about their beliefs and connect them with their family's faith heritage including and beyond Unitarian Universalism. Remember, some children may be articulating their beliefs for the first time. Some may believe in Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy; others may be sure there is no such thing as God. Children may find it hard to see beliefs as something that can change or to see connections among their beliefs, their faith heritage, and the UU Sources. Allow them to be who they are and where they are, and see what you can learn.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print out Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket, cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life" or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is

new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life. If you choose not to sing, use a bell to ask the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from the UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL, PART I — DIVERSE FAITH TRADITIONS (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of Handout 1, [Faith Symbols](#), (included in this document) for all participants
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- At least two weeks before this session, ask participants to find out from their parents about their family's faith heritage(s). Adapt and distribute Leader Resource 1, Faith Heritage Letter to Parents.
- Print out and copy the handout.
- Optional: Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Distribute copies of Handout 1, Faith Symbols. Explain that later in the session they may cut out or draw these faith symbols or others for their Window/Mirror panels.

Point out the Buddhist prayer wheel, the Christian cross, the Jewish Star of David and the Islamic crescent moon and star. Ask the group to identify the symbol that represents Unitarian Universalism; affirm that it is the flaming chalice. Ask if participants have any ideas why the flaming chalice is represented in the center of the handout. Say:

Unitarian Universalism respects all faith traditions and has a rich history and tradition of

its own. Unitarian Universalists bring beliefs and practices from many different faith traditions to the religious community we share.

Invite participants to share about other faith symbols they may know, including their own experience with that faith.

Encourage children to share their knowledge of their own faith heritage. If you wish, collect their contributions, phrasing them briefly on newsprint.

ACTIVITY 2: WHERE DO MY BELIEFS COME FROM? (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- If you have extra time, consider expanding this activity to incorporate Alternate Activity 1, Listening Activity — Supporting Theological Diversity; children articulate a faith belief to a partner or small group and practice respectful, affirmative listening.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Tell the children:

Let's practice "theological reflection"—that means thinking about a religious question.

Ask the children to consider what they think they believe about God. Have a moment of silence and reflection on this question. You may use a bell or chime to signal the need for silence at the beginning of the time for reflection. Ring the bell or chime again to signal the end of the time for reflection.

Now, invite the children to share their thoughts on what they believe about God. Allow all volunteers to share, yet move conversation along—the focus here is not on the beliefs, but how children came to them. Affirm all contributions succinctly. Make it clear there is no "right" answer. Tell the group, "In our faith, we understand that what people think about God often changes over the course of time in their lives."

Now ask the children to think about how they came to their beliefs. Write their answers on newsprint, in the order in which you hear them (no ranking by importance or tallying to mark a repeated response). Make certain that everyone has a chance to speak.

Some answers you may hear are:

- My parents gave me an idea about God.

- I do not believe in God.
- I am not sure I believe in God.
- I used my own experience to decide about God.
- I read a book that helped me learn about God.
- I decided about God because of something I learned in church.
- I think that you should choose a religion that makes sense to you.
- The idea of God is not believable.

Be prepared for negative comments, e.g., "God is a stupid idea," or "Who would believe something so ridiculous?" A sarcastic or provocative comment may indicate that a child does not feel their belief is really welcome or they are uncomfortable with not knowing what they believe. Gently help a child paraphrase a genuine question. Affirm that "not knowing," skepticism and atheism are legitimate stances on God.

You may wish to introduce terms such as "deist," "humanist," "skeptic" or "agnostic" if you are comfortably sure of their meanings. However, avoid characterizing children's beliefs by denomination—e.g., Christian, Buddhist—based on this brief information from them.

Point out the diversity of the beliefs children have shared. Ask, "If we opened this discussion to the whole congregation, might we find even more beliefs?"

Emphasize that beliefs can change as we learn and have new experiences in life. You may say:

No matter how your beliefs may change, you are always welcome here. People can believe in different religious ideas and still remain in the same Unitarian Universalist congregation because of some beliefs we all share: We believe in the value of a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We believe in the right of individual conscience in our faith choices. We believe in respecting everyone.

Including All Participants

Do not put children on the spot by going around in a circle for responses. It is more important to demonstrate welcome to all religious beliefs and faith traditions, than to make sure all children share with the group.

ACTIVITY 3: UU SOURCES INVENTORY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

- Handout 2, [Unitarian Universalist Sources](#) (included in this document) , and pencils, for all participants

Preparation for Activity

- Print and copy handout for all participants.
- Post a sheet of blank newsprint to record notes from each small group you will form.
- Be ready to help small groups with examples that help illustrate each Source, for example, "The Golden Rule" for Jewish and Christian teachings, respect for the environment from Earth-based religions, etc.

Description of Activity

Ask the group what "sources" are, as you distribute handouts and pencils. Affirm that a source is "someplace you can get something you need." Tell the group:

Now we are going to look at our Unitarian Universalist Sources. These are places where we look for what we need in faith—answers to our religious questions and guidance about how to live our lives.

Form small groups of three to five participants. With six small groups, assign each group a Source to discuss. With four groups, you might assign direct experience (first Source), words and deeds (second), wisdom (third) and teachings (fourth, fifth and sixth). If the entire group is too small for four small groups, work as one group to consider direct experience, words and deeds, and "teachings and wisdom."

Invite participants in small groups, to apply these questions to their Source:

- What does this Source mean? What are some examples of it?
- What happens in our congregation that seems connected to this Source? Think about our worship, religious school, social justice activities, holiday and holy day celebrations, special events.
- Is the Source missing in our congregation? What would you like to learn more about or see more of, related to this Source?
- Can you think of a way this Source is connected to any beliefs you or others shared during this session? (For example, does your belief about God come from a Christian or Jewish bible story? from the statements of someone prophetic, either ancient or contemporary? from

a folk tale from another world religion your parents or grandparents may have told you?)

Watch the time. Save two or three minutes for small groups to share some of their discussion. Use the newsprint to record examples of the Source to help the entire group learn the meanings of all the Sources—for example, under "direct experience" you may note "watching sunset," "singing in church," "helping homeless person," "waking from a powerful dream," etc.

To conclude, point out that people may hold different beliefs, learn from different faith traditions, and look to different Sources for truth, and still remain in the same Unitarian Universalist congregation. Say:

In our religion, we do share many beliefs. We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of everyone. We believe that everyone is free and responsible to search for truth and meaning, and we believe in following our own individual conscience to make our faith choices. And, we believe our members' different faith paths enrich the faith of the whole congregation.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY — THOMAS STARR KING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Thomas Starr King](#) (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "Thomas Starr King," a few times. Consider telling it dramatically, rather than reading it from the page. Practice telling it. Claim the storytelling; for example, try adopting different voices for different characters. The stories here are written for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.
- For storytelling, be ritualistic. Create a mood and time that is different from other moments in the session. For example, turn overhead lights off and use lamps. Position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.
- Review questions and choose some you think might resonate with the group and help these particular children interpret the story and relate it to their own lives.
- If the group is very large, plan to form smaller groups (no less than three participants) for

discussion. An adult leader should facilitate each small group.

- Consider what this story means to you in relation to the purpose of this session. Articulate this in a one- or two-word sentence that you can share with the group at the end of the discussion.

Description of Activity

Before you begin, ring the chime (or other noisemaker). Make eye contact with each participant. Introduce the story:

Today Unitarian Universalists talk about many other religions and not just Christianity, but Christianity is a part of our history. The founders and early believers of both Unitarianism and Universalism were all Christians. They came from Protestant religions, such as Methodist and Presbyterian.

But these early Unitarian and Universalists believed in following your conscience in matters of religion—deciding for yourself and not simply believing what others in authority tell you to believe. This led our faith community to become something different from a Christian faith. We encourage one another to look to many faith traditions each for their own truth. We find wisdom to feed our faith in many religions and philosophies. We welcome people who have religious roots or find faith wisdom in Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Humanism, Wicca and many other traditions, including Christianity.

Thomas Starr King was one of those early believers, raised in a Christian faith. Let's see how he changed and what he did as he grew up.

Read or tell the story. Sound the chime (or other noisemaker) again at the end.

Invite the children to think silently on their own about the story.

Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to better understand the story from the multiple perspectives in the room as we find out what each other thought about the story.

Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Remind them not to assume others think or feel the same way. You may suggest that a brief silence be maintained after each person's comment.

Invite the children to retell the story, briefly, in their own words. What children recall and relay tells you what they

found most meaningful or memorable. Then, use these questions to facilitate discussion. Make sure every child who wants to speak has a chance:

- Do you think it was an easy or a difficult decision for Starr to leave the Unitarian religion and become a Universalist?
- Why do you think his friends were upset?
- Do you think it was easy or hard for him to move to California, leaving his friends again, this time to move far away?
- Is it scary, or exciting, to think that your beliefs might change as you learn and grow and experience life? Why?

ACTIVITY 5: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL, PART II — DIVERSE FAITH TRADITIONS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Handout 1, [Faith Symbols](#) (included in this document), for all participants
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror Panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - A variety of drawing and writing materials, including color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors, including left-hand scissors
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon, scraps of fabric and a variety of old magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Have materials easily accessible, including copies of Handout 1 you provided to participants in Activity 1.

Description of Activity

Say, in your own words:

Today we have spent some time examining our beliefs and where we learned or discovered them. We talked about how our family's faith heritage and our Unitarian Universalist Sources

can help us as we keep exploring our beliefs. We have shared some of our own beliefs and seen how different and individual they can be, even just among the people in this room.

Now you have a chance to express who you are in your beliefs by adding to your Window/Mirror Panel.

Ask the children to bring their Window/Mirror Panels to work tables. Distribute Window/Mirror Panel basket(s). Invite the children to:

- Draw on paper or Mylar, or cut out and decorate, one or more religious symbols you find meaningful because of family or friend connections or because they are important sources for your own beliefs. Add the symbols to your panel.
- Write a statement of a belief that is important to you and add it to your panel.
- Make a drawing to show the faith heritage you come from, your beliefs now, or your life's faith journey up to this point.
- Represent your faith future, the Sources or faith traditions you want to explore, and how these might relate to your Unitarian Universalist journey of faith.
- A combination of any of the above suggestions.

Walk around and assist. Some participants may need to engage verbally before they find direction.

Give the group a two-minute warning so they have time to complete their image, affix it to their Window/Mirror Panel, clean up, and store their panels.

Including All Participants

Affirm it is perfectly okay to invent a faith symbol, not use a faith symbol, or use a question mark. Remind children they may use the flaming chalice symbol to represent Unitarian Universalism as a faith heritage, a set of shared beliefs learned or practiced in our congregation, or simply where they come to church.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of Namaste and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to first clean up their own area and the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses, allowing individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: CONGREGATIONAL FAITH FAMILY TREE

Materials for Activity

- Notebooks and pencils
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Congregational information such as newsletters, flyers, website pages, orders of service
- Appropriate arts and crafts materials, including copies of Handout 1, [Faith Symbols](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Gather information about worship and other activities which children can examine for evidence of different faith and denominational traditions and beliefs represented in your worship and other congregational activities.
- With your director of religious education and/or minister, plan a time for participants to interview members about the faith and denominational traditions and beliefs they bring to your congregation.
- Arrange for a time for participants to assemble a three-dimensional "faith family tree." Obtain the arts and crafts supplies you will need and invite any volunteers with special skills.
- Arrange a place in your congregation for the display of the faith family tree. You may wish to coordinate this with an exhibit of participants' Window/Mirror Panels.

Description of Activity

Participants build a three-dimensional "family tree," representing the faith and belief traditions in your congregation, in a design and medium of the group's choice. You will need at least three meeting times to:

1. Assign research roles (can be brief).
2. Conduct research.
3. Build the congregational faith family tree.

Even if you think you know all the faith and belief traditions members bring to your congregation, an essential part of this Faith in Action activity is to dispatch participants to look for diversities which may not be obvious. All participants should help in "appreciative inquiry," even if they simply ask their parents about the faith and belief traditions they bring to their practice of Unitarian Universalism. You may wish to assign some

children to survey members at a coffee hour and allow others to observe worship services or tour the facility to read posted flyers and analyze art, architecture, etc. for the faith traditions represented.

Offer the group or lead a discussion to develop a concept for a three-dimensional, Congregational Faith Family Tree. How can participants represent what they have learned about religious diversity among congregational members? Make Handout 1, Faith Symbols, available. Other items for the tree might include photographs of congregational celebrations, flyers or cut-outs from flyers for events marking different faith traditions, or "I believe..." statements written on index cards in different handwriting.

Variation

Engage congregational members to co-create the Congregational Faith Family Tree. To introduce the project, ask the children to brainstorm the many religious traditions represented in their Unitarian Universalist congregation. Point out that there may be additional faith traditions and beliefs, too. Say:

Let's celebrate our religious diversity by asking members of the congregation to add to our Faith Family Tree.

Guide the children to:

1. Make a Congregational Faith Family Tree structure or two-dimensional poster for display in a well-traveled place in your congregational facility where it can remain for several weeks.

2. Announce to the congregation (newsletter, worship announcements, etc.) that members are invited to represent themselves on the tree. The announcement and the display itself should clearly indicate what members may do—for example, "Take one of the blank tree leaves provided, list your religious background, your current faith orientation, or a particular Unitarian Universalist Source that is important to you and affix the leaf to the Faith Family Tree."

Once the congregation has had time to interact with the Faith Family Tree, make time for the group—or perhaps a wider, multigenerational group—to respond to the evidence of religious diversity that has been gathered. Encourage sharing about the various faith traditions and how they appear, or do not appear, in congregational worship and other activities. You may find Alternate Activity 1, Listening Activity — Supporting Theological Diversity, useful for such a meeting.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

We need not think alike to love alike. — Francis David

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

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

We explored diversity of faith heritage and religious belief as a desirable and welcome feature of a Unitarian Universalist congregation. The activities helped children practice active affirmation of each individual's faith heritage and personal religious beliefs. The children learned that when we affirm each other's meaningful faith traditions and their theological questions and beliefs, we affirm each other as individual truth-seekers (our fourth Principle) and show that we accept every individual and encourage their spiritual growth (third Principle). The session introduced the six Sources that support and nurture Unitarian Universalist faith. Children will explore how the Sources embrace a variety of faith traditions, including Unitarian Universalism itself. A story about Thomas Starr King illustrates that to follow one's own faith path is not only allowed but a core value in Unitarian Universalism.

Children learned symbols of Unitarian Universalism and several other major faiths. Some children used these symbols to represent their faith heritage in an art activity.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . T alk about ...

Ask your child what they shared about their faith heritage today. Ask if they learned anything surprising about themselves when it was time to think about what they believe about God or another religious topic. Were

they surprised by anything a peer contributed? If your child learned that a friend holds a different belief or comes from a faith tradition that is different from yours, ask how it felt to discover this difference. Ask them what they think about the religious diversity around them and the ways this diversity is celebrated in your congregation and/or your home.

Share your thoughts on religious diversity, inside and outside your congregation. Share your feelings about freedom of religious belief.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

A FAMILY ADVENTURE

Do you have friends whose religious beliefs differ from yours and are comfortable articulating their faith choices? Arrange for your family to join them for a religious service or celebration and some conversation about their beliefs. Bring along a copy of the Unitarian Universalist Sources and find out which Sources, if any, resonate religiously for your friends.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Discuss the theological diversity within your family. Sketch your family's faith heritage "family tree" and discuss the faith journey(s) that led you to your Unitarian Universalist community.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: LISTENING ACTIVITY — THEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper and pencils for all participants
- A timepiece

Preparation for Activity

- Consider your beliefs about God, what happens to us after we die, or another religious question. Prepare a short statement about a belief of your own to use as an example.

Description of Activity

Participants practice supportive listening by affirming personal belief statements each child shares with a partner or small group.

Distribute paper and pencils. Ask the children to develop a belief statement to share. Allow one or two minutes for each child to develop a statement about God or something else that they consider a religious topic. This statement may be written down or the child may choose to represent their belief in a drawing.

Now, say:

Our faith tells us that anything you believe is okay here. We all know that. Now we will practice how to show it. Everyone will have a chance to share their belief statement. The other(s) will listen in the respectful, supportive way everyone in our congregation should when discussing our beliefs.

You may wish to establish some tools for showing respectful listening. Ask the group for suggestions, and/or suggest:

- Look at the person who is talking.
- Ask questions in a respectful way if you do not understand something the person says or shows you.
- Keep your agreement or disagreement with the person's beliefs to yourself. Do not challenge or criticize their beliefs.
- Save your sharing about your own beliefs until after the person's turn to share theirs.

Form pairs or small groups and invite children to practice telling their beliefs and listening respectfully to those of others. Monitor time and groups to make sure each child has a turn to talk and to listen. If you observe disrespectful listening, gently step in and redirect.

Re-gather the group and debrief. You might ask:

- How did it feel to be sharing your belief statement?
- How did it feel when you were listening to someone else?
- Did anyone feel they wanted to ask or discuss more about the belief the other person shared? What would be some ways to pursue further conversation if your beliefs were different? If they were similar?
- How did you, as a listener, help someone feel their belief is accepted?
- As a talker, how confident did you feel that your belief was accepted? Why do you think you felt as you did?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: OUR FAITH FAMILY TREE (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A large sheet of poster board
- Appropriate arts and crafts materials, including copies of Handout 1, [Faith Symbols](#) (included in this document)

- Optional: Photos or other items participants have brought from home to represent their faith heritage

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place where the group can work on a large poster (such as several work tables, pushed together) and a place to display the Faith Family Tree. You may wish to coordinate the display with an exhibit of participants' Window/Mirror Panels.
- Optional: Prepare the poster board by writing "Windows and Mirrors Faith Family Tree" as the title. You might cut out and attach a flaming chalice from Handout 1 (it could serve as the trunk of a Faith Family Tree).

Description of Activity

Tell the children they will make a Faith Family Tree to show the diversity of faith traditions represented in the group.

Show the group the poster board. Explain that the flaming chalice will be part of the poster. Children may use other faith symbols, including more flaming chalices, or images they draw or have brought from home to show the diverse faith traditions that feed the Unitarian Universalism we share in this group.

Invite volunteers to share information about their faith heritage and tell how they want to represent it on the Faith Family Tree. Allow the group to suggest symbols for one another to use, as well as suggest ideas for the design of the tree and where the flaming chalice ought to go.

Invite children to cut out, draw and/or decorate their own faith heritage images. As children finish, help them attach their pieces to the Faith Family Tree. You might have some children assemble the tree instead of making their own individual faith heritage images.

As the Faith Family Tree nears completion, encourage conversation about the various faith traditions represented. Invite children to share about how they experience them at home and/or in the congregation.

Including All Participants

Children will need to know something about their faith heritage to represent it on a poster. If you have not sent the Faith Heritage Letter to Parents (Leader Resource 1) or you have reason to believe some children will not describe their faith heritage, invite just a few volunteers to share orally about their faith heritage. Make sure you have assignments—e.g., attaching faith symbols to the poster, decorating the poster title or hanging the poster

for display—for children who opt not to add a faith heritage image.

Church, and then write them down in a letter to your congregational leadership.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: UU PARTNER CHURCHES

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Paper and pencils, crayons or markers for cards or letters
- Optional: Information about Unitarian Universalist Partner Churches

Preparation for Activity

- Visit the [Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council website](http://www.uupcc.org/) (at www.uupcc.org/) and choose materials to share with the group.
- Find out about your congregation's Partner Church activities. If appropriate, invite your minister or a lay leader to come talk with children about how your congregation participates.

Description of Activity

Say, in your own words:

The Unitarian Universalist Association Partner Church Program connects Unitarian Universalist congregations in the U.S. with congregations outside the U.S. to provide assistance, encouragement and partnership. These congregations in India, the Philippines and Hungarian-speaking areas of Romania represent minority religious communities, often facing misunderstanding and sometimes persecution because of members' religious beliefs.

Tell the children that Partner Churches outside the United States may include people whose beliefs are not exactly the same as theirs, but who, like Unitarian Universalists in the United States, choose freedom of conscience in matters of faith.

If your congregation has a Partner Church, tell the children how the congregation participates and brainstorm ways the group can become involved. Guide them to think of ways they could help the Partner Church children, for example, by sending cards, letters or emails to them or by holding a bake sale to raise funds for school scholarships.

If your congregation is not active in the program, make a commitment to initiate a Partner Church relationship. Lead the children to petition the larger congregation. Brainstorm reasons why you should support a Partner

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 3: STORY: THOMAS STARR KING

From *A Lamp in Every Corner* by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004).

A Bright Star

A long time ago, when railroad trains were still brand new and the United States had only twenty-four stars on its flag instead of fifty, there lived a boy whose name was Starr. That may seem like an odd sort of name to us today, but his mother's last name had been Starr before she was married, and back then, children were often given their mother's maiden name as their middle name. Starr's full name was really Thomas Starr King, but there were lots and lots of boys named Thomas around, and so his family called him Starr.

Starr was bright, just like his name. He was bright in school, learning his lessons well. He was bright at home, helping out cheerfully and doing his chores without complaints—not too many, anyway. And he was bright at the Universalist church his family went to, where his father was a minister. Starr was always happy to help. He carried the hymnals, he polished the candle holders, and he helped dust the pews.

But most of all, Starr loved to ring the church bell. On Sunday mornings, bright and early, he'd climb the stairs to the bell tower. He'd grab the rope with both hands and pull! And then: *bong!* would go the bell, and up would go Starr. That rope would pull him right off his feet! And then down he'd come with a *thump*, and the bell would go *dong!* Then Starr would give that rope another pull, and *up!* he'd go again, even higher this time, and the bell would go *bong!*

Starr loved ringing that church bell. He loved other music, too. He loved singing, especially at church, where lots of people sang in harmony. Some sang high, some sang low, some sang in-between, but all the different voices worked together to create one glorious song.

Starr liked everything about church. "When I grow up," Starr said, "I'm going to be a minister in a church, just like my father." And Starr was. When he was twenty-one, he was a minister in a Universalist church. But then, when he was twenty-four, he changed churches. He became a minister in a Unitarian church. (Back then, the Universalists and the Unitarians were still separate. Starr was ahead of his time. He was a Universalist

Unitarian over one hundred years before the rest of us became Unitarian Universalists.)

Some of his friends weren't happy to see him change. "Starr!" they said, "how can you leave Universalism?"

"I'm not leaving Universalism," Starr said. "I can be a Unitarian and Universalist at the same time. I'm just singing a different part. We all sing together to make one glorious song."

In 1860, when railroads went from state to state and there were thirty-three stars on the American flag, Starr left Boston, Massachusetts, and moved all the way across the country to San Francisco, California. His friends weren't happy to see him go. "Starr!" they said, "how can you move so far away?"

"I'm not leaving our country," Starr said. "I'm just moving to a different state. All the states work together to make one great nation." But the year was 1860, and not everyone agreed. The Civil War was coming, and the nation was being torn apart, some states to the North and some states to the South. The stars were coming off the flag. California was in the West, and no one was sure which way it would go.

Thomas Starr King was sure that the states should stay together, "one nation, indivisible," and he set out to convince everyone in California of that, too. He was a minister at his church in San Francisco, and he preached there on Sundays, but he also traveled around the state and made speeches. He made speeches in towns and in mining camps, in great lecture halls and in canvas tents. He made speeches in front of thousands and thousands of people. He didn't convince all of the people, but he convinced enough, and in 1861 California voted to stay in the Union and to keep its star on the American flag.

"He saved California for the Union," said a general in the Union army, and that helped the North win the war. The people of California still remember him for that today. California put a statue of him in the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco and sent another statue to Washington, D.C. He has two mountains named after him: one in California's Yosemite National Park and one in New Hampshire's White Mountains. Both the Unitarians and the Universalists still remember him, and we've set his name on the school where some of our ministers go: the Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California.

So you may hear his name from time to time, and now you know why: Thomas Starr King was a bright and shining star.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 3:
HANDOUT 1: FAITH SYMBOLS



Christianity



Judaism



Hinduism



Islam



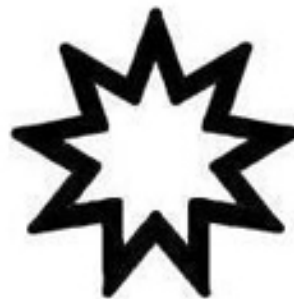
Unitarian Universalism



Buddhism



Sikhism



Bahá'í



Jainism

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 3:

HANDOUT 2: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOURCES

The [Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources](#) can be found on the UUA website.

Unitarian Universalism draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 3:

LEADER RESOURCE 1: FAITH HERITAGE LETTER TO PARENTS

Adapt and distribute to parents at least two weeks before leading this session.

Dear Parents of the Windows and Mirrors Group,

On (date), please make sure your child brings knowledge of their faith heritage to the session. The group will explore the diversity of faith heritages and beliefs represented in our Unitarian Universalist community. We will explore our own individual beliefs and examine where we learned or how we discovered them. We will share about the faith heritage of our families.

Children may also want to bring a photo or other image from home that says something about your family's faith heritage. In an art project, they will represent their faith heritage and/or beliefs with one or more faith symbols. Symbols of Unitarian Universalism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism will be provided. If another faith heritage is important in your family, or a particular faith symbol is meaningful for your family, please send an appropriate image with your child to this session.

Thank you,

(Co-leaders names and contact information)

FIND OUT MORE

Theological Diversity within the UUA

Organizations affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association testify to the variety of faith heritages represented in our denomination. Find out about the [HUUmanists Association](http://www.humanists.org) (at www.humanists.org), the [Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship](http://www.uuchristian.org/) (at www.uuchristian.org/), the [Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship](http://www.uua.org/uubf) (at www.uua.org/uubf), the [Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans](http://www.cuups.org/) (at www.cuups.org/), and [Unitarian Universalist Partner Churches](http://www.uupcc.org/) (at www.uupcc.org/) in Romania, India and the Philippines .

In her 2004 *UU World* article "[What can Jewish Orthodoxy teach us?](http://www.uuworld.org/2004/03/bookshelf.html)," (at www.uuworld.org/2004/03/bookshelf.html) the Reverend Elizabeth Lerner, who was raised UU, writes:

I am a Unitarian Universalist in the same way I am an American—born to it, out of a colorful ancestral stew. My ancestors arrived here from Poland, Russia, and Italy within the same twenty-year span. Roman Catholic on one side of the family, Jewish on the other, I am a perfect candidate for Unitarian Universalism—which is exactly why my parents chose this faith and raised me and my sister in it. Unitarian Universalism's religious pluralism, as so many of us have found, is a good match for American cultural pluralism.

The [website of Rev. Marti Keller](http://www.revmartikeller.com/sermons/humanist.html) (at www.revmartikeller.com/sermons/humanist.html), the [Jewish Voices in Unitarian Universalism](http://jewishvoicesinuuism.homestead.com/index.html) (at jewishvoicesinuuism.homestead.com/index.html) website, and the website of [Unitarian Universalists for Jewish Awareness](http://www.uuja.org/) (at www.uuja.org/) are places to explore Jewish connections in our faith.

SESSION 4: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF FORGIVENESS

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world. — Marianne Williamson

Ideally, a faith community is the place to practice repentance and forgiveness, the better to use them in the world outside. This session explores pathways to forgiveness.

When a child feels wronged, the impulse toward revenge and retaliation may invite more creative possibility than forgiveness. Many children, too, have experienced (or offered) insincere apologies, perhaps when an adult mediator's goal was to achieve a temporary peace. This session teaches that as liberating as an apology can be for both the aggrieved and errant parties, true forgiveness is only sustainable in the context of justice. Repairing a broken covenant takes sincere intent and deliberate practice. Children in this session begin to learn the appropriate skills.

GOALS

This session will:

- Develop participants' understanding of the individual's role in a covenanted community
- Help participants understand the necessity for both peace and justice in a covenanted community
- Create understanding of forgiveness and its benefits to both the person receiving and the person giving.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Practice the skills of offering forgiveness to those who have broken a covenant
- Connect their own thoughts and experiences with a story about a group of Buddhist students' experience of covenant and forgiveness
- Articulate ways they express and consider ways to enforce the group covenant
- Understand how practicing forgiveness helps heal hurt feelings

- Commit to practicing at home forgiveness skills learned during the session.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Law, Crime and Punishment	5
Activity 2: Game — Steal the Bacon	10
Activity 3: Story — Teaching a Thief	15
Activity 4: Write a Letter of Forgiveness	15
Activity 5: Window/Mirror Panel — Forgiveness Heart	5
Faith in Action: International Forgiveness Day	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Spiritual Practice — Forgiveness Meditation	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable and light a candle to mark the time as different from other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes; perhaps repeat a word or phrase to separate you from the activities of the day. After opening your eyes, consider:

- When or to whom have you had a difficult time offering forgiveness?
- How does this affect your life?
- How do you perceive the children in the group feel or think about breaking the rules and seeking forgiveness? How might they understand this session?
- What models of forgiveness do children see among the adults in the congregation? Are these useful models or negative models?
- What are your expectations for this session? What do you hope is created at its conclusion? What difference do you hope it makes?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket, cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is

new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life

If you choose not to sing, use a bell as a signal for the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: LAW, CRIME AND PUNISHMENT (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- On a large sheet of newsprint make three columns. Write the word "Crime" over the first column, "Mild Punishment" over the second and "Harsh Punishment" over the third. In the "Crime" column, write these examples of behavior that would be considered breaking either a covenant or the law:
 - Stealing a pencil
 - Stealing your parents' car
 - Stealing a stranger's car
 - Robbing a bank
 - Stealing retirement money from elderly people
 - Stealing someone's land
- Leave room to add others the children may contribute.

Description of Activity

Children begin thinking about the "gray areas" of rule-breaking. This activity helps prepare them to be open to forgiveness.

Briefly discuss the concepts of law (rules we all agree to follow), crime (a harsh action that breaks the rules) and

punishment (a penalty or price for breaking the rules). Mention that in many religions, cultures and legal systems, the penalty must fit the crime — for example, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth (Exodus 21:23-27); no cruel or unusual punishment (the 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution).

Ask the children what they believe should be the mildest and harshest punishment for each crime listed on the newsprint. There may be some debate about appropriate punishment; you might suggest a quick vote among the group. Write their responses on the newsprint. Let the children know they will have an opportunity to revisit this list later in the session. Keep the list posted—or put it aside to use in Activity 4, Write a Letter of Forgiveness.

ACTIVITY 2: GAME — STEAL THE BACON (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- An object that serves as the "bacon" (something that will not roll or bounce; a glove or hat works well)

Preparation for Activity

- Create a space large enough for the group to form two lines facing each other and about 10—15 feet apart.
- Agree about who will be the umpire. If there is an even number of children, an adult can be umpire; if not, one of the children can be umpire.
- Agree to play the game until one side earns 5 points.

Description of Activity

This game uses fast-paced movement to explore the penalty for getting caught "stealing the bacon." The object of Steal the Bacon is to take the "bacon" back to your own side without being caught.

Form the children into two teams. Ask each team to count off, starting with the number 1. The two teams face one another in a straight line approximately 10—15 feet apart.

The umpire calls out a number. The players on each side who are assigned that number are the players for that round. No other team members may leave their side of the field.

Neither player may touch the other until someone touches the bacon. Once a player touches the bacon, however, the other player may tag him or her.

If a player is able to grab the bacon and carry it back over to their own side, that team scores a point. If a player is tagged after touching the bacon but before returning to their own side, the team that tagged him or her scores a point.

What usually happens is that both kids run out and then hover over the bacon, each waiting for a slight advantage to grab it and run back before the other can react.

The game is over when a predetermined number of points are scored or when all numbers have been called.

Including All Participants

Be mindful of accessibility issues. Participants with those issues may serve as umpire, or the game can be modified. Instead of running in and out of line, have the players whose turn it is sit or stand next to one another with the "bacon" in the center; the first person to snatch it gets the point.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — TEACHING A THIEF (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Teaching a Thief](#)" (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick, or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Consider telling the story rather than reading it from the page or read it dramatically.
- Practice telling it or reading aloud. Try adopting different voices for different characters.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story. Carefully review the questions and choose those that you think might resonate with your group. These questions are meant to help these particular children interpret the story and relate it to their own lives.

Explain that now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills. As we find out what one another thought about the story, both skills are needed to understand the story better from the multiple perspectives in the room.

Encourage children to pay attention to what they found meaningful in the story. Begin by asking the children to retell the story in their own words, briefly. What children recall and relay tells you what they consider most meaningful or memorable.

- What happened in this story?
- Have you ever been like the other students—angry when it seemed that someone got away with breaking the rules?
- Refer to the list of punishments the children created in Activity 2; what kind of punishment do they think the thief should have received?
- Have you ever been like the thief—breaking a rule of your family or group?
- How were you treated when your "crime" was discovered?
- Does that ever happen in this room?
- When should people be forgiven and why?
- Are there acts that are unforgivable?
- Are there people who are unforgivable?
- What would happen if you forgave them?
- In our congregational community, do we have a special obligation to forgive one another?

You may wish to pose to the group a mirror and a window question:

- Mirror: How do I apologize for breaking a rule of the group?
- Window: Who do we forgive? Why?

Conclude by briefly sharing what this story teaches you about forgiveness and how it can help you and others remake the world. You can say:

Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person. One way to do this is through the practice of forgiveness when someone has hurt us.

Thank everyone for their observations and sharing.

ACTIVITY 4: WRITE A LETTER OF FORGIVENESS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Three-Step Forgiveness Letter](#) (included in this document)
- Paper and pencils for all participants
- Newsprint sheets generated in Activity 1, Law, Crime and Punishment
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how you will lead the participants to write Forgiveness Letters. You may want to do any or all of these:
 - Read aloud the directions and examples for each of the three steps outlined in Leader Resource 1.
 - Provide copies of the leader resource to all participants.
 - Write the directions and examples on newsprint and post.
- Print Leader Resource 1. Make the copies you will need, and/or write directions and examples on sheets of newsprint, and post.
- If you have taken it down, post the newsprint with punishments for particular offenses the group listed in Activity 1.
- Think of a few examples of breaking a group covenant, to prompt the children's ideas.

Description of Activity

Children practice forgiving others in a way that validates their own feelings of hurt and betrayal while preserving the dignity of the person who has broken their covenant.

Direct children's attention to the three steps of the Forgiveness Letter posted on newsprint and/or copies of the leader resource. Go through the directions. Explain that it is very important to go through all three steps. Say, in your own words:

If you only write the feeling letter without coming to forgiveness, you will just be stuck in your anger. If you just write the forgiveness letter without writing the feeling letter and the response letter, it may feel fake.

Then, invite children to think about a time when someone hurt them by breaking a rule or committing a wrong. The rule might be a written rule, but it may also be an unspoken rule, such as a covenant between friends about how they will treat one another, or a covenant between parent and child about what is fair.

While children are thinking, hand out blank paper. Then, ask each child to write a Feeling Letter. Say:

Write your feelings to the person that upset you. Imagine that they are listening with love and compassion, the way you would have liked them to listen in the first place.

Read aloud the Feeling Letter example from the leader resource. Challenge children to express their feelings briefly, in two or three sentences. Tell them, "When you

write a Feeling Letter, it is usually best not to send it. It is just to clear your mind of the anger and resentment."

Give the group several minutes to write. Next, tell the children they will write a Response Letter. Say:

This is a letter from the person to whom you have written the Feeling Letter. This letter is not to be sent, either. Write what you wish and imagine the person would respond to your Feeling Letter, now that they know your feelings. Do not have them only apologize. Have them write that they will take some action — an action that would make you feel better. An action that shows they are truly sorry and are looking for a solution.

Point out the sheet of newsprint which lists the punishments the group generated earlier in Activity 1. Suggest the list may give children some ideas for what they wish the person would do as part of their apology. Read the Response Letter example from the leader resource. Give the children a few minutes to write their Response Letters on the same sheet of paper.

Then say:

The final step of writing a Forgiveness Letter is another letter from you to them. This letter will be just a few short sentences that express your forgiveness and love. If you cannot forgive them yet, tell them you want to forgive them.

Distribute new sheets of paper. Read aloud the Forgiveness Letter example and give the children a few minutes to write.

When children are finished writing, ask how they think the process they have just gone through and/or giving the actual Forgiveness Letter to the person might help them forgive the person who has hurt them. Ask:

- Does a punishment need to be part of the solution?
- Can we forgive without apologies or punishments? Why, or why not?

Remind the children that this is just practice for when they want to write a real Forgiveness Letter to someone, though if they like, they can give the Forgiveness Letter to the person they wrote it to. Then say:

While the Feeling Letter and the Response Letter are not intended to be shared, the things you wrote in those letters may have helped you know what you want to say to the person who hurt you, and what you wish they might say back.

Suggest children rip up their Feeling and Response letters or place them in a private place, such as their personal diaries or journals.

Make sure the children have decided what to do with their three letters before moving on to the next activity.

Including All Participants

If any participants may struggle with this level of writing assignment, offer all the children the options of drawing the three steps as pictures or dictating their letters to an adult. Make sure you have drawing materials as well as writing materials, and a space where a child can tell an adult what to write in privacy.

ACTIVITY 5: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — FORGIVENESS HEART (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Color pencils (sharpened or with a sharpener available)
- Basket(s) of window/mirror panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Cut out heart shapes from paper or Mylar. Hearts should be five inches at the widest point (or larger, if children's Window/Mirror Panels are quite large). You may wish to make a variety of colors or sizes to offer children some choices. If you use Mylar, children will need permanent markers to write on their hearts.
- Have materials, including children's Window/Mirror Panels, easily accessible.
- Make sure pencils are sharpened.

Description of Activity

Invite children to get their Window/Mirror Panels and settle at work tables. Distribute Window/Mirror Panel baskets of materials. Give each participant a heart shape.

Invite participants to decorate their heart in response to the question "What does forgiveness mean to you?" Tell them they may write or draw their idea of forgiveness and then add their forgiveness heart to their Window/Mirror Panel. If they are writing, ask them to begin with "Forgiveness is... ."

Keep instructions to a minimum. Explain that they have a very short time to complete this and discourage them from over-thinking it. Let each participant choose where the piece should go on their panel and help them attach it.

Including All Participants

A participant who cannot write or draw may be able to dictate their thoughts to a co-leader to write on a heart. You might invite the participant to choose another child who has finished their own heart to decorate theirs, too, according to their instructions.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone first to clean up their own area and the materials they were using, then clean another area

or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: INTERNATIONAL FORGIVENESS DAY

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Blank paper and pencils, crayons or markers for all participants
- Optional: From the [International Forgiveness Day](http://www.forgivenessalliance.org/day.html) (at www.forgivenessalliance.org/day.html) website, handouts describing the organization's activities

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Prepare a few handouts that describe International Forgiveness Day activities.
- Read the [Truth and Reconciliation Report for the Children of Sierra Leone](http://www.trcsierraleone.org/pdf/kids.pdf) (at www.trcsierraleone.org/pdf/kids.pdf) to learn how an entire society has worked to develop a justice and healing process that includes children. Even though it is written for children, the 62-page report is probably too dense and graphic to share in the session. Glean ideas you

can apply to your leadership of this group, perhaps as a model for how your community or congregation could collectively nurture forgiveness.

Description of Activity

Explain that International Forgiveness Day, variously held on August 1 or the first Sunday of August, is a time when groups of people gather to ask and grant forgiveness. We do not need to wait until August to create a forgiveness event for our congregational community. Form small groups of at least four children, each with an adult facilitator if possible. Ask the children to brainstorm ideas for how the entire congregation could participate in a Forgiveness Day.

Give the small groups a few minutes to generate ideas. Then ask them to share in the larger group. Write down all the ideas. If no one has suggested it, propose that the day include a ceremony of writing Forgiveness Letters. Lead a discussion to shape a concrete proposal.

Now ask children to think about all the people they would need to help them organize a Forgiveness Day and write the names on the large sheet of paper. Decide when you might want to hold a Forgiveness Day with the larger church community. Make a commitment to propose Forgiveness Day to your religious educator and minister.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world. — Marianne Williamson

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

We affirmed the value of forgiving people who break the rules of a community. We explored the idea of expressing righteous anger when we have been hurt by someone, seeking that person's sincere apology, and then letting go of the anger by offering sincere forgiveness. The practices we used in this session can be used in daily life.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

Ask your child what they found most meaningful about their religious education session today—having this conversation directly afterward tends to yield the most information. You might ask, "What do you think about forgiveness?" Ask them whether and how they have been hurt by someone whose apology they seek. Ask them what it would take for them to forgive that person. Ask them what practices they learned today that might help them. Share about a time you have sought forgiveness when you knew you had hurt or wronged someone. Share about a time you forgave someone else. Be honest about how forgiving and seeking forgiveness have been challenging or rewarding for you.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

Have each member of the family write a forgiveness letter to someone else. Invite everyone to prepare by writing their feelings of hurt or betrayal first, then writing an imaginary apology from the person who hurt them. These writings should stay private; it may be a good idea to rip them up.

Then, each person writes a sincere letter of forgiveness, or a letter that says they want to forgive the person (but are not yet ready). If there are young members of the family who haven't learned to write yet, ask them to talk about forgiving someone who hurt their feelings. Share the forgiveness letters with each other. Affirm that forgiveness is important for a healthy family.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Find out online what a group called the [Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance](http://www.forgivenessalliance.org/day.html) (at www.forgivenessalliance.org/day.html) does to promote forgiveness, including a day in August for local celebrations of forgiveness and a web page of "[forgiveness heroes](http://www.forgivenessalliance.org/heroes.html)" (at www.forgivenessalliance.org/heroes.html)."

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SPIRITUAL PRACTICE — FORGIVENESS MEDITATION (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A chime or a bell

- Leader Resource 2, [Forgiveness Meditation for Children](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Review Leader Resource 2, Forgiveness Meditation for Children, and prepare to lead the meditation. You can learn more from a [website about Buddhism](#) (at buddhism.kalachakranet.org/Meditations/love_forgiveness_meditation.html) that explores love and forgiveness meditations.
- Make sure to use an area large enough to accommodate all the group participants lying on the floor or sitting comfortably in chairs. If necessary, consider multiple separate areas to hold the activity.

Description of Activity

This activity offers a spiritual practice that children can use throughout their lives. It is a Buddhist practice of forgiving oneself, asking forgiveness from people whom we have harmed, and forgiving people whom we love as well as people we do not yet love.

Ask the children what they know about meditation. Allow some responses. Then, invite them to lie comfortably on the floor or to sit in their chairs. Lead them in taking three deep breaths. Ask children to repeat silently to themselves each phrase you will read aloud.

Using Leader Resource 2, read the Forgiveness Meditation aloud, leaving time between phrases or sentences for the children to repeat the words to themselves.

Ring the chime or bell to end the meditation. Then invite the children to remain silent for 15 seconds. To finish, stretch arms overhead and then bring arms down to sides.

Thank them for their participation.

Including All Participants

Be mindful of accessibility issues. Invite participants to stretch as they are willing and able.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 4: STORY: TEACHING A THIEF

"Teaching a Thief" is taken from *Kindness, A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom* by Sarah Conover and Valerie Wahl (Boston: Skinner House, 2010). Available from the [UUA Bookstore](#). All rights reserved.

Bankei was a famous Zen teacher in Japan long ago. Students from all over came to his monastery for months of study and meditation. To make it through such intensive training is not an easy thing: There is much hard work to be done, many hours of meditation, little sleep, and only small, spare meals.

Once during the time at the monastery, a student found that all he could meditate on was his empty stomach. It was also all that he thought about during work and all he thought of even when eating! Finally, he could not stand it a day longer. In the night, ever so quietly, he sneaked into the kitchen, hoping to make off with something tasty and filling. But the head cook—always alert even when asleep—awoke and caught him.

The next morning, the matter was brought to Bankei in hopes that the student would be forced to leave. However much to the group's dismay, Bankei thanked them for the information and acted as if nothing had happened.

Just a few days later, the same pupil was caught stealing food from the kitchen again. The students were even angrier. It was in the middle of the night when the thief was apprehended, but they wrote a petition right there and then to their teacher Bankei. They each vowed to leave the monastery the next day if the thief was not expelled.

When Bankei read the petition the next morning, he sighed. He went outside to the monastery gardens and paced thoughtfully. At last he asked that all the monks and students—including the thief—be brought together.

They gathered in the temple hall, becoming quiet when Bankei entered.

"Many of you have come from far away to be here," announced Bankei. "Your hard work and perseverance are to be praised. You are excellent, dedicated students. You have also clearly demonstrated that you know wrong from right. If you wish, you may leave this monastery and find another teacher. But I must tell you that the thief will remain, even as my only student."

The students were appalled! A murmur of discontent hummed about the room. How could their teacher ask them to leave?

Who had done the wrong thing? Only the thief! Feeling anger of the other students, the thief in their midst hung his head in disgrace.

"My friends," Bankei gently continued, "this thief does not understand the difference between right and wrong as you do. If he leaves, how will these things be learned? He needs to stay here so he can also understand."

When the thief heard these words, he felt profoundly moved. Tears sprung to his eyes. But even through his shame in front of the others, he felt Bankei's deep compassion. He knew he would not steal anymore.

Bankei ended his speech. He left the hall, leaving the students to make their individual decisions. The thief immediately took a spot on a meditation bench and set about meditating. Many of the students stood right up to leave the monastery. Somewhat confused by Bankei's speech, they discussed things among themselves. All except for the presence of one student—the thief—the great hall emptied for a time.

When Bankei returned an hour later, it was so quiet he assumed all the students had left, just as they had vowed. But much to his surprise, every last student had returned. All were quietly sitting, composed in meditation. The wise and kind Bankei smiled at such a wonderful sight.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 4:

LEADER RESOURCE 1: THREE-STEP FORGIVENESS LETTER

Step One: Feeling Letter

Dear (person's name),

A) Anger. Write your feelings of anger. I am angry that... / I am furious... / I hate...

B) Sadness. Write your feelings of sadness. I am sad that...

C) Fear. Write your feelings of fear. I am afraid that...

D) Sorrow or regret. Write your feelings of lament. I am sorry that...

Signed, (your name)

EXAMPLE

Dear Pogo,

I am angry that you stole my pencil and tried to pretend the dog took it. It makes me feel like you don't respect me or my things. I thought you were my friend but you don't act like a friend. That makes me sad. I don't want to talk to you anymore.

Signed, Logo

Step Two: Response Letter

Dear (your name),

(Write their letter to you)

Signed, (person's name)

EXAMPLE

Dear Logo,

I am sorry I stole your pencil and I am sorry I lied and said it was the dog who took it. I really want you to be my friend, but I guess I need to act like a friend first. Please forgive me. I will do (insert solution) to make it up to you.

Signed, Pogo

Step Three: Forgiveness Letter

Dear (person's name),

(Write your letter)

Signed: (your name)

EXAMPLE

Dear Pogo,

I forgive you for taking my pencil and lying about it. Of course I want to be your friend. Let's agree to respect each other's things and tell the truth.

Signed, Logo

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 4:

LEADER RESOURCE 2: FORGIVENESS MEDITATION FOR CHILDREN

From the website [A View on Buddhism](#).

Give children a moment each time you ask them to picture someone new.

Read aloud the words you want children to say silently to themselves one phrase at a time, with pauses in between.

Picture yourself in your mind. As you breathe in and out, repeat these words silently to yourself:

I forgive myself for whatever I did, on purpose or by accident.

May I be happy, free of confusion, understand myself and the world.

May I help others to be happy, free of confusion, and full of understanding.

Now picture in your mind a person you love and want to forgive.

As you breathe in and out, repeat these words silently to yourself:

From my heart, I forgive you for whatever you did, on purpose or by accident.

May you be happy, free of confusion, and understand yourself and the world.

Please forgive me for whatever I did to you, on purpose or by accident.

May we open our hearts and minds to meet in love and understanding.

Try to feel the warmth of the healing between you.

Now picture in your mind someone you have hurt.

As you breathe in and out, repeat these words silently to yourself:

Please forgive me for whatever I did to you, on purpose or by accident.

May you be happy, free of confusion, and understand yourself and the world.

Please forgive me for whatever I did to you, on purpose or by accident.

May we open our hearts and minds to meet in love and understanding.

Try to feel the warmth of the healing between you.

Now picture in your mind a person you do not like very much.

As you breathe in and out, repeat these words silently to yourself:

Please forgive me for whatever I did to you, on purpose or by accident.

May you be happy, free of confusion, and understand yourself and the world.

Please forgive me for whatever I did to you, on purpose or by accident.

May we open our hearts and minds to meet in love and understanding.

Try to feel the warmth of the healing between you.

FIND OUT MORE

Ideas about Forgiveness

You can explore:

- Buddhist ideas about forgiveness at [The Forgiveness Meditation](http://buddhism.kalachakranet.org/Meditations/love_forgiveness_meditation.html) (at buddhism.kalachakranet.org/Meditations/love_forgiveness_meditation.html)
- Atonement for breaking a covenant at [Judaism 101—Yom Kippur Day of Atonement](http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday4.htm) (at www.jewfaq.org/holiday4.htm).
- A variety of perspectives at [Why Forgive?](http://explorefaith.org/forgive/index.html) (at explorefaith.org/forgive/index.html)

A 2004 essay by Episcopal priest L. William Countryman, "[Forgiveness and Justice](http://www.explorefaith.org/forgive/countryman.html)," (at www.explorefaith.org/forgive/countryman.html) challenges the idea of retribution as justice and presents an alternate view. The essay reads, in part:

Justice seeks the world of "shalom," the life of the age to come. It will do nothing that would make such a world impossible. It will do anything that might actually bring it closer. It will even forgive. Instead of dedicating ourselves, then, to the impossible task of getting the past right, we find ourselves freed by forgiveness to live fully in the present and to begin building something new and better.

SESSION 5: THE BLESSING OF IMPERFECTION

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

If you look closely at a tree you'll notice its knots and dead branches, just like our bodies. What we learn is that beauty and imperfection go together wonderfully. — Matthew Fox, theologian

Humans are imperfect. We are each uniquely made and live our lives uniquely. Yet we often compare ourselves to others, finding a standard of perfection against which we undoubtedly fail. Lacking a skill or feature we wish we had, we may feel incompetent or inadequate. We forget to value our capacity to learn, grow, and contribute to our communities in our own unique ways.

Unitarian Universalism celebrates the beauty of each individual—imperfections and all. Our first Principle affirms our inherent worth and dignity, and our seventh Principle suggests that we all need one another. This session helps children know they need not be "perfect" to be loved, respected, and appreciated for their own unique gifts.

In this session, a tale from India, "The Water Bearer's Garden," demonstrates that our very imperfections can have corresponding gifts. Children learn about scientific "accidents" that resulted in inventions we enjoy today. The group observes raku pottery and learns the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi—the beauty of imperfection.

In the Window/Mirror panel activity, participants write or draw about their own flaws/blessings using a cracked pot template (Handout 1). Next, Activity 5 invites participants to form their own "cracked pots" with self-hardening modeling clay.

Before distributing modeling clay, explain that participants may make a wabi-sabi pot either with modeling clay or, if they would like to incorporate it onto their Window/Mirror panel, on paper. Distribute modeling clay to those who prefer it. While they are making their "cracked pots," direct them to consider their own imperfections and how these are also gifts to share.

GOALS

This session will:

- Convey that Unitarian Universalism celebrates our differences and affirms the inherent worth of every person

- Teach children to take note of their unique gifts and their potential to learn, grow and contribute to their communities
- Demonstrate how rigid standards of perfection can impede fairness, happiness and progress
- Demonstrate the concept of the beauty of imperfection.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Hear a story in which an imperfection was also a special gift that could be shared
- Express, in an art project, their own imperfections in terms of gifts of blessings they can share
- Learn about useful inventions that came about by mistakes or accidents
- Learn that, as Unitarian Universalists, we value the very imperfections that make each individual unique.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Nobody's Perfect	5
Activity 2: Story — The Water Bearer's Garden	10
Activity 3: Oops... Wow!	15
Activity 4: Window/Mirror Panel — Perfectly Me	10
Activity 5: Wabi-Sabi, the Beauty of Imperfection	10
Faith in Action: Smile Train Fundraiser	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Chocolate Tomato Cake	

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable; light a candle to mark the

time as different from your other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes; perhaps repeat a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. After you open your eyes, consider:

- Have you ever felt incompetent or inadequate because you thought you were too far from perfection? What standards were you associating with "perfection"?
- Can you think of any flaws you find in yourself that could be turned around and viewed as gifts or blessings?

- What are your expectations for this session? What do you hope results from it? What difference do you hope it makes?

Today you will guide the group to think about specific ways in which they are imperfect and ask them to envision these flaws as gifts. Be gentle and accepting, as you would want a leader to gently guide and accept you.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection, and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint and post.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket, cut out the short readings, and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life" or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is

new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life. If you choose not to sing, use a bell as a signal to ask the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from the UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: NOBODY'S PERFECT (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint. Draw a line down the middle to make two columns.

Description of Activity

Gather the group and tell them:

We are going to talk today about perfection. Have you ever tried to be perfect? What does it mean to be "perfect"? Let's collect our ideas.

Head the left-hand column on the newsprint: "Perfect... " Ask the group to name things that can be perfect. In the left-hand column, write their ideas as nouns—e.g., (perfect) teeth, a (perfect) day, (perfectly) clean room, or (being perfect at) school, gymnastics, math, or behavior. Leave space between items on your list; use more newsprint if you need to.

Once you have a variety of ideas, invite the group to explain how they identify perfection in the different instances they suggested; use the right-hand column for notes. You might ask, "What are the traits of a perfect math student?" or "What makes a clean-up job 'perfect'?" Your notes should be descriptive phrases—e.g., gets all "A"s (perfect student), never loses a game (perfect athlete), never gets sick (perfectly healthy).

Explore three "perfections" together (or more, if you have time and children are engaged). To conclude, offer that

a definition of "perfect" might be "meeting a specific checklist of exact standards." Suggest that while someone might be a "perfect" student, earning all "A"s all the time, or have "perfect" teeth that are straight and gleaming white with no cavities, no person can be perfect in every way all the time.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — THE WATER BEARER'S GARDEN (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Water Bearer's Garden](#) (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "The Water Bearer's Garden" a few times. Consider telling it dramatically, rather than reading it from the page. Practice telling it. Claim the storytelling; for example, try adopting different voices for different characters. The stories here are written for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.
- For storytelling, be ritualistic. Create a mood and time that is different from other moments in the session. For example, turn overhead lights off and use lamps. Position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.
- Review discussion questions. Choose some you think might resonate with this particular group and that will help them share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own experiences.
- If the group is large, plan to form smaller groups (no less than three participants) for discussion. An adult leader should facilitate each small group.

Description of Activity

Tell the group that the story, "The Water Bearer's Garden," comes from India . Ring the chime (or other noisemaker), make eye contact with each participant, and read or tell the story.

Sound the chime (or other noisemaker) again at the end. Invite participants to think silently on their own about the story. Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to help us understand the story from multiple perspectives.

Let's find out what one another thought about the story.

Remind them not to assume others think or feel the same way. Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Encourage the group to listen to each comment and then share some silence. Use the bell or chime to move between speakers.

Invite participants to retell the story, briefly, in their own words. What children recall and relay tells you what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Then use the following questions to facilitate discussion. Make sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance.

- Have you ever been in a situation where you could not do a job up to expectations, like the cracked pot? How did you feel?
- Why didn't the cracked pot notice the flowers until the water bearer pointed them out?

Ask the group to think of other flawed objects. You might suggest ripped jeans, a lamp with no bulb, a torn umbrella, or a scratched mirror. Guide the group to consider how the objects' flaws could be gifts or blessings.

Variation

Invite the children to consider the next question quietly to themselves. If they are comfortable doing so, they may close their eyes. Give a full minute for reflection.

- What might be your own imperfections? What might be the blessing of these?

Tell them they might like to use their reflections when they work on their Window/Mirror Panel later in the session.

ACTIVITY 3: OOPS!... WOW! (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Silly putty (TM)
- Chocolate chip cookies
- Velcro
- Sticky notes
- A Slinky (TM)
- A bar of Ivory soap
- Paper and pencils
- Leader Resource 1, [Oops!... WOW! Explanations](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Spread the items (Silly Putty, chocolate chip cookies, etc.) around the room, setting each on a separate table.
- Place paper and pencils with each item. Write the name of each item at the top of a page.

Description of Activity

Gather the group and indicate the items you have placed around the room. Ask the group to identify them (which they likely will do quickly). Say:

You recognize these items because you have probably used most of them. But each one exists only because someone accidentally made it while trying to invent something else.

Form at least three small groups. Tell them they will have two and a half minutes at each of three tables to make up a theory of how the item on the table came to be accidentally invented. You might say:

What was someone trying to do? What went wrong? How did they realize they had actually invented something useful?

Ask them to write their theories briefly on the paper provided with the items. If another group has already written a theory on the paper, the new theory has to be different.

Send each group to a different table. Rotate the groups, allowing each group to visit at least three tables. Watch time carefully; you may wish to give 30-second warnings before each rotation.

Save five minutes to compare what groups have written and share, from Leader Resource 1, the real story about each invention.

ACTIVITY 4: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — PERFECTLY ME (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Handout 1, [Cracked Pot Template](#) (included in this document)
- A variety of color pencils
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror Panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper

- Scraps of fabric
- Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
- Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
- Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Provide a variety of color pencils in each Window/Mirror basket; make sure all are sharpened.
- Print Handout 1, Cracked Pot Template, for all participants, plus a few extra. Or, print several copies on heavy card stock to make templates participants can use to trace the cracked pot shape on Mylar, fabric, poster board or another material.
- Have materials easily accessible.

Description of Activity

Remind participants about the cracked pot and flaws that might be gifts. Ask them what they consider as the cracks in their lives. What are their features or traits that seem to be flaws, but help make them unique individuals with gifts that can be shared?

Distribute handouts. Invite participants to use colored pencils to add words, pictures, or other decorations that represent their flaws/gifts on their cracked pots. Suggest they put a flaw/gift in each section and then cut them apart to add to their Window/Mirror Panels.

As an alternative, distribute template(s) of the cracked pot. Indicate the fabric, Mylar, or other two-dimensional material onto which participants may trace a cracked pot and then represent some of their imperfections/gifts with appropriate writing/drawing implements. Ask participants to cut out their cracked pots and attach them to their Window/Mirror Panels, either in one piece or as a set of fragments. Let each participant choose where the pieces should go on their panel and offer help as needed.

Give a two-minute warning so everyone has time to affix their cracked pot to their Window/Mirror Panel, clean up materials, and store their panels.

Variation

In the limited time frame, some participants may feel too much pressure to articulate flaws and how they can be blessings. You may want to cut a template along its crack lines to form a puzzle. Give participants the option

of tracing the individual fragments onto different colors of Mylar (or different materials altogether), to represent a variety of unique traits that comprise their individual "cracked pot."

ACTIVITY 5: WABI-SABI, THE BEAUTY OF IMPERFECTION (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pictures of raku pottery (Leader Resources 2, [Raku Pot](#) (included in this document) and 3, [Raku Pears](#) (included in this document))
- Self-hardening modeling clay and pencils for all participants
- Optional: Raku-fired pottery item(s) and a cloth for display

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2, Raku Pot, and Leader Resource 3, Raku Pears. If possible, obtain a real raku-fired pot to show the group. Or, obtain some images of Japanese or Western raku pottery and bring them in. Good sources are exhibition catalogs, art books and pottery how-to books from the library and websites with images you can print, such as Douglas M. Hooten's website, [Ceramics with Wabi](http://dmh.net/raku98/9861.htm) (at dmh.net/raku98/9861.htm), and [Robert Compton Pottery](http://www.robertcomptonpottery.com/Sales-Raku-Fired-Pottery-00-Master.htm) (at www.robertcomptonpottery.com/Sales-Raku-Fired-Pottery-00-Master.htm).
- If you have brought raku pottery that belongs to you or someone else, be thoughtful about how to share it with the group. It may be wise to lay some cloth on a table to display a pot and invite participants to view it closely, touch it carefully and leave it in place.
- Read the Description of Activity section and prepare to explain briefly the concept of the beauty of imperfection. Optional: Explore further resources for wabi-sabi and cracked pots in Find Out More.
- Obtain self-hardening modeling clay, enough for each participant to form a small pot.

Description of Activity

Pass around or show images of raku pottery, and/or invite children to see and touch raku pots you have brought.

Explain that raku pottery, American-style, is based on a technique started by Korean potters four hundred years ago, and since then it has been traditional in Japan and an integral part of a formal Japanese tea ceremony. In the American style, the irregular, smoky cracks in a pot are made by tossing pots into a fire in a metal container, such as a metal trash can, as the final step in making them.

Say:

The results of the raku process are wholly unpredictable. Thus, the goal is imperfection.

Ask the group for adjectives to describe the pots. Expect a range—for example, beautiful, ugly, weird—and affirm all responses.

Tell the group raku pots are intentionally imperfect. They are examples of a Japanese idea about beauty: wabi-sabi. You might say:

Wabi-sabi sees the singular beauty in an object that may first look flawed, decrepit, or ugly. The beauty comes from how the object shows the natural processes of life.

Help participants generate examples of wabi-sabi in everyday life. You might suggest a favorite pair of ripped jeans, an overgrown wildflower garden, a crumbling old castle, a well loved and well worn baby blanket or stuffed animal, a desk or table marked with use. To conclude, challenge participants to look for wabi-sabi—people, places, or things appreciated for their imperfections—between now and your next meeting.

Distribute self-hardening modeling clay and invite participants to make their own wabi-sabi pots. Indicate pencils with which children can make "cracks." Tell them they may take their pots home as a reminder of the beauty of imperfection.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror panels between sessions. Keep in mind that there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.

- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Review Session 1, Leader Resource 2 so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of Namaste and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone first to clean up their own area and the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1 Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group will say goodbye with "namaste," explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in saying goodbye with the bowing gesture that accompanies the word "namaste."

Distribute copies of the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: SMILE TRAIN FUNDRAISER

Preparation for Activity

- Visit the websites of [Smile Train](http://www.smiletrain.org/) (at www.smiletrain.org/) or [Operation Smile](http://www.operationsmile.org/about-us/facts/) (at www.operationsmile.org/about-us/facts/). Choose one for which to raise funds.

Description of Activity

The [Smile Train](http://www.smiletrain.org/) (at www.smiletrain.org/) is an international organization that provides medical treatment to children born with cleft lip and cleft palate.

Another organization that works to repair cleft palate is [Operation Smile](http://www.operationsmile.org/about-us/facts/) (at www.operationsmile.org/about-us/facts/). Invite the group to plan a bake sale, greeting card sale or other activity to raise money for one of these organizations.

Say, in your own words:

Children who look different from others sometimes get teased. If that happens, a child might think their difference is a terrible flaw. Maybe you have been teased at one time for looking different. Maybe you have teased someone else who looks different.

Tell the children that some children look different because of medical conditions they are born with. Ask if anyone knows or has seen a child like that. Allow some contributions. Expect some laughter, as this topic is likely to make children uncomfortable. Acknowledge that it can be uncomfortable to see or talk about this kind of difference. You may wish to say that some medical conditions simply make people look different, while others affect a person's health or comfort and some medical conditions do both.

Say:

If we know or see someone who has a visible medical condition, we can bet they are aware of it whenever they are with other people. That must be hard. We would want that person to know we see their imperfection and accept it as part of them. We want to show our respect for that person and our connection with them.

One way we can do that is to help pay for surgery for children who have a medical condition that both makes them look different and harms their health, but do not have the money for surgery to repair it.

Explain that cleft lip and cleft palate happen when someone is born before their face fully develops inside their mother's belly. Tell the group that surgery can repair a cleft lip or palate so a child can breathe, speak and eat better, as well as have an appearance that is more like other children's. Take suggestions for a fundraising activity to help Operation Smile or the Smile Train, and make a plan.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?

- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with one another? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

If you look closely at a tree you'll notice its knots and dead branches, just like our bodies. What we learn is that beauty and imperfection go together wonderfully. — Matthew Fox, theologian

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

We reflected on Unitarian Universalism's celebration of each individual—imperfections and all. We taught that children need not be "perfect" to be loved, respected, and appreciated for their own unique gifts. A tale from India, "The Water Bearer's Garden," demonstrated that our very flaws can have corresponding gifts. Children learned about scientific "accidents" that resulted in inventions we enjoy today such as the Slinky and floating Ivory soap. The group may have tasted a great chocolate cake made with a surprise ingredient (tomatoes); try this recipe at home.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

What do you perceive as your flaws? In what way could they be seen or experienced as gifts?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

A FAMILY ADVENTURE

A chocolate cake made with tomato or mayonnaise. A fruit smoothie including carrot juice or peanut butter. Look for and make a tasty recipe that uses an unlikely ingredient that, on its own, would not appeal to your child. Talk about how the recipe gives the unlikely ingredient a way to share its special gifts.

A FAMILY GAME

Turn your imperfections into blessings. Allow each family member to suggest their own "flaw" for the others to help them re-frame as a gift. For example, someone who is often told they are "annoying" may also be very funny or be able to cheer someone up when doing the very same behaviors. Someone who gives family members too many instructions—"bossy"—may also be caring, knowledgeable, or responsible. Someone whose messy room is legendary is likely also to be easygoing or creative.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Parents who wonder if they expect too much "perfection" from their children may like to read *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee* by Wendy Mogel (New York: Penguin, 2001). Mogel is a clinical psychologist who found, in Jewish tradition, meaningful guidance for contemporary parenting. In a 2006 article about her, the New York Times Magazine says:

There is a Hasidic saying that Mogel quotes, 'If your child has a talent to be a baker, don't ask him to be a doctor.' By definition, most children cannot be at the top of the class; value their talents in whatever realm you find them. 'When we ignore a child's intrinsic strengths in an effort to push [them] toward our notion of extraordinary achievement, we are undermining God's plan,' Mogel writes.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: CHOCOLATE TOMATO CAKE

Materials for Activity

- Recipe for a chocolate cake made with tomato, and required ingredients
- Baking supplies
- Plates, forks and napkins

Preparation for Activity

- Search online or in cookbooks for a chocolate cake recipe that uses tomatoes or tomato soup as an ingredient. Or, use a [Rachel Ray Chocolate Cake recipe](http://www.rachaelraymag.com/recipes/dessert-recipes/chocolate-snackin-cake/article.html) (at www.rachaelraymag.com/recipes/dessert-recipes/chocolate-snackin-cake/article.html) that includes mayonnaise and hot, brewed coffee.
- If your congregation has baking facilities you can use, plan to make the cake with participants before the session begins so it is ready to serve after your Closing. Or make the cake yourself before the session.

Description of Activity

Allow participants to taste a cake made with an unlikely ingredient. See if anyone can taste the unlikely ingredient. Ask children to think of other foods that are made with an ingredient that, by itself, would not seem appealing. Point out that the tasty snack gives the unlikely ingredient—like the cracked pot—a way to share its special gifts.

Including All Participants

Check with your director of religious education, parents and participants for food allergies. If any participant is allergic to any ingredient in a recipe, adapt the recipe or skip this activity.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 5: STORY: THE WATER BEARER'S GARDEN

From *uu & me! Collected Stories*, edited by Betsy Hill Williams (Boston: Skinner House, 2003). Used with permission.

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on one end of a pole that he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it. At the end of the long walk from the stream on the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. For two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his master's house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer, "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes

water to leak out all the way back to your master's house.

Because of my flaws, you have to do all this work, and you don't get full value from our efforts," the pot said.

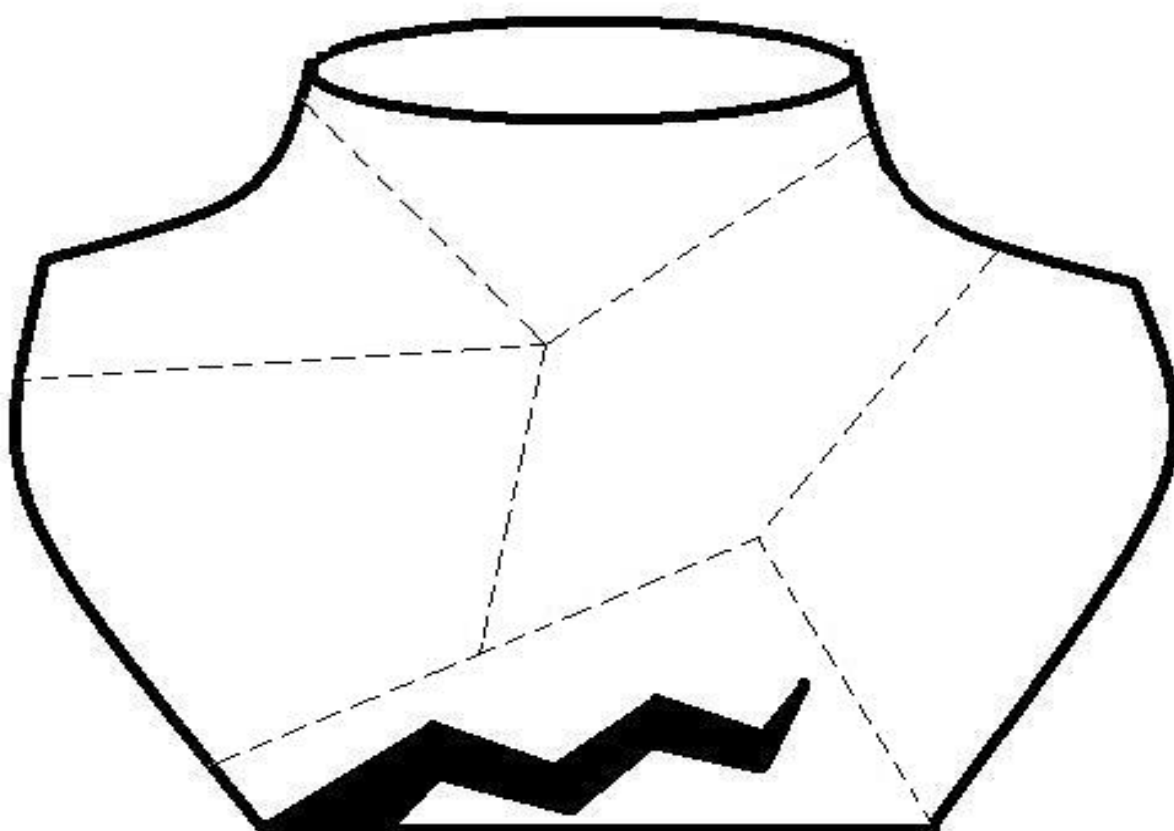
The water bearer felt sorry for the cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt sad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the pot apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on our side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house.

"We all have our own unique flaws. We are all cracked pots. In God's great web of life, nothing goes to waste. Don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and you too can be the cause of beauty. Know that in our weakness we find our strength.

**WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 5:
HANDOUT 1: CRACKED POT TEMPLATE**



WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 5:

LEADER RESOURCE 1: OOPS!... WOW! EXPLANATIONS

Share these true stories of how mistakes led people to invent these useful, common items.

Silly Putty

From the [Computer Patent Annuities](http://www.cpaglobal.com/ip-review-online/widgets/notes_quotes/more/1713/who_invented_silly_putty) (at www.cpaglobal.com/ip-review-online/widgets/notes_quotes/more/1713/who_invented_silly_putty) website:

The invention of Silly Putty was a side effect of America's attempts to cope with the rubber shortage brought about the Japanese capture of producer-nations during World War Two. In 1943, James Wright, a Scottish engineer, was working at General Electric's laboratory in New Haven, Connecticut, to find a viable method of producing synthetic rubber. One day he mixed some silicon oil and boric acid in a test tube. When he removed the gooey substance that formed inside, Wright threw a lump to the floor and found that it bounced back up again. After circulating among chemists for a few years, Silly Putty was launched as a children's novelty item in 1949. Since then, over 200 million plastic eggs-full of the stuff have been sold worldwide.

From the [InventorSpot](http://inventorspot.com/articles/three_famous_things_invented_accident_12896) (at inventorspot.com/articles/three_famous_things_invented_accident_12896) website:

The invention of Silly Putty started out scientifically. During World War II, the United States government was in dire need of a substitute for rubber to use on such things as boots and airplane tires. They asked their engineers to experiment with silicone to find this synthetic rubber. In 1944, a General Electric engineer named James Wright added boric acid to silicone oil and ended up inventing what became Silly Putty. However, before it was Silly Putty, it was nothing. Though it was elastic and bounced, it wasn't sufficient as a rubber substitute and was put aside. It wasn't until 1949 that Silly Putty realized its true potential. It had attracted the attention of a toy store owner named Ruth Fallgatter. She teamed up with a marketing consultant named Peter Hodgson to find a creative use for the putty. It was first marketed to adults and then became a toy for children. The rest is history. Despite the rationing of silicone brought on by the Korean War, Silly Putty persevered and is now one of the world's most popular toys.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

Adapted from the website, [What's Cooking America](http://whatscookingamerica.net/History/CookieHistory.htm) (at whatscookingamerica.net/History/CookieHistory.htm), copyright Linda Stradley.

The first chocolate chip cookies were invented in 1937 by Ruth Graves Wakefield (1905—1977), of Whitman, Massachusetts, who ran the Toll House Restaurant. The Toll House Restaurant site was once a real toll house built in 1709, where stagecoach passengers ate a meal while horses were changed and a toll was taken for use of the highway between Boston and New Bedford, a prosperous whaling town.

One of Ruth's favorite recipes was an old recipe for "Butter Drop Do" cookies that dated back to colonial times. The recipe called for the use of baker's chocolate. One day Ruth found herself without the needed ingredient. Having a bar of semisweet chocolate on hand, she chopped it into pieces and stirred the chunks of chocolate into the dough. She assumed the chocolate would melt and spread throughout each cookie. Instead the chocolate bits held their shape and created a sensation. She called her new creation the Toll House Crunch Cookies. The Toll House Crunch Cookies became very popular with guests at the inn, and soon her recipe was published in a Boston newspaper, as well as other papers in the New England area. This cookie became known nationally when Betty Crocker used it in her radio series, "Famous Foods from Famous Eating Places."

Ruth approached the Nestlé Company. They agreed Nestlé would print what would become the Toll House Cookie recipe on the wrapper of the Semi-Sweet Chocolate Bar. The company developed a scored semisweet chocolate bar with a small cutting implement so making the chocolate chunks would be easier. According to the story, part of this agreement included supplying Ruth with all of the chocolate she could use to make her delicious cookies for the rest of her life. Then, in 1939, Nestlé began offering Nestlé Toll House Real Semi-Sweet Chocolate Morsels.

Ruth sold all legal rights to the use of the Toll House trademark to Nestlé. On August 25, 1983, the Nestlé Company lost its exclusive right to the trademark in federal court. Toll house is now a descriptive term for a cookie.

Velcro

From [WikiAnswers](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Who_invented_Velcro) (at wiki.answers.com/Q/Who_invented_Velcro) and [enotes.com](http://www.enotes.com/science-fact-finder/general-science-technology/who-invented-velcro) (at www.enotes.com/science-fact-finder/general-science-technology/who-invented-velcro).

George de Mestral, a Swiss amateur mountaineer and inventor (1908—1990), decided to take his dog for a nature hike one lovely summer day in 1948. They both returned covered with burrs. De Mestral inspected one of the burrs under his microscope and was inspired to use the same mechanism for a fastener. His idea met with resistance and even laughter, but the inventor "stuck" by his invention. Together with a weaver from a textile plant in France, de Mestral perfected his hook and loop fastener. By trial and error, he realized that nylon, when processed under infrared light, formed tough hooks for the burr side of the fastener. This finished the design, patented in 1955. The inventor formed Velcro Industries to manufacture his invention. Not long afterward, De Mestral was selling over sixty million yards of Velcro per year. Today it is a multi-million dollar industry.

The name, "velcro," combines two French words, velours ("velvet") and crochet ("small hook"). A velcro fastener comprises two strips made of nylon; one strip is dense with thousands of tiny hooks and the other has tiny loops for the hooks to catch.

Sticky Notes/Post-its

From [About.com](http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blpostit.htm) (at inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blpostit.htm).

Post-it notes may have been a God-send... literally. In the early 1970s, Art Fry was in search of a bookmark for his church hymnal that would neither fall out nor damage the hymnal. Fry noticed that a colleague at 3M, Dr. Spencer Silver, had developed an adhesive that was strong enough to stick to surfaces, but left no residue after removal and could be repositioned. Fry took some of Dr. Silver's adhesive and applied it along the edge of a piece of paper. His church hymnal problem was solved!

Fry soon realized that his "bookmark" had other potential functions when he used it to leave a note on a work file, and co-workers kept dropping by, seeking "bookmarks" for their offices. This "bookmark" was a new way to communicate and to organize. 3M Corporation crafted the name Post-it note for Fry's bookmarks and began production in the late '70s for commercial use.

In 1977, test-markets failed to show consumer interest. However, in 1979 3M implemented a massive consumer sampling strategy, and the Post-it note took off. Today, we see Post-it notes peppered across files, computers, desks, and doors in offices and homes throughout the country. From a church hymnal bookmark to an office and home essential, the Post-it note has colored the way we work.

A Slinky

From [enotes.com](http://www.enotes.com/science-fact-finder/general-science-technology/who-invented-slinky) (at www.enotes.com/science-fact-finder/general-science-technology/who-invented-slinky).

The Slinky was invented by Philadelphia engineer Richard T. James in the mid-1940s. The Slinky is a toy made of a steel or plastic coil that tumbles smoothly down a flight of stairs.

It wasn't James's intention to create a toy. The Slinky was actually the result of a failed attempt to produce an anti-vibration device for ship instruments—something that would absorb the shock of waves. When James accidentally knocked one of his steel spirals off a shelf, he saw it literally crawl, coil by coil, to a lower shelf, onto a stack of books, down to the tabletop, and finally come to rest, upright, on the floor.

James' wife, Betty, saw its potential as a toy and named it "slinky." Betty and Richard James founded James Industries in 1948 to market the toy Slinky.

A Floating Bar of Ivory Soap

From About.com: Inventors (at inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blsoap.htm).

A soap maker at the Procter and Gamble company had no idea a new innovation was about to surface when he went to lunch one day in 1879. He forgot to turn off the soap mixer, and more than the usual amount of air was whipped into the batch of pure white soap that the company sold under the name The White Soap. Fearing he would get in trouble, the soap maker kept the mistake a secret and packaged and shipped the air-filled soap to customers around the country. Soon customers were asking for more "soap that floats." When company officials found out what happened, they turned it into one of the company's most successful products, Ivory Soap.

**WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 5:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: RAKU POT**



WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 5: LEADER RESOURCE 3: RAKU PEARS

From the website, [Art 'n Soul](#), copyright Sharon Bartmann. Used with permission.



FIND OUT MORE

Mistakes That Worked

More accidental discoveries can be found in the book *Mistakes That Worked* by Charlotte Foltz Jones (New York: Doubleday, 1991).

Resiliency, Diversity, and Personal "Flaws"

Resiliency is a quality that helps children who are teased about their differences understand that the teasing is the other person's problem. Children who are less resilient tend to interpret teasing as the naming of a personal, uncorrectable flaw.

By viewing their minority status as a strength, families that do not fit traditional structures or that fall outside the ethnic or economic mainstream have extraordinary potential to raise resilient children, according to a chapter, "Human Diversity," by Barbara Okun, in *Family Therapy Review* edited by Robert H. Coombs (New York: Routledge, 2004).

Wabi-Sabi and Cracked Pots

A Japanese philosophical/aesthetic term often associated with raku pottery, wabi-sabi describes "the beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, incomplete, humble, modest, and unconventional." According to the [New Tribal Visions](http://www.newtribalvisions.com/wabi-sabi.html) (at www.newtribalvisions.com/wabi-sabi.html) website:

Wabi-sabi is at the core of all Japanese ideals of beauty; the quintessential aesthetic of a Zen culture. Objects wabi-sabi are simple, earthy, and unpretentious.

On his site, [Ceramics with Wabi](http://dmh.net/raku98/reku-def.htm) (at dmh.net/raku98/reku-def.htm), Douglas Hooten gives accessible definitions of "wabi" and "sabi" and a brief history of raku.

In a blog article, ["The Joy of Wabi-Sabi,"](http://anmaru.wordpress.com/2008/01/30/the-joy-of-wabi-sabi/) (at anmaru.wordpress.com/2008/01/30/the-joy-of-wabi-sabi/) Anmaru writes:

... it's completely unlike Western ideals such as the [golden ratio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_ratio) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_ratio) that require mathematical exactness. Wabi-sabi is appreciated with another part of the brain.

Some clothing manufacturers feel the need to label garments that are hand-knitted or made of some kinds of silk with little tags pointing out that oddities or apparent imperfections are characteristics of the fabric or the process, not flaws. This is a good example of wabi-sabi (the characteristics, not the rather condescending tags...). Of course, many people appreciate that hand-made items have a charm and value no machine-made perfection can match.

Korean potters, under Japanese rule, began making raku ceramics in the 17th century. Ceramicist Paul Soldner writes in ["American-style Raku"](http://www.paulsoldner.com/writings/American_Raku.html) (at www.paulsoldner.com/writings/American_Raku.html) about how contemporary, Western-style raku pottery differs from traditional Japanese Raku, which is made by the Raku family, and is an integral part of Japanese tea ceremony.

SESSION 6: ALL AGES OFFER GIFTS

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The elder cannot be an elder if there is no community to make [them]... an elder. The young child cannot feel secure if there is no elder, whose silent presence gives [them]... hope in life. The adult cannot be who [they are] unless there is a strong sense of the other people around. — M.P. Som?n Ritual Power, Healing, and Community (Portland, Oregon: Swan/Raven & Co., 1993)

While society tends to segregate people by age, our congregations can be places where multigenerational living and learning can happen. However, even here, multigenerational experiences may need to be intentionally appreciated, and sometimes created.

This session guides participants to identify their own age-related characteristics and interests as well as those common in people of other ages, from the very young to the very old. Then participants assess ways people from multiple age groups interact in the congregation and imagine new ways they could interact to better share and enjoy their different gifts.

The story "The Children's Crusade" provides a Civil Rights-era lens to examine different ways children and adults can contribute to a shared purpose. The story describes how schoolchildren joined protests in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, despite the concern of many adults.

If it is feasible to conduct this session with a number of guests of different ages and stages of life, we recommend it. All the activities can be done with a larger-than-usual, multigenerational group. To ensure a good representation of ages, you might schedule this session at a time that does not conflict with worship. Invite individuals personally; Leader Resource 1, Invitation to Participate, provides a sample letter. Confirm guests' attendance a day or so before the session.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce the concept of multigenerational community, affirm it as reflective of our values as Unitarian Universalists, and demonstrate what it looks like

- Develop participants' sense that the age they are now is a point in their life's continuum
- Explore competencies that people of different ages tend to exhibit
- Teach about children's participation in civil rights protests as an example of people of different ages coming together to support and promote a community to which they belong; invite children to apply this lesson to the multigenerational possibilities of their Unitarian Universalist congregation
- Challenge participants to connect their faith to behavior in daily life.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about the role some children played in the Civil Rights Movement
- Articulate characteristics of different ages in life and define these as gifts
- Demonstrate understanding of multigenerational community by evaluating and designing congregational activities in terms of meaningful age-inclusiveness
- Add a representation of themselves in multigenerational community to their Window/Mirror panels
- Optional: Create expressions of pastoral concern with a multigenerational perspective to help people of different ages feel seen and welcomed in the congregation.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Where Do We Mix?	5
Activity 2: Story —The Children's Crusade	15
Activity 3: Window/Mirror Panel — The Age I Am	15
Activity 4: Creating a Congregational Event	15

Faith in Action: Multigenerational
Congregational Event

Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Making Pastoral Cards for All Ages	30
Alternate Activity 2: Come Sing a Song with Me	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable and light a candle to mark the time as different from other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes; perhaps repeat a word or phrase to separate you from the activities of the day. After opening your eyes, consider:

- What ages are the people who are part of your daily life? Do you live with young children, youth, adults or elders? Do you work with individuals who are at different stages of life from you? How do your interactions reflect your respective ages and stages of life? How do

these interactions affect your perspective or the way you live?

- Remembering your childhood, what multigenerational or cross-generational moments mattered to you? Why? Who was present? Why were you together? How did individuals of different ages contribute to these moments?
- Review what you know about the multigenerational lives of the children in the Windows and Mirrors group. To what degree might the message of this session be "news" to them? How can you prepare for losses that children may think of or mention, such a recent death, illness, or move of a parent or grandparent?
- What are your expectations for this session? What do you hope results from it? What difference do you hope it makes?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post somewhere everyone can see it.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: WHERE DO WE MIX? (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Congregational newsletters, flyers, calendars, and announcements about events such as worship, fellowship, social justice, advocacy and/or group learning
- Photographs from congregational events, including photo albums if possible
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [List of Ages and Life Stages](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Collect the information and photographs. If you will have multiple small groups, collect duplicates. Good sources are congregational newsletters, religious education schedules and events calendars and pages from your congregational website.
- Be ready to contribute your knowledge of congregational events, especially those that lend themselves to thoughtful adaptation to become more authentically multigenerational.
- Print a copy of Leader Resource 2, List of Ages and Life Stages.

- Post sheets of blank newsprint. Title the first sheet "Where Do We Mix?"
- Optional: Prepare a chart on newsprint for taking notes. Make a large column on the left for "Congregational Events." Add six small columns next to it for "very young," "school age," "teen," "young adult," "parents" and "older adults."

Description of Activity

Pass around the information and photographs about congregational events and activities. Ask participants to name the events, what their purpose is or was, and what ages of people attended. List events on newsprint and note the age groups involved. If you made a chart, place checks in the appropriate age group columns. Do this activity quickly and briefly.

Including All Participants

If you have a multigenerational group, give clear direction to all ages that this activity is a brief brainstorming. Affirm that participants will have opportunities to share stories about congregational events later.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Children's Crusade](#) (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker
- Optional: Visual images of segregation and the Civil Rights movement

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story a few times. Consider telling it dramatically, rather than reading it from the page. Practice telling it. Claim the storytelling; for example, try adopting different voices for different characters. The stories here are written for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.
- For storytelling, be ritualistic. Create a mood and time that is different from other moments in the session. For example, turn overhead lights off and use lamps. Position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.
- To set the stage for this story, plan to share some documentary images of segregation and

the Civil Rights movement. Gather the images you want to share. Make sure you have any audio/visual equipment you need. For [Jim Crow-era , se gregation photographs](#) (at www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/085_disc.html) try the Library of Congress online. The Southeast Public Health Training Center website has a [circa 1963 photo](#) (at sphetc.org/timeline/1960-4.jpg) of black Americans, including children, protesting school segregation. The About.com African-American History section of the About.com website provides a collection of [images of racial segregation signs](#) (at afroamhistory.about.com/od/jimcrowlaw1/ig/Racial-Segregation-Signs/) posted at hotels, waiting rooms, rest rooms, a drinking fountain, etc.

- Review the discussion questions. Choose some you think might resonate with this particular group and help them share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own experiences.
- If the group is very large, plan to form small groups for discussion. Each group should have at least three participants and an adult facilitator.

Description of Activity

Give instructions for the moment in the story when participants can stand, as they are able.

Ring the chime (or other noisemaker), make eye contact with each participant and read or tell the story.

Sound the chime (or other noisemaker) again at the end. Invite participants to think silently on their own about the story. Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to help us understand the story from multiple perspectives. Let's find out what one another thought about the story.

Remind them not to assume others think or feel the same way. Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Encourage the group to listen to each comment and then share some silence. Use the bell or chime to move between speakers.

Begin a discussion by asking participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Then use the following questions to facilitate discussion. (If the group includes multi-age participants, phrase the questions to include everyone.) Make sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance:

- What was Martin Luther King, Jr. asking the black community to stand up for?
- Why were some adults afraid to do as Dr. King asked? Do you think their fear of jail was stronger than their need for segregation to end?
- Do you think the children cared more about their civil rights than the adults did? Were they less afraid than some of the adults? Why?
- Why did they want to march? (Affirm answers such as bravery, willingness to go to jail, determination, love for their parents and community, generosity, wanting to please Martin Luther King and the other adult leaders, trust/not believing they truly would be harmed, persistence, a sense of comfort in knowing their friends would be there also so they would not be alone.)
- Why did the adults tell the children to sit down?
- Why did the adults change their minds and allow the children to march?
- (for children) Have you ever volunteered to help, and an adult ignored you or said "no?" Why did they say "no?" How did you feel? What was the outcome?
- When the children marched, what happened? How did the children's actions affect the adults?
- After the march, do you think children changed their expectations of themselves and of adults? Did the adults in the community change their expectations of the children?
- Was there a time when you helped someone of another age do something important? Or perhaps a time when someone younger than you helped you? What gifts of age did you bring them? What gifts of age did they bring?

Conclude by articulating what the story teaches about different gifts that children and adults bring into re/making the world. Ask the group to think about:

- What gifts of age do you have now? (mirror question)
- How might you use these gifts together with someone of a different age to make the world a better place? (window question)

Thank everyone for their observations and sharing.

Including All Participants

If any participants cannot stand up on their own, tell the group before you begin the story that there will be a

moment when they should raise their hands in the air (if possible) or nod their heads to signify answering the call with a "yes."

If you have brought documentary images and a non-sighted participant is present, ask a few volunteers to describe the photographs verbally.

ACTIVITY 3: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — THE AGE I AM (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Optional: Blank paper or card stock, cut to a size that can be placed within Window/Mirror Panels
- Optional: Paint and paintbrushes, pastels or other art media
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Consider the size of participants' Window/Mirror panels and the number of projects each panel will include (that is, the number of sessions you plan to lead). You may wish to cut blank paper or card stock in a specific sizes or shapes for this assignment.
- If you have a multi-age group that includes guests, provide paper and arts and crafts materials so everyone can do this assignment, with or without a Window/Mirror panel. Plan where guests might display their pictures at the close of this activity or session.
- Have materials easily accessible.

Description of Activity

Ask the children to bring their Window/Mirror panels to worktables. Distribute Window/Mirror panel basket(s) and any other materials you may have brought. Say:

Today you will add another view of yourself to your Window/Mirror panel. You can use pictures, words, collage, or a combination to show how you fit into multigenerational community.

If you have guests, invite them to do the assignment on an individual piece of paper. Explain any plan you have for how the guests might display their work after the activity.

Remind participants that "multigenerational" means a wide span of ages and stages of life. Ask the group for definitions of "community." Affirm answers such as: A community is a group where everyone feels like they belong; it has a shared purpose; it is people with something in common; it is being together for a reason everyone cares about.

Ask participants to think of a time when they gathered with people of many different ages, from very young children to older adults. Suggest it might be a congregational event they talked about earlier in the session; a gathering of family and friends; a public event such as a parade, a community fair, or an arts performance; or sports event. If they cannot think of a real experience they wish to represent, they may imagine a multigenerational community gathering. Ask everyone to raise their hand when they have an image in mind.

Once most have raised their hands, invite everyone to position themselves with any others their age in the community gathering. What are the people their age doing? What are people of other ages doing? You may wish to ask some volunteers to describe their multigenerational event and tell what different age participants are doing.

Now invite the children to create an image of multigenerational community for their Window/Mirror panel. Tell them they may use drawing/painting, collage, writing, or a mixture of these. Ask them to make sure they feature themselves or their age group in their representation.

Give the group a two-minute warning so they have time to affix their image to their Window/Mirror panel, clean up materials, and store their Window/Mirror panels.

ACTIVITY 4: CREATING A CONGREGATIONAL EVENT (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Sheets of newsprint listing congregational events, from Activity 1, *Where Do We Mix?*
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Blank paper, a pen or pencil and a copy of Handout 1, [Congregational Event for All Ages](#) (included in this document), for each group
- Leader Resource 2, [List of Ages and Stages](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Post newsprint listing congregational events brainstormed in Activity 1.
- On another sheet of newsprint, list six age categories: very young children, school-age children, teens, young adults, older adults and very old adults. Post the list.
- Optional: Post another sheet, and list (1) why enjoy? (2) how meaningful? and (3) how participate? as short reminders of the small group discussion questions.
- Post blank newsprint to compile small groups' ideas at the end of the activity.

Description of Activity

Form as many small groups as you have adult facilitators—ideally, each with five to nine participants. Give each group paper and a pen or pencil and ask for a volunteer in each group to take notes.

Ask each group to choose one congregational activity or event on the list to discuss. The event should be one that (1) most of the group value and enjoy and (2) they agree is important to at least some people in the congregation.

Give groups a moment to choose an event. Then, quiet the group and invite groups to discuss these questions, with the note-taker recording the group's answers. Tell them they will have five minutes.

- What is enjoyable about the event or activity?
- What is meaningful or valuable about the event/activity? (Another way to frame this question is, "What do very young children [or

another age group] get out of this activity/event?")

- How does the event/activity engage people in different age groups? (Or, "How do very young children [or another age group] participate?")

Give a one-minute warning and then stop the groups. Then give them another five minutes to consider how the event/activity could be changed to be more fun, meaningful, and engaging for people of every age and stage of life. Remind participants to avoid suggesting changes to appeal to one age group that could cause another group to like the activity less.

You may wish to mention the story "The Children's Crusade":

As you think about how all ages share time together in our congregation, remember the story we heard. Consider what the children and the adults in Birmingham each brought to the protest march, and what a child or adult may have experienced as a result of doing that activity together.

Give groups at least five minutes. Then ask them to stop their discussion and choose a spokesperson.

Re-gather everyone in a circle. Invite spokespeople to briefly present how they would change one congregational event or activity. Record ideas in note form on the blank newsprint.

To close this activity, lead a discussion about how the various suggestions would engage different age groups to make the event/activity more enjoyable and meaningful for them and how different ages could participate.

Variation — Faith in Action

If this activity could lead into a Faith in Action activity in which the group will plan and/or host an explicitly multigenerational congregational activity or event, guide the discussion toward consensus on a plan based on one or more small groups' suggestions. You may end up with a suggestion for a brand new event to propose to the congregation.

Conclude by asking for volunteers and assigning roles so the group can present their idea to your minister, your director of religious education, or other congregational leaders.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout

- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone first to clean up their own area and the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: MULTI-GENERATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL EVENT

Materials for Activity

- Notes from Activity 4, Creating a Congregational Event
- Leader Resource 2, [List of Ages and Life Stages](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post small groups' contributions from Activity 4, Creating a Congregational Event.
- Post fresh newsprint.

Description of Activity

In Activity 4, the group looked at the congregation's events and activities in terms of what someone of a particular age or stage of life might find meaningful or fun. This Faith in Action activity guides the group to plan and suggest to congregational leaders an explicitly multigenerational, adapted or brand new event or activity.

Lead the group to review the events explored by the small groups, with an eye toward choosing one to suggest to your congregation. You might also introduce for consideration a new multigenerational event idea for the group to plan. Consider offering a social justice or pastoral activity, or a children's activity with roles for all ages. Alternate Activity 1, Making Pastoral Cards, might provide the seed for an all-ages activity at your congregation.

There are many ways you might choose an event to plan as intentionally multigenerational; one way might be to hand each participant two differently colored dot stickers (for example, red and yellow) and ask everyone to mark their first and second choices on the posted newsprint lists. The event with the most dots wins.

Once an event or activity is selected, lead the group to plan the event. Brainstorm ideas on how it can be welcoming, enjoyable, and meaningful for people of different ages. An adult should briefly record ideas on the blank newsprint. Start the planning process with questions like the following:

- What is the name of the event?
- What is the purpose of the event?
- What ages are involved now?

- Does the event affect everyone or only some people? Who?
- Who hosts the event now?
- How is the event advertised?
- What time of day is it held?
- Where it is the event held?
- How could physical movement be involved but not required?
- Are participants asked to read, or read/speak aloud? How can folks who cannot read yet, or do not feel comfortable speaking in public, participate?
- Would parents with babies be able to participate?
- What kind(s) of food are served?
- What games or icebreakers might bring all ages together at this event?
- What accessibility or inclusion issues might there be?
- What safety issues might there be?

Once the purpose and basic plan for the event are established, gather ideas for making it maximally welcoming, enjoyable and meaningful. Refer to the list of age groups (Leader Resource 1) to make sure all are addressed. Find consensus on suggestions as you go along.

Save about five minutes for working together on a proposal to congregational leadership about the event. The proposal might be in form of a letter to your minister or committee chair(s), or an outline of what will happen at the event. Draft the proposal on newsprint.

Have a volunteer type and print the proposal, leaving room for all participants to sign. Thank everyone for their participation and invite them to share clean-up.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?

- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

The elder cannot be an elder if there is no community to make [them]... an elder. The young child cannot feel secure if there is no elder, whose silent presence gives [them]... hope in life. The adult cannot be who [they are] unless there is a strong sense of the other people around. — M.P. Som?n Ritual Power, Healing, and Community (Portland, Oregon: Swan/Raven & Co., 1993)

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

While our society tends to segregate us by age, our congregations can be places where multigenerational living and learning can happen. This session guided participants to appreciate multigenerational experiences from multiple ages' perspectives and to plan a congregational activity for all ages.

Participants reflected on idea that they, themselves, are a particular age. They explored their own and others' age-related characteristics and interests.

The story, "The Children's Crusade," provided a Civil Rights-era lens to examine different ways children and adults can contribute to a shared purpose. The story describes how children joined protests in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963 despite concerns of many adults.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

Share stories about multigenerational events you participate in, such as family/friends vacations, congregational events or public events. Invite each person to talk about what they like or don't like about an event and the ways in which they find it meaningful. Encourage your child to articulate anything they may have learned about the traits or concerns of their own age group, yours and others.

Invite your child to tell you about the Children's Crusade. Share observations about how children and adults together made a difference. Help your child keep their commitment this week to notice the gifts of someone of a different age.

EXTEND THE TOPIC. Try...

Affirm regular multi-age connections for you and your child. Calculate the time your child spends in age-

segregated activities, and try to balance it with activities in which they engage with people of diverse ages. Together you might develop a chart to record, for one week, each person's interactions with various ages.

To broaden the age ranges in which your family interacts, you might volunteer together to care for or teach younger children or older adults. Visit a neighbor with older children, younger children, or no children. Commit to participating in an activity or event at your congregation that is already intergenerational.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Before one meal each week, light candles, hold hands and invite each member of the family to name a friend or family member not of the same age and not present. End with these words:

With all of these people in our hearts and minds we are in communion.

A FAMILY GAME

The game Do As I Say is fun for all ages to play together. One person starts the game by repeating a simple action, such as patting their head or tapping a foot, but saying something different, such as "I am making a fist." Everyone has to repeat the statement each time the leader says it, but do the action the leader is doing. The first person the leader catches doing or saying the wrong thing becomes the new leader. If the leader gets mixed up first, they choose someone else to be the new leader. Younger children may need help with what to say but often find "opposite" motions easier to negotiate than adults. Older participants may like help thinking of a simple action to perform.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Make a family photo album/scrapbook with the theme All Ages Have Particular Gifts. Include photos of different-aged people, both friends and family, doing what they enjoy most or spend most time doing. Organize the album by age. Or, use photos that include multiple generations in shared activities. Use scrap-booking items found at office supply or craft stores to enhance the theme.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: MAKING PASTORAL CARDS FOR ALL AGES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Card stock for cards
- Optional: Envelopes for cards

- Arts and crafts materials to share, such as markers, colored pencils, paints/paintbrushes, tissue paper, stickers, glue sticks and scissors (including left-handed scissors)
- Optional: Small sticky labels that read "This card was made by a multigenerational learning group at (name of congregation)."
- Copy of Leader Resource 2, [List of Ages and Life Stages](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Invite participants across a wide spectrum of ages to join the group for this activity.
- Prepare sticky labels ahead of time.
- You may wish to fold card stock into greeting cards and insert in blank envelopes.
- If you are providing paints and paintbrushes, have water and rags on hand for clean-up. Leave time for the clean-up. Identify a place for participants to place painted cards to dry.
- Post blank newsprint. Write on it "condolences" and "congratulations."
- Print Leader Resource 2, List of Ages and Life Stages.
- Make a sample card to send to a person who graduated from a school grade, is ill, has had a family member die, is celebrating a birthday or has reached another life passage.
- Contact the minister, director of religious education, pastoral care committee, or lay leaders who might send pastoral cards to congregational members. Invite them to join this session, share ideas for pastoral cards they can use and/or agree to send the children's cards to appropriate recipients.

Description of Activity

This activity generates discussion of the personal challenges and celebrations common at different stages of life and gives the group a role in your congregation's practice of recognizing members' life passages. Ministers and others in your congregation who provide pastoral service and those who receive it will appreciate children's hand-made cards.

Ask participants to name occasions on which they have sent or received cards and write these on newsprint. You may suggest the anniversary of a special event, a birthday, a child dedication (baptism, christening, bris), coming-of-age ceremony (or confirmation, first Communion, bar/bat mitzvah), congratulations on an

achievement, death of a family member or pet, graduation, marriage, move to a new home or serious illness.

Distribute card stock and arts and crafts materials at worktables. Explain that the group will now make cards to be sent out to congregational members of all ages, as the need arises. If you have a multigenerational group of participants and have made sticky labels, distribute the labels and show participants where to affix them on each card.

Engage the group in thinking about how to design cards for different purposes. Lead the group in phrasing a few different sentiments to write on the cards. Mention that any art made with loving thought is appropriate for all occasions. Indicate the spelling of "condolences" and "congratulations" on the newsprint and invite the group to suggest additional words they would like to see spelled out.

Invite participants to make at least one card for someone in an age group different from theirs. Tell them how much time they have and give a two-minute warning with directions for clean-up and where to place the finished cards. You may wish to leave extra time for volunteers to share cards they made or randomly choose a card(s) to share with the group.

Thank everyone for their participation.

Variation

If you have multi-age guests, create opportunities for participants to work with someone of a different age. Form multigenerational groups to share a worktable or to design cards on a theme (e.g., get-well cards).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: COME SING A SONG WITH ME (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Piano or guitar
- Song books such as [Rise Up Singing](#) (at www.singout.org/rus.html) by Peter Blood and Annie Patterson (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out!, 2004); the hymnbook *Singing the Living Tradition*; and/or the UU Musicians Network's [Come Sing a Song with Me](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=894), edited by Melodie Feather (Boston: Skinner House, 2008); or song sheets with lyrics

Preparation for Activity

- Set a date with your religious educator, minister and lay leaders for an explicitly

multigenerational half-hour sing-along. Invite a song leader and/or piano or guitar accompanist. Use congregational announcements, board and committee announcements, your newsletter(s) and/or website, posted or mailed flyers, and word of mouth to pass the invitation along. Make it clear that babes-in-arms are welcome. If the sing-along will not be at a regular worship or coffee hour time, engage volunteers to offer transportation to elders and others who may need it.

- Choose a few songs ahead of time that participants of many ages may know.
- Consider starting the event with a brief synopsis of the story "The Children's Crusade" and some words to affirm that all ages contribute to our community's life and work in a variety of ways. You might include one or two songs sung during the Civil Rights movement such as "We Shall Overcome" (Hymn 169 in *Singing the Living Tradition*), "Blowin' in the Wind" (page 115 in *Rise Up Singing*), or "This Little Light of Mine" (Hymn 118 in *Singing the Living Tradition*).

Description of Activity

Singing songs together, especially ones that are important in your congregation, can foster a sense of multigenerational community and create special memories for children.

Welcome everyone. Distribute hymnbooks or song sheets. Lead the group in singing the songs you have chosen, using call-and-response to make sure all can join in whether or not they already know the words.

Include some songs that elders can teach and others that children can teach. Inviting young children to teach hand motions to a well-known song could be fun.

Variation

Warm up the group with games all ages can play together. Groups of 20 or fewer can play a Name Whip game. Participants sit in a circle and each introduces themselves by saying their name and a word that starts with their first initial—for example, Dana Delicious or Amy Apple. You might ask participants to introduce themselves with a word that describes something they and other people their age do or like—for example, Dana Driving or Amy Aerobics. Each participant must recite the names and matching words for every person who has already spoken and then add their own name and word. The whip ends when the last person names everyone in the room and their age-related word. Then you might invite one or two volunteers (preferably of

different ages) to name every person in the circle and the word they chose.

For another game, Do As I Say, have everyone sit in a circle. One person starts the game by repeating a simple action, such as patting their head or tapping a foot, but saying something different, such as "I am making a fist." Everyone has to repeat the statement each time the leader says it, but do the action the leader is doing. The first person the leader catches doing or saying the wrong thing becomes the new leader. If the leader gets mixed up first, they choose someone else to be the new leader. Younger children may need help with what to say but often find "opposite" motions easier to negotiate than adults. Older participants may need suggestions for a simple action to perform.

Including All Participants

Make sure the room is fully accessible and has seating options to make people of every mobility level comfortable. Invite people with hearing or vision limitations to sit where they can best hear/see.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 6: STORY: THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

By Kate Rhode, in *What if Nobody Forgave? and Other Stories*, edited by Colleen McDonald (Boston: Skinner House, 2003). Used with permission.

You may wish to have an adult storyteller begin this story, and have a child reader take over at the point where the text says, "The children heard about the decision and told their friends." Make sure all storytellers have time to read the story and prepare themselves to tell it before the session begins.

Invite all the listeners to rise, as they are able, at the part of the story where the children stand up.

"What are we going to do?" asked Martin Luther King, Jr., the well-known American civil rights leader, as he sat with his friends at a meeting in the 16th St. Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. King, who was trying to lead the black people of Birmingham in their struggle to end segregation, was worried that he and his friends were going to fail in their mission. Nevertheless, he rose from his chair at the front of the group.

"Who will demonstrate with me tomorrow in a brave attempt to end segregation? Who will risk going to jail for the cause?"

Often, four hundred people would show up for meetings like this one, but only 35 or so would volunteer to protest and not all those volunteers would actually show to protest. Those who did would gather downtown and parade through the streets, carry signs, chant, and sing, sending the message that segregation had to end.

In King's day, segregation meant that black people were not allowed to do the same things or go to the same places as white people. Black people couldn't go to most amusement parks, swimming pools, parks, hotels, or restaurants. They had to go to different schools that weren't as nice as the schools for white kids. They had to use separate drinking fountains, and they could and did get in trouble for breaking this rule. They weren't allowed to use the same bathrooms; many times, there were no public bathrooms at all that they could use. They weren't allowed to try on clothes before they bought them, like white people could.

Black people didn't think this was fair. Some white people didn't think it was fair either. In the 1950s and 1960s, many thousands of people worked to end segregation. But in many places, especially in the southern part of the United States, segregation was the

law, and if black people tried to go somewhere they weren't supposed to go, they could and did get arrested, beaten, and even killed. In the spring of 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. went to Birmingham, Alabama, one of the largest and most heavily segregated cities in America, to bring people together to change the law.

You see, the people were very scared. The sheriff in Birmingham was named Bull Connor. And black people didn't know what Bull Connor might do to them if he caught them protesting. Martin Luther King had already been in jail once, and others were afraid to follow him. Besides, they weren't sure protesting would do any good.

Dr. King, seeing that no one answered his call, again tried to inspire the group. "The struggle will be long," he said. "We must stand up for our rights as human beings. Who will demonstrate with me, and if necessary, be ready to go to jail for it?"

There was a pause, and then a whole group of people stood up. Someone gasped. All the people who stood up were children.

(Leader—Invite all the children in the room to stand up, as they are able.)

The adults told them to sit down but they didn't.

Martin Luther King thanked the children and told them he appreciated the offer but that he couldn't ask them to go to jail. They still wouldn't sit down. They wanted to help.

That night, Dr. King talked with a close group of friends about the events of the day. "What are we going to do?" he asked. "The only volunteers we got were children. We can't have a protest with children!" Everyone nodded, except Jim Bevel. "Wait a minute," said Jim. "If they want to do it, I say bring on the children."

"But they are too young!" the others said. Then Jim asked, "Are they too young to go to segregated schools?"

"No."

"Are they too young to be kept out of amusement parks?"

"No!"

"Are they too young to be refused a hamburger in a restaurant?"

"No!" said the others.

"Then they are not too young to want their freedom."

That night, they decided that any child old enough to join a church was old enough to march.

The children heard about the decision and told their friends. When the time came for the march, a thousand children, teenagers, and college students gathered. The sheriff arrested them and put them in jail. The next day even more kids showed up—some of their parents and relatives too, and even more the next day and the next day. Soon lots of adults joined in. Finally, a thousand children were locked up together in a "children's jail." And there was no more room for anyone else.

Sheriff Connor had done awful things to try and get protesters to turn back. He had turned big police dogs loose and allowed them to bite people. He had turned on fire hoses that were so strong the force of the water could strip the bark off of trees. He had ordered the firefighters to point the hoses at the children and push them down the street. People all over the country and all

over the world saw the pictures of the dogs, the fire hoses, and the children, and they were furious.

Now the white people of Birmingham began to worry. All over the world people were saying bad things about their city. Even worse, everyone was afraid to go downtown to shop because of the dogs and hoses. So they decided they had to change things. A short time later, the black people and white people of Birmingham made a pact to desegregate the city and let everyone go to the same places.

Today when people tell this story, many talk about Martin Luther King, Jr. We should also remember the thousands of brave children and teenagers whose courage helped to defeat Bull Connor and end segregation in Birmingham and the rest of the United States.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 6:

HANDOUT 1: CONGREGATIONAL EVENT FOR ALL AGES

Use these questions to consider how people of different ages might enjoy or find meaning in an activity or event at your congregation. Try to answer each question from the perspective of a very young child, a school-age child, a teenager, a young adult, an older adult and a very old adult.

For each activity or event...

Very Young Child	School-Age Child	Teenager	Young Adult	Older Adult	Very Old Adult
---------------------	---------------------	----------	----------------	----------------	-------------------

... what is there to do at the event/activity? (How do they participate?)

... what is enjoyable about the event/activity?

... what is meaningful or valuable about the event/activity? (What do they get out of it?)

Additional questions to consider for each age group:

- Is there too much, too little or just enough...
 - reading?
 - snacks?
 - moving around?
 - sitting still?
 - music?
 - talking with your friends?
- Is the room comfortable?

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 6:

LEADER RESOURCE 1: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Dear [name],

We would love to have you join our Windows and Mirrors (grades 4/5) religious education program on (date, time). Our session is about how our religious community is made up of all ages, each important to our congregation. We will hear and discuss a story about a Civil Rights event called the Children's Crusade—a time when adults were reluctant to act to further the movement and children participated in a way that no one else could. Then we will do some activities together to explore the different gifts that people of different ages and life stages bring to our congregation.

We hope you will join us. If you have any questions, or would like transportation to and from church for this event, please contact us.

We will follow up with a phone call to you in a few days.

Sincerely,

(Co-leaders / contact information)

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 6:

LEADER RESOURCE 2: LIST OF AGES AND LIFE STAGES

Use this list as a reference during the activities in this session to ensure you include multiple age and stage-of-life perspectives.

Very young children

School-age children

Teens

Young Adults

Older Adults

Very Old Adults

FIND OUT MORE

Intergenerational or Multigenerational Community

Many Unitarian Universalist congregations value multigenerational community in theory more than in practice. Online, find discussion about how worship, religious education, social actions, and other congregational functions might become more richly multigenerational.

The Reverend Tom Owen-Towle has written:

The mission of Unitarian Universalist (UU) religious education is to create and sustain an intergenerational community of truthfulness and service, holiness and love. This imperative should undergird and guide our social action, liturgy, and stewardship as well. Unitarian Universalist religious education is neither book nor guru centered. It is not adult or even child centered. It is congregation centered, wherein all ages cooperatively engage in what Starr Williams called 'a cycle of nurturing.' Hence, our educational perspective must be grounded in sound ecclesiology and focus on all members being religious, remembering, re-creative, responsible, respectful, renewable and reverent pilgrims.

The Search Institute's [downloadable book](http://searchinstitutestore.org/home.php?cat=275) (at searchinstitutestore.org/home.php?cat=275), "Creating Intergenerational Community," offers 75 activity ideas to

include multiple generations, workable in a variety of aspects of UU congregational life.

Websites supported by [St. Thomas University in Brunswick, Canada](http://www.stthomasu.ca/research/youth/manual/activities.htm) (at www.stthomasu.ca/research/youth/manual/activities.htm) and [Penn State's College of Agriculture and Extension](http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Program.html) (at intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Program.html) offer many ideas and considerations about intergenerational community, including activities.

The Children's Crusade, Birmingham, Alabama

The marches in which children participated took place in the spring of 1963 during the [Birmingham campaign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birmingham_campaign) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birmingham_campaign) orchestrated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and allies in the black civil rights movement. Read a detailed report on the Children's Crusade and find background, including primary sources, on the [Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement website](http://www.crmvet.org/tim/timhis63.htm#1963bhcc) (at www.crmvet.org/tim/timhis63.htm#1963bhcc). A National Parks Service website dedicated to [historic places of the Civil Rights Movement](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/al10.htm) (at www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/al10.htm) describes what happened on May 2, 1963, when children joined the protest at Kelly Ingram Park .

On the [Teaching Tolerance](http://www.tolerance.org) (at www.tolerance.org) website, read a story about a [schoolchildren's march in December, 2005](http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_tol.jsp?id=1337) (at www.tolerance.org/news/article_tol.jsp?id=1337) in Montgomery, Alabama, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Montgomery bus boycott.

SESSION 7: LET'S TALK

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Language exerts hidden power, like the moon on the tides. — Rita Mae Brown, author and activist

Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone. — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Language is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation. — Angela Carter, 20th-century British author

If we are to achieve the beloved community that liberal religion seeks to create, we must maintain a discipline of deep listening. Even though we may think of a smile as a universal affirmation, the activities and stories in this session demonstrate that we cannot make assumptions about what people mean to say, nor can we assume others will automatically understand us. Making the effort to communicate and understand one another is both a practical and spiritual task. This session guides participants to understand their responsibility to be both self-aware of their communications and aware of how others might receive them.

The Alternate Activities offer exploration of various forms of communication from music and movement to languages used with English, including Pig Latin, Morse code, and American Sign Language.

Consider inviting a bilingual guest to attend this session and translate the stories into another language as you read them aloud. It might be even more fun to have two guests, one a foreign language interpreter and another using American Sign Language.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce participants to their responsibilities as communicators
- Alert participants to the role linguistic and cultural communication differences play in interpersonal misunderstanding
- Offer skills for improving interpersonal and intercultural communication
- Demonstrate how communication skills can be part of a spiritual as well as a practical discipline

- Reinforce our Unitarian Universalist Principles of the inherent worth and dignity of all peoples; justice, equity and compassion in human relations; acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations; and world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Develop awareness of themselves as communicators
- Explore how communication skills help them live out Unitarian Universalist Principles, specifically by becoming thoughtful and skilled at welcoming newcomers to their congregation (and their home, their school, and their friendship group)
- Appreciate the variety of written, spoken and physical languages that people use
- Learn to say and write "welcome" in at least one other language
- Practice the talking and listening aspects of communication.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Create Your Own Language and Gesture	5
Activity 2: Story — The Curse of Babel	5
Activity 3: Story — The Day of Pentecost	10
Activity 4: Game — Let's Talk and Listen	10
Activity 5: Ways to Communicate a Welcome	5
Activity 6: Window/Mirror Panel	15
Faith in Action: Practicing What We Speak	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Non-Verbal Survival Skills	15

Alternate Activity 2: Language Audit	10
Alternate Activity 3: Music as Language	10
Alternate Activity 4: Translating the Familiar	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable; light a candle to mark the time as different from your other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply and perhaps repeat one word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day.

Think about how you talk and how you listen when you communicate with others. You might consider:

- The gestures you use in a conversation
- A significant incident when your words or gestures were misunderstood
- An occasion when you reached across a cultural difference by using language or gestures thoughtfully.

Consider how you can share your experiences and insights with the children in the session.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymn book, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket, cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life" or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is

new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from the UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: CREATE YOUR OWN LANGUAGE AND GESTURE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Slips of paper for all participants (Leader Resource 1, [Friends Phrases](#) (included in this document))
- Basket
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1, Friends Phrases. You will need one copy for every six participants plus another copy to keep intact to use in Activity 3.
- Cut the leader resource into slips of paper. Fold the slips and place them in the basket.

Description of Activity

Invite each child to select a slip of paper from the basket without showing it to anyone. When everyone has a slip of paper, ask the group to read their slips silently and make up their own language to communicate their phrase. Suggest children repeat the phrase in their new language several times to themselves, to memorize it. Distribute pencils to children who would like to jot down their phrase on their slip of paper.

Then gather the group in a circle. Ask the children to turn their backs to one another and make up a gesture to go with the phrase in their special language. Tell them that, for now, this is a secret gesture they should not

show anyone else. Ask them to hold on to their slip of paper and remember their phrase and gesture for later in the session.

Including All Participants

Read the phrase on their slip of paper to any child who has difficulty reading.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — THE CURSE OF BABEL (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Curse of Babel](#) (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story in advance.

Description of Activity

Ring the chime (or other noisemaker), make eye contact with each participant and read or tell the story.

Sound the chime again at the end. Invite one or two volunteers to retell the story in their own words. Then, lead a discussion with these questions:

- Is it a curse that people speak different languages, or a blessing?
- What was the role of God in the story?
- If God was trying to teach the people a lesson, what was it? Was it a good lesson or a bad one? What might be the results of the people learning this lesson?

Point out that in the story, God took away a common language to keep humans limited in what they could accomplish together. Ask:

- Whether or not you believe in a God that could or would do that, do you think people need a common language to accomplish great things together?
- Do you think that here in our congregation we share a common language? How does that help us accomplish things together? How does a lack of common language get in the way?
- How about in our families?
- As Unitarian Universalists?
- As Americans?
- As humans?

Help the group discover through discussion that "language" can mean one's mode of moving, singing, drawing, etc. You might say:

All forms of communication are in a language, not just writing and speaking. There are lots of ways to find common language—not just words, but also music, physical activities, artistic expression and simple things like a shared understanding of what a smile means.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — THE DAY OF PENTECOST (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Day of Pentecost](#) (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story in advance.

Description of Activity

Tell the group you will now share another story about communication. Ring the chime, make eye contact with each participant and read or tell the story.

Sound the chime again at the end. Then, lead a discussion about what it means to share language. You might ask:

- What other spoken languages are you aware of in your family, neighborhood, school, congregation and community?
- How easy is it for you to understand those other languages?
- What does it feel like when you are able to understand someone even if they do not speak the same language as you?

Because this is the second story they will have heard, children may seem "talked out." If it is difficult to spark discussion, move to the next activity, Game — Let's Talk and Listen. You can return to these discussion questions when you process the game with the group.

ACTIVITY 4: GAME — LET'S TALK AND LISTEN (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Slips of paper from Activity 1, Create Your Own Language and Gesture
- Leader Resource 1, [Friends Phrases](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Children need to have heard both stories, "Tower of Babel" and "The Day of Pentecost."
- Make sure you have an intact copy of the leader resource.

Description of Activity

Give children a moment to find their slip of paper from Activity 1. Ask them to remember how to say their phrase in their invented language and the gesture they created to go with it.

Gather the children in a circle. Tell them:

We are going to experience something like the Tower of Babel and Pentecost stories you have just heard. You will have a chance to try and communicate your phrase to the rest of us. You may repeat your phrase and gesture as much as you like in order to be understood, but do not translate into English.

Now invite the children to speak the phrases they created in their new languages, all at the same time. Allow them to attempt to communicate to the group this way for a minute or so. Then stop them and say:

Let's talk for a minute in English, without giving away our secret phrases just yet. How did that go? Has anyone understood anyone else?

Allow some comments. If anyone thinks they know another person's phrase, ask them what they think it is and why they think so—but do not reveal the correct phrase.

Now form pairs or triplets. Ask the children to take turns talking and gesturing to communicate their phrase to their partner(s). Give enough time for all partners to try communicating their phrase.

Re-gather the group and ask if being in a smaller group brought anyone closer to understanding another person's phrase (but don't reveal the phrases yet).

Now tell them you will give them a clue. Read aloud all six phrases from Leader Resource 1. Explain that everyone in the group is trying to communicate one of these. Invite a few volunteers to demonstrate their phrase and gesture for the whole group, one at a time, and see if participants are better able to guess. To conclude the game, ask each participant to share their gesture and the English version of their phrase.

Debrief the game with the children; ask what was surprising, fun, or challenging.

ACTIVITY 5: WAYS TO COMMUNICATE A WELCOME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- List or display of ways to write, say and gesture "welcome"
- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Compile a list or display of ways to write, say and gesture "welcome" in a variety of languages and cultures. Use the Internet, books, and multilingual friends and acquaintances to collect a variety of written, spoken and gestured "welcomes." Learn how to pronounce unfamiliar phrases. On the website of Southampton (UK) Children's Information Service, you can [hear, read and download "welcome"](#) (at www.southamptoncis.org/form-arabic.asp) in a variety of languages including Arabic, Farsi, Hindi and Somali. The [Omniplot](#) (at www.omniplot.com/language/phrases/welcome.htm) website offers a long list of "welcomes," many with audio links. Gather illustrations of "welcome" in American Sign Language (see [Lesson Tutor ASL website](#) (at www.lesstutor.com/eesASLWelcome.html)) and images of "welcome" written in non-English alphabets.
- Make a handout and copy it for all participants. Or, write/post a display of "welcomes" on newsprint and/or walls. You will need the handout or display for Activity 6, Window/Mirror Panel, as well as this activity.

Description of Activity

Gather the group for discussion and ask:

If you do not share the same language as someone, how can you communicate and be absolutely sure that person understands you?

Allow some discussion. Affirm or make these points:

- There may be some universals in nonverbal communication, such as smiling.
- Nevertheless, even when you do share a language with someone, cultural differences in body language, alphabet, speech patterns, and voice intonations can complicate communication.

Now offer the example of welcoming others to our congregation, family, or group of friends. How might participants communicate "welcome" to someone who:

- Speaks their language but tells you they have just moved from a different town or another region of the country?
- Arrives in a wheelchair?
- Is elderly and walks with a cane?
- Is a child their age who does not speak much English?

Allow some discussion. Affirm ideas for welcoming that express awareness of a newcomer's perspective or potential needs, such as asking a blind visitor whether they read braille and would like a braille hymnbook; offering to help an elderly person find a seat for worship, or asking a new child their name, where they are from and what school they go to. Say:

When people come to our congregation, we need to let them know they are welcome here, and we need to be sure they understand. The word "welcome" is not enough, but it would be a good start. It might be especially meaningful to make someone feel welcome who is more comfortable with a language other than spoken English.

Let's explore how to say "welcome" in a few different languages.

Distribute handouts you have prepared or direct participants' attention to the "welcomes" you have displayed. Encourage the children to experiment with these and help with pronunciation as needed. Also, invite participants to share translations of "welcome" that they may know.

Conclude by asking the children if they know of people in the congregation who use a language other than spoken/written English. Plan when children can share multilingual "welcomes" with some people who may especially like to hear them.

Including All Participants

If the group includes participants who know another language, including American Sign Language or braille, contact them before the session and ask if they are willing to teach the group the word "welcome" in their language.

ACTIVITY 6: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- List or display of ways to write, say and gesture "welcome" (see Activity 5, Way to Communicate a Welcome)
- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Optional: Blank paper or card stock, cut to a size that can be placed within Window/Mirror Panels
- Optional: Paint and paintbrushes, pastels or other art media
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror Panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Consider the size of participants' Window/Mirror Panels and the number of projects each panel will include (i.e., number of sessions you plan to lead). You may wish to cut blank paper or card stock in a specific size/shape for this assignment.
- Make sure children have access to the list or display of "welcomes" you handed out or posted for Activity 5.

Description of Activity

Ask the children to bring their Window/Mirror Panels to worktables. Distribute Window/Mirror panel basket(s) and other materials, such as special paper cut to a certain size.

Invite children to add signs to their Window/Mirror Panels that welcome people in one or more different languages.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of Namaste and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to first clean up their own area and the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses, allowing individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to

the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: PRACTICING WHAT WE SPEAK

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Let's Talk... and Listen](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Photocopy the handout for all participants.

Description of Activity

Tell the group they will do an experiment, between now and your next meeting, to put the session's lessons about faithful communication into practice.

Distribute handouts. Read the suggestions on the handout together. Invite each child to promise to do one activity before the next session and prepare to share briefly what they learned next time they meet.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Language exerts hidden power, like the moon on the tides. — Rita Mae Brown, author and activist

Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone. —Ralph Waldo Emerson

Language is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation. — Angela Carter, 20th-century British author

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

If we are to achieve the beloved community that liberal religion seeks to create, we must maintain a discipline of deep listening. This session guides participants to understand their responsibility to be both self-aware of their communications and aware of how others might receive them. The activities and stories in this session demonstrate that we cannot make assumptions about what people mean to say, nor can we assume others will automatically understand us. Making the effort to communicate and understand one another is both a practical and spiritual task. The group discussed communication approaches to make a newcomer to our congregation feel welcome and learned to say "welcome" in at least one language other than English.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

Exposure to different languages can help children understand that language is only a representation of human experience, one that varies widely from culture to culture and from person to person. Where do your family members encounter written or spoken languages other than English? Do different members of your family "speak" different body languages and does that sometimes cause them to misunderstand one another?

EXTEND THE TOPIC. Try...

A FAMILY ADVENTURE

Family members can join in the children's Faith in Action project and commit to doing one of the following activities before Windows and Mirrors meets next:

- Say "welcome" to someone in another language.
- Watch a foreign language TV channel.
- Observe others talking and notice the gestures they use and what they mean.

A FAMILY GAME

Investigate body language communication patterns in your family. Encourage your child and other family members to pay attention during your conversations to how many times, and when, their listener(s) smiled or nodded their heads. Make a list of body language affirmations that are universally understood—at least in your family.

A FAMILY RITUAL

For a week, challenge family members to start each day by greeting one another with "Good morning" in a different language.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: NONVERBAL SURVIVAL SKILLS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Enough to Make Your Head Spin](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.

Description of Activity

The children will experience giving and receiving nonverbal affirmations. Form two groups—speakers and listeners—and pair each speaker with a listener. Now ask the listeners to count off by fours and come receive special instructions from you, out of the earshot of the speakers:

- Listeners who are ones: Use no nonverbal affirmations while listening to their partners.
- Twos: Use positive nonverbal affirmations, such as smiling or nodding their heads, at appropriate times.
- Threes: Use positive nonverbal affirmations, such as smiling or nodding their heads, at random times.
- Fours: Use negative nonverbal confirmations, such as frowning or shaking their heads "no" at times when a positive affirmation is appropriate.

Make sure all understand what you mean by "nonverbal affirmation."

Send the listeners back to their speakers. Give the speakers a subject prompt, such as their favorite vacation or the funniest thing that ever happened to them. Allow the speakers one minute to speak to the listeners, who follow the directions for their subgroup.

Re-gather everyone and ask the speakers to evaluate the quality of their listener's listening, on a scale of one to ten. Discuss the mixed messages speakers received from some of the listeners. Say:

Now we are going to hear about an American Peace Corps volunteer in Bulgaria who faced a similar problem.

Ring the chime to begin the story.

After the story, ring the chime again.

Help the group identify Elizabeth's nonverbal communication difficulty and the problems that ensued (head nod vs. head shake). Ask volunteers to identify

the adaptations Elizabeth made to deal with this difficulty:

- Asking her students to use "da" (yes) or "ne" (no).
- Listening for the tongue cluck that often accompanies no.
- Laughing at her own mistakes.
- Practicing correct head movements when speaking Bulgarian to Bulgarians.

Ask the group:

- What traits did Elizabeth need to succeed in her work? (Affirm: good learner, good sense of humor, hard worker, determined, sensitive, good listener.)
- What were Elizabeth's rewards for her efforts? (Affirm: feeling closer to the people and the culture, laughter and sharing smiles.)
- What cultural universals in communication does Elizabeth mention? (Affirm: laughter, smiles.)
- Do you agree with the statement, "A smile is a smile the world over," and if so, why do you think it is true?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: LANGUAGE AUDIT (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Paper and pencils

Preparation for Activity

- On newsprint, list these activities: build, compute, dance, play, read, write and sing. Post the newsprint.

Description of Activity

Gather the group and invite them to participate in a survey of the activities they like most. Tell them to raise their hand for each activity you name that they like to do. They can raise their hands for more than one activity.

Read the activities, one at a time, using tally marks to record the number of responses to each.

You may comment on the numbers when the list is done, but refrain from commenting on individuals' choices (e.g., "I'm surprised you like to dance, Mary.")

Form at least four groups according to the activities children say they like to do. (You may have to merge some activities into a broader category such as active

sports, indoor games, traveling.) Then, invite the groups to think of the activity they chose as a language. Ask the small groups to come up with a way to say "welcome" in the language of reading, singing, building, etc. Give groups about five minutes to find a way to present their "welcome" to the larger group.

Allow each group a minute to present. Then, ask the group, "How in our congregation do we use these languages? What is the message we are giving in the way we read (dance, play, etc.)?"

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: MUSIC AS LANGUAGE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Music in languages other than English, Spanish or French and appropriate music player(s)
- Optional: Lyrics to simple children's songs in languages other than English, Spanish or French

Preparation for Activity

- Learn the words and melody to songs you plan to teach in another language.

Description of Activity

In this activity, children hear (and/or learn) a simple children's song in another language. After children hear a song, invite them to guess its meaning, based on the melody, tempo, voices singing, and mood of the song: Is it happy or sad, reverent or fun? Are children singing to one another, or adults to children? Does it sound as if the singers are counting, or saying people's names? If you choose to teach a song, ask the children to guess its meaning only after they have learned the song.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: TRANSLATING THE FAMILIAR (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Handout 2, [Morse Code and Pig Latin](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, on newsprint, and post. (You may wish to use just the first line of the song.)
- Obtain a [Morse code chart](#) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:International_Morse

_Code.PNG). Make a few copies for one small group of children to share or copy the code onto another sheet of newsprint. (See Find Out More.)

- Write directions for speaking [Pig Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pig_Latin) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pig_Latin) on another sheet of newsprint. (See Find Out More.)
- Optional: Be ready to help children translate "Spirit of Life," into American Sign Language. The ASL Dictionary Project provides an [American Sign Language alphabet chart](http://www.masterstech-home.com/The_Library/ASL_Dictionary_Project/ASL_Tables/Alphabet.html) (at www.masterstech-home.com/The_Library/ASL_Dictionary_Project/ASL_Tables/Alphabet.html) online which you might use to create a translation. However, it is best to invite a guest who knows ASL to join your group for this activity. If they do not know a translation for "Spirit of Life," suggest they read David Bar-Tzur's [instructions for the translation](http://www.theinterpretersfriend.org/songs/spirt-of-life.html) (at www.theinterpretersfriend.org/songs/spirt-of-life.html) online.

Description of Activity

In this activity, two or three groups of children will translate the words to "Spirit of Life" into Morse code, Pig Latin and/or (optional) ASL. To save time, invite them to translate just the first line: "Spirit of Life, come unto me."

Form the groups and distribute the Morse code and Pig Latin newsprint and the ASL chart. Indicate where you have posted the words "Spirit of Life, come unto me."

Give groups five to seven minutes. Then invite each group to share their translation with the larger group. After each demonstration, ask the audience (the other group(s)) to determine which word, gesture or sound means "life" and imitate the word.

Together, ask the entire group to create a dance using the word, gesture, and sound for "life." Dance becomes yet another means of communicating.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 7: STORY 1: THE CURSE OF BABEL

Adapted from Hebrew scripture, Genesis 11:1-9.

Tell the group this story comes from Hebrew scripture. In this bible story, God is a character that has a particular relationship with humans. Invite the children to be observant about that relationship as they hear the story.

Long ago, all the peoples of the Earth shared one language. They all spoke the same way and understood one another's words without a problem. This was true until one time, when a group of people journeying westward came to a place called Shinar, where they chose to settle down and build themselves a city. First they formed their bricks and burned them so they would be hard stones for building. Then they gathered wet clay to use for mortar.

The people planned a city with a tower that would reach into the heavens. They wanted their tower to be so grand that it would demonstrate how much human beings could accomplish, and so tall it would always call them home, even if, in future times, they scattered from Shinar far and wide across the Earth.

God came down to see the city and the tower that the people had built. God was impressed, but concerned. "Behold," God said. "The people is one, and they have all one language. Look what they have built together! Now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined they can do."

God gathered some helping spirits and said, "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." Without a common language, the people's work on the tower came to a halt. They separated into groups and scattered away from Shinar, taking all their different languages with them.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 7: STORY 2: THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Adapted from a June 6, 2004, [sermon by Rev. Robert M. Hardies](#) delivered at All Souls Church, Unitarian, Washington, DC. Used with permission.

Tell the group this story, "The Day of Pentecost," comes from Christian scripture. It is in the Book of Acts, 2:1-13. While God is mentioned in this story, the Holy Spirit is also mentioned. Ask children to notice the role the Holy Spirit plays in the story.

A group of Jesus' followers gathered together in Jerusalem, after Jesus' death. No sooner have they met than the wind starts kicking up, with a loud rushing sound. Then fire flashes down from out of the heavens, in the form of forked tongues, and a fiery forked tongue comes to sit and flicker on the head of everyone who is there. And they start to talk in strange languages. Languages no one ever heard before. Languages that should not make any sense.

Now, all this ruckus begins to attract attention. People from different cultures and languages start to gather 'round to see what is going on. They hear Jesus' followers talking in a strange language, yet they can each understand what is being said. Each and every one is bewildered, because each one hears the words in their own native language. Parthians, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, people from Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to the Cyrene, Cretans, Arabs and visitors from Rome "It is a miracle!" they say. "What does this mean? Is something magical translating the words so we can all understand?"

Some Christians call this story "the miracle of Pentecost." This story inspired a religious movement called Pentecostalism, whose followers see speaking in tongues as a gift from God. If you go to a Pentecostal church, you might hear worshippers utter ecstatic, unintelligible words. This is a way of showing that one has the Holy Spirit inside of them. Some believe the gift of tongues makes people better able to communicate with God, and with others.

Unitarian Universalists also care about understanding every person, no matter what language they speak. We do not want language barriers to stop us from bonding with others and sharing our love and care for our world. A Unitarian Universalist might say, "The wind and the fire and the strange languages are not the real miracles of Pentecost. The real miracle was that here you have all these people talking about what they believe, each in

a different language, but EVERYONE who is listening hears them in their OWN language. They all ask: 'How is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?'"

What happened at Pentecost is sort of like what happens at the United Nations building. You know, one person gives a speech, but everyone else has those little earpieces on so they can hear in their own language...thanks to those frantic translators sitting in the glass booths. But in THIS story, it's the Spirit that's doing the translating. That's the miracle. The miracle of Pentecost is that a diverse group of people started talking about their faith in different languages, but they all understood one another. The miracle is the understanding. Not the tongues, the understanding.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 7: STORY 3: ENOUGH TO MAKE YOUR HEAD SPIN

By Elizabeth (Vernon) Kelley, published on the [U.S. Peace Corps Coverdell World Wise Schools website](#).
Used with permission.

"I'll have coffee," I tell the waitress at a cafe during my first week in Bulgaria. She shakes her head from side to side. "OK, tea," I say, thinking that maybe there's something wrong with the coffee machine. Again, she shakes her head. "Um... cola?" Once more, she shakes her head. By now, she's looking at me like I'm crazy, and I'm totally confused. Then I remember: A shake of the head by a Bulgarian means "yes," and a nod, what the rest of the world does for "yes," means "no."

When I began teaching, all this head-bobbing made communication in the classroom interesting. Although I had made sure my students knew about this cultural difference on the first day of school, we all frequently forgot what we were doing. My students would answer a question correctly or say something really great, and I'd

nod. A second later, they were trying to change their answer, since they thought the nod meant they had been wrong. But the confusion went both ways. Sometimes I'd ask a student a yes-or-no question and he or she would answer with a nod or a shake, without saying anything. Not remembering the difference, we'd have to go through the motions several times before I understood. Frequently I found myself saying: "Da or ne? just tell me one or the other!"

I've come to understand the importance of using all my senses in a new culture, and of not making assumptions that a gesture or other form of communication... means the same thing everywhere.... I must make sure I am really listening and watching for other clues when someone is communicating with me. Here, a sound along the lines of a cluck of the tongue often accompanies a "no," and being aware of that helps me steer clear of confusion. Tuning in to how the people around me communicate has brought me closer to the people and the culture here. And whenever we slip up and forget to control our heads, the laughter that follows brings us together. Luckily, a smile is a smile the world over.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 7:

HANDOUT 1: LET'S TALK... AND LISTEN

Make a promise to do at least one of these activities before the next time Windows and Mirrors meets. Be prepared to tell the group what you did and what happened.

- Say "welcome" to someone in another language.
- Watch a foreign language TV channel.
- Observe others talking. Notice the gestures they use and what they mean.
- Use one of the following listening skills in a conversation with a friend or family member, and observe their reaction:
 - Keep good eye contact with the speaker.
 - Think about the information you are hearing.
 - Let the speaker talk without interruption.
 - Ask good questions at the right time.
 - Repeat back, in your own words, important information the speaker has shared.
 - Save your own personal stories until after you have responded to what the speaker wants to tell you.
 - Encourage the speaker with body language, such as smiling and nodding your head.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 7:

HANDOUT 2: MORSE CODE AND PIG LATIN

Morse Code

Samuel F.B. Morse, a Unitarian, in the 1840s invented a code to use with electric telegraph machines. Morse code uses sound to create letters, numbers, punctuation and special characters. According to a [Wikipedia article on Samuel Morse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morse_code) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morse_code), International Morse code is composed of five elements:

short mark, dot or "dit" (.)	one unit long
longer mark, dash or "dah" (—)	three units long
intra-character gap (between the dots and dashes within a character)	one unit long
short gap (between letters)	three units long
medium gap (between words)	seven units long

Pig Latin

Pig Latin is a made-up language used throughout the English-speaking world.

The usual rules for changing standard English into igPay atinLay are:

For words that begin with [consonant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consonant) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consonant) sounds, move the initial consonant or [consonant cluster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consonant_cluster) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consonant_cluster) to the end of the word and add "ay." Examples:

beast = east-bay

dough = ough-day

happy = appy-hay

three = ee-thray

trash = ash-tray

For words that begin with [vowel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vowel) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vowel) sounds (including [silent consonants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_letter) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_letter)), add the syllable, "ay," to the end of the word. In some dialects, to aid in pronunciation, an "h," "w," or "d" is added to the suffix; for instance, eagle could be eagle-hay, eagle-way, or eagle-day.

A hyphen or apostrophe is sometimes used to make retranslation to English easier; for instance: Ayspray is ambiguous, but ay-spray means "spray" and ays-pray means "prays."

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 7: LEADER RESOURCE 1: FRIENDS PHRASES

Cut so each phrase is on a separate slip of paper.

Let's be friends.

Can we be friends?

I want to be your friend.

We are friends.

My friend!

I am your friend.

FIND OUT MORE

American Sign Language

Many non-hearing people use American Sign Language to communicate. It is its own language; it is not a literal translation of spoken English, and it is distinct from French Sign Language, Arabic Sign Language, Russian Sign Language and others. Some signs use one's entire

upper body. ASL has gestures and movements for many words and concepts, and an alphabet for finger-spelling each letter of the American alphabet. The ASL Dictionary Project provides an [American Sign Language alphabet chart](http://www.masterstech-home.com/The_Library/ASL_Dictionary_Project/ASL_Tables/Alphabet.html) (at www.masterstech-home.com/The_Library/ASL_Dictionary_Project/ASL_Tables/Alphabet.html) online.

SESSION 8: EYES ON THE PRIZE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Everybody needs history but the people who need it most are poor folks—people without resources or options. — Henry Hampton, 20th-century American documentary film producer

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of the beloved community, a phrase we use in our Unitarian Universalist faith. He said, "We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality." In the beloved community, people of all races, genders, classes, sexual orientations, ethnicities, religions, philosophies and languages fully join in society's decision-making processes and enjoy its bounty.

We have not yet fully achieved this beloved community. This session challenges participants to become anti-racist allies. Even those of us in mono-racial/mono-cultural communities can and must take opportunities to expand our vision to respectfully and generously embrace of all humanity in our great diversity — for as long as racism exists, we are all diminished.

The children learn about Henry Hampton (1940-1998), a one-time public relations director of the Unitarian Universalist Association who became the first African American owner of a network affiliate television station and who founded Blackside, Inc., a major, minority-owned media production organization. For many decades, mainstream print and television news had presented minorities exclusively through the lens of a dominant, European-American culture. Hampton created and executive produced *Eyes on the Prize*, a public television series that indisputably dented the institutional racism endemic in our mainstream national media.

Participants then make their own study of media to ascertain what they are told/shown and consider how realistically media portray racial/ethnic variety and realities in your community and the nation. For this session, you will need to gather examples with images from local and national mainstream media along with minority-produced magazines and other media.

For the Faith in Action activity, identify your congregation's social and racial justice work in solidarity with local organizations run by Native American/Indigenous peoples, African Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans, Arab Americans and/or immigrants from other countries (or, find out about

groups in neighboring communities and opportunities for social justice ally work.

We highly recommended you watch some of *Eyes on the Prize* before leading this session. If you have time and technology, choose some clips to show the group. You can purchase *Eyes on the Prize* in its entirety or view segments of it on the [PBS website](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/resources/res_video.html) (at www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/resources/res_video.html).

GOALS

This session will:

- Build participants' media literacy, in particular their awareness of how local and national media portray people of color
- Introduce participants to the concept of being a social justice ally
- Help participants identify existing and future opportunities in their congregation and/or community to act as social justice allies with a view toward building the beloved community
- Promote practices that support our Unitarian Universalist Principles, especially our first, the inherent worth and dignity of every person; second, justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; and sixth, the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Examine how local and national mainstream media portray people of color and other minorities
- Discover how minority ownership of media's storytelling can change the story, by learning about documentary television producer Henry Hampton
- Learn the concept of being a social justice ally
- Practice acting as allies to one another in a modified version of the game *Mother, May I?*
- Optional: Plan and implement a congregational audit of social justice activities in the local community.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Henry Hampton	10
Activity 2: Game — Mother, May We?	10
Activity 3: Media Audit	15
Activity 4: Window/Mirror Panel — Me in the Media	15
Faith in Action: Congregational Audit	15
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Watch Clips from "Eyes on the Prize"	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable; light a candle to mark the time as different from your other activities. Close your

eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes and perhaps repeat one word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day.

Think about ways you have experienced, observed or fought racial oppression. Reflect:

- What is your experience being an ally against racial oppression?
- If you have never acted as an ally, why? What have been the barriers?
- What are ways your participation in a Unitarian Universalist congregation/fellowship has helped you gain more understanding about racial oppression?
- Are you involved in any social or racial justice work in the congregation? If you are, why did you choose the issue(s) you did? If you are not, why not?

Be prepared to share your insights with the participants in the session.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post somewhere everyone can see it.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — HENRY HAMPTON (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copy of the story "[Henry Hampton](#)" (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story a few times and practice telling it, perhaps dramatically. The stories here are written for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.
- Review the questions and choose some you think might resonate with the group and help these particular children interpret the story and relate it to their own lives.
- If the group is very large, plan to form smaller groups for discussion. Each group should have at least three participants and an adult facilitator.

Description of Activity

Ring the chime (or other noisemaker), make eye contact with each participant and read or tell the story.

Sound the chime (or other noisemaker) again at the end. Invite participants to think silently on their own about the story. Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to better understand the story from multiple perspectives as we find out what one another thought about the story.

Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Remind them not to assume others see or feel the same way. You may suggest that a brief silence be maintained after each person's comment.

Invite the participants to retell the story, briefly, in their own words. What participants recall and relay tells you what they found most meaningful or memorable. Then use the following questions to facilitate discussion. Make sure every child who wants to speak has a chance.

- How do you think people's ideas about our country would be different if only white people made newspapers and television shows?
- How do you think it might have felt to be an African American child reading a magazine or watching a television show in those times?
- How do you think it would have felt to be a white child?
- What ideas might those children have about their world?
- How do you think Henry Hampton changed how people viewed African Americans? Why did Henry Hampton see a different picture of America?
- Why do you think Henry Hampton thought *Eyes on the Prize* needed to be made and viewed?

ACTIVITY 2: GAME — MOTHER, MAY WE? (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the description of this variation of the traditional game, Mother, May I? so you are prepared to lead the game
- Find a large, open space where participants can move unobstructed for at least 20 feet in all directions.

Description of Activity

In this session, lead this variation of the game Mother, May I? to reward participants serving as allies to one another.

Gather the children so they are lined up across one end of the open space. Stand at the other end. Ask them if they have ever played the game Mother, May I? Tell

them you will play a different version of the game called Mother, May We? and you will be the leader.

Mother, May We?

The children's goal is to advance toward the leader by following the leader's instructions — but first, asking permission. Tell the children that they need to ask permission, together with the partners who will move with them, by saying in unison "Mother, may we?"

You may address instructions to an individual child by name, to a portion or the group or to the whole group. Each time, make a demand that requires two or more players to move together. For example:

- Luke, take a partner's hand and skip two steps together.
- Dana, find two people with sneakers on, say their names, and all of you take one hop forward.
- Li Ping, go over to someone who lives in the same town as you and take two baby steps together.
- The three children who are furthest back, gather in one place and take a twirly step forward together.
- Everyone who is wearing jeans, find someone who is not wearing jeans and take one step forward.

Of course, be careful to group and partner children according to neutral similarities and differences such as items or colors they are wearing, where they are standing in the room, the public school they attend, etc.

Respond to "Mother, may we?" with "Yes, you may." Only then can the children move forward as you have instructed them.

To make the game more challenging, when children say "Mother, may we?" you might respond, "No, you may not... But you may take two giant steps together (or some other suggestion)." Then they need to ask "Mother, may we?" again. Children and their partner(s) will need to listen for your response before moving forward.

In the traditional game, the first child across becomes the new leader. In this version, when children reach you, invite them to move to the sidelines and coach the remaining children to help them all get to the finish line.

When all children have reached the finish, the game is over. Gather children and process how it felt to play this way instead of individually. Point out that by helping one

another and working together, in this game everyone moved forward.

Including All Participants

Be mindful of accessibility issues involving participants and/or leaders. Opt to play the game with hand gestures rather than movement so as not to exclude anyone from playing. As a gesture is accepted, give that participant a check; the first person who gets five checks wins and can now become a "coach" to help the others cross the finish line.

ACTIVITY 3: MEDIA AUDIT (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Magazines and newspapers from a wide variety of sources
- Local and national mainstream newspapers and magazines with photographs
- Minority-owned newspapers and magazines (look for photographs of African Americans, Asians, other racial/ethnic minorities and people with visible disabilities)
- Optional: Video clips from local newscasts, streaming news video, other online news media and appropriate player(s)
- Optional: Data from a recent [census](http://www.census.gov) (at www.census.gov) that documents the percentage of population in your community that are Native American/Indigenous, African American, Latin American, Asian American, Arab American and/or immigrants from other countries

Preparation for Activity

- Gather magazines and newspapers from a variety of sources. Ask parents and congregation members to bring in magazines and newspapers several weeks before this session; Leader Resource 1 provides a sample email or handout. Try to obtain as many images as you can of all of the racial and ethnic groups represented in your community so participants can consider the full range of who lives in your community, including people of European descent.
- If you will use technology to share images, test equipment in the meeting space before the session.

- Gather enough examples of print or video media for participants to view each example alone or with just one partner.
- Optional: Gather census information that shows your local demographics as well as national demographics by minority group status.

Description of Activity

The Mirror question for this session is "What do I understand about my place in racial/ethnic diversity in my world?" The Window question is "What do I understand about my world's diversity?"

First ask the participants what kind of people live in the community: Are there people who speak different languages? People who sometimes wear special, cultural clothing? People with different skin colors? People who eat different foods? While many of these are indicators of culture—as opposed to what we typically think of as racial or ethnic diversity—these questions are a way to circle around "race" and ethnicity before zeroing in on the presence of people in your community who are Native American/Indigenous, African American, Latin American, Asian American, Arab American and/or immigrants from other countries.

Lead the children to look at the community where your congregation meets, through images in the local media. The objective is not to conduct a media critique, but to elicit observations and build awareness. Ask children, "Who do you see in the images? Yet, who actually lives/works in this community?" and "What are the people doing in the pictures? What does that say about people who belong to the same racial/ethnic group in our community?" Share with the participants whatever facts you have about populations represented in your community (percentages of community population, neighborhood location, country of origin, and so on). Ask participants why they think the local media do not have many (or any) images of these groups.

Finally, ask "How true do you think the impression is that we get from our local media? What could be done differently in our newspaper/magazine to make the pictures look more like our real community?"

Next, invite children to look at national media samples. Encourage them to compare the mainstream media with examples you have brought of magazines/media owned by minorities. Ask participants to note differences and similarities. Of particular images, you may like to ask:

- Who are these people? What are they doing/where are they going?
- Are any of us here members of this group?

- Does anyone have siblings, parents, teachers or friends who are in this group?

Listen to what participants have to say and make notes on newsprint. Of course, you should correct any overtly racist remarks. At the same time, remember these are youngsters who reflect the perspectives they have learned from families, friends and schools as well as media. Keep discussion focused on exploring what we know and what we do not know about racial/ethnic groups in our community or the nation and how media images help or do not help us learn more.

Conclude this activity by asking the participants how we can learn more about the racial/ethnic groups in our community. Ask what they think could be done so the media are more true and fair. Record their responses on newsprint. Say:

We can all be social justice, anti-racism allies.
We can let the publishers and reporters and newscasters know the problems we saw in the media images here today.

Make a commitment to convey some of the children's observations or suggestions to the correct person at a local newspaper, television station or other media outlet. Be sure to follow up and tell the children when you have done so and let them know if you receive any response.

If the group will do the Faith in Action activity, Congregational Audit, tell them they can come up with more ways to be allies later.

Including All Participants

Avoid making any child feel self-conscious, especially if they are a racial or ethnic minority in the group. If the group has only one Asian Pacific Islander child, focus on representation of another minority group in your community. If a child asks, "Why aren't there any images of (my people)?" you can respond, "For some reason, I could not find any images. That isn't very realistic, is it? How can we all make sure that in the future more of (your people) are in the media?"

ACTIVITY 4: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — ME IN THE MEDIA (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Magazines and newspapers from a wide variety of sources
- Adhesive or double-sided tape to create collage on window/mirror panels
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror Panel materials

- Sheets of Mylar in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil, and other reflective paper
- Sheets of plain or construction paper
- Scraps of fabric
- Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
- Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
- Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Gather magazines and newspapers from a variety of sources. Ask parents and congregation members to bring in magazines and newspapers several weeks before this session; Leader Resource 1 provides a sample email or handout.
- Prepare to distribute participants' Window/Mirror Panels and the baskets of Window/Mirror arts and crafts materials while children are looking for images in the publications.
- Make sure pencils are sharpened.

Description of Activity

Ask the children to think about the media audit they just did (Activity 3). Now they will have the opportunity to do a similar audit of the media, except now they will look for images where they see themselves. Say something like:

Look through the magazines and newspapers here and find images where you see yourself. Think about not only your physical image, but also images representing your interests, hobbies, and activities. For example, I may like to play baseball, however as a female (if you are a female) I do not often see media images of females playing baseball. I may choose to cut out a picture of a male baseball player anyway.

Keep instructions brief. Explain that they have a very short time to complete this. Encourage them to not to "over think" and, as the Nike ads say, "just do it."

Let them know they will add these images to their Window/Mirror Panels. As children finish, distribute their Window/Mirror Panels or invite the children to get their panels from where they are stored. Allow them to choose where the images should go on their panels and help children attach them.

You may wish to say, in your own words:

By making and displaying the panels, you are assembling media images that represent you. It is for you to see as a reminder, as well as for others who were not on our "journey" through the congregation to see. It is all part of the sharing that makes a fabric of faith community. Perhaps someone else will find their media image in your panel.

Invite the participants to share their panels and talk about why they chose the images they did.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone first to clean up their own area and the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1 Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: CONGREGATIONAL AUDIT (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Recent congregational newsletters
- Optional: Congregational member directory

Preparation for Activity

- Gather information about any recent or current congregational social and racial justice activities. These can include international solidarity efforts but, if possible, focus on activities based in your own community.
- Invite religious professionals and/or lay leaders to join the group in conducting and analyzing the audit.
- Before launching the group, consider how the audit might be done. Possibilities include interviewing social action committee members and/or other congregational members (taking notes or using video or audio recording) and reviewing archived newsletters. What help might the group need from adults?
- Arrange for the group to submit an article to your congregational newsletter or website to share the findings from this audit.

Description of Activity

Dismantling racism requires not only that each of us act as an ally, but also that we join to make an institutional response. In concert with adult members, participants can help make your congregations more welcoming and more assertive in its social and racial justice actions.

The driving question for a congregational audit is a Window Question: How can our congregation act as social and racial justice allies? Lead the group in an audit to determine when, where, why and how the congregation acts or can begin to act as a social and racial justice ally in the local community.

Invite participants to help shape a format for an audit of the congregation's recent and current social and racial justice work. The group might decide to survey congregational members about their involvement, interview people for an article in the congregation newsletter and/or create a photo essay.

Work as a group to identify, through the newsletters or conversations with members, your congregations' committees, funds, initiatives or partnerships that promote social and racial justice. Identify sources, including people in the congregation who are involved in solidarity activities. Help them formulate questions about the motivation for the social or racial justice work, why activists think it is important, and how the activists hope to be effective. Consider some of these questions:

- What social and racial justice projects are the congregation or any of its members involved in?
- How many are about local issues? (local meaning your town, county or nearest big city)
- How many are about national or global issues?
- How did it come about that the congregation got involved with these particular issues?
- What results feel like success in this effort?
- What other social and racial justice issues do you care about that the congregation has not yet addressed?
- Are there any issues for which you would like to work as an ally?

After the audit is complete, process the results as a group. Ask the children:

- Do you want to see an issue tackled that has not been addressed?
- Are there any issues for which you would like to work as an ally? How could we get started?

Invite and help the children to write an item for the congregation's newsletter or website to share their findings—and suggestions for future projects—with members.

Including All Participants

Be sure every child has a role in designing and conducting the congregational audit. Participants who

are not comfortable with an assignment to interview adults or older youth may prefer a visual arts, writing, research or other behind-the-scenes role.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Everybody needs history but the people who need it most are poor folks—people without resources or options. — Henry Hampton, 20th-century American documentary film producer

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

The children examined racism and social justice through the lens of media images. We explored the story of how Henry Hampton, an African American independent filmmaker, created the revolutionary documentary series *Eyes on the Prize*. In particular, we examined how we can all be social justice allies, especially with people in our community who are Native American/Indigenous, African American, Latino/a American, Asian American, Arab American and/or immigrants from other countries. We played a game that helped us practice being allies to each other, and we looked at the local media to learn more about the populations in our community and what our congregation is, or could be, doing to act as social justice allies.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

Your first awareness of racial discrimination or institutionalized racism, especially when you were young. Engage family members to share your perceptions about current racial discrimination. Has anyone in the family seen evidence of racism recently? Where? Is your family in a racial/ethnic minority or majority in your community? What have been your

experiences as part of the dominant group or as part of a minority group?

Discuss an occasion in your life when you were proud of acting as a social justice ally (even if the person you were supporting did not know you), or a time when you wished you had acted as an ally. Acknowledge it can feel scary to stand in opposition to ideas and behaviors of the people in your family, school and community. Point out that it takes courage to defend the human rights of others. Note that Unitarian Universalism is where we come together as people of faith to work for peace and social justice.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

Find out more about the cultures represented in your community. Choose a culture different from your own to learn about.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Do some research to investigate demographic change in your community. Assess where your family falls, in terms of ethnicity and skin color, on a continuum of original inhabitants to latest arrivals. How has your community traditionally responded to newcomers from various cultures? Talk about local stories of oppression as well as courage and triumph, especially examples of people standing in opposition to institutional racism.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WATCH CLIPS FROM "EYES ON THE PRIZE"

Materials for Activity

- DVD or video clip of an episode of *Eyes On The Prize* and appropriate equipment to show it

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain a DVD of an episode of *Eyes on the Prize*. Screen the episode and select the segment(s) you want to show. Plan to save at least ten minutes for discussion afterward.
- Optional: Plan to stream a clip from the *Eyes on the Prize* series via [Internet](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/resources/res_video.html) (at www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/resources/res_video.html).
- Set up and test the appropriate audiovisual equipment.

Description of Activity

Tell participants they will view part of Henry Hampton's *Eyes on the Prize* documentary series. Show the piece(s) you have selected. Then, lead a discussion with these questions:

- What surprised you about what you just saw?

- Do you think someone who was not African American could have told this story in the same way?
- How do you think it makes a difference that most of the people making this film were African American?

You may also revisit the discussion questions from Activity 1, Story — Henry Hampton. Notice whether the children's answers are different, now that they have viewed part of the documentary. Tell the group what you observe.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 8: STORY: HENRY HAMPTON

By Ellen Gold.

It may be hard for you to imagine a time when African Americans did not have the same rights and freedoms as Americans with light skin. After all, an African American, Barack Obama, became our President in 2009. But there was a time, not so long ago, when discrimination—treating people differently—was legal and part of American culture. Children with brown skin could not go to schools that were for Caucasian kids—and they were usually the better schools. People whose skin was brown were made to sit at the back of public buses, use separate drinking fountains and put up with unfair, disrespectful treatment from people with lighter skin.

Let's try to imagine those times of inequality. Picture someone opening a newspaper or turning on the TV news. Do you think that person would see people with a variety of skin colors, as you see today?

(Pause for responses. Affirm that before Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights Movement, it would be rare to see African Americans on television or in the newspaper unless they were famous or in trouble.)

In the times before, the African American story was almost like a secret. African Americans knew it, but there was no public place to share it with everyone. It was a story with slavery, unfairness, and harm: an American story that was not one to be proud of. Maybe the storytellers—the movie makers and news producers, who were mostly white—were too ashamed to make that story public.

A filmmaker named Henry Hampton made the African American story part of the public record and changed forever the way we make and see television. His movies presented factual information about the history and lives of African Americans. Henry was African American, and he strongly believed in civil rights for all. As a young man, he took part in some of the famous 1965 Civil Rights marches in Selma, Alabama. Blacks and whites marched together in support of equal voting rights for everyone. The marchers faced armed police who were not afraid to use violence against a peaceful demonstration.

Henry Hampton was deeply affected by his and others' experiences during the Civil Rights Movement. He had a story to tell. And in 1968, he found a way to tell it. He started a company he called Blackside, Inc.

In 1968, the Civil Rights Movement was on everyone's mind. Henry Hampton was not the first to turn the

cameras toward African Americans. But he was one of the first to do so who was African American himself. He was telling the story of African Americans, and telling it his own way.

At that time, it was rare to find an African American person behind the camera, making decisions about what to show on television or in a movie. The people in charge of films, television, and newspapers were mostly Caucasian. They told the stories and photographed the images from their point of view. Once Henry Hampton and Blackside began making movies, real African American stories and lives became visible to all.

Blackside's most famous documentary series was called *Eyes on the Prize*. Hampton called it an "honest telling of the Civil Rights Movement." The road to making the series was extremely long and difficult. He needed a lot of money, a lot of help, and the cooperation of many, many African Americans whose stories he wanted to include. These were people who had first-hand experience living as African Americans when discrimination hurt them and first-hand experience being part of the Civil Rights Movement. Henry Hampton never gave up. He made sure the *Eyes on the Prize* movies told real stories of ordinary citizens and showed their strength, courage and wisdom.

Henry Hampton was not just trying to tell his side—the black side—of a story. He always looked for truth. Perhaps that is one reason he could always count on the Unitarian Universalist Association as a partner. In fact, he worked for our congregations before he started Blackside, Inc. He was famous for his strict research methods, always checking, double-checking and triple-checking every fact.

Eyes on the Prize finally premiered in 1987 on PBS. Maybe you watched *Sesame Street* on that station when you were little. *Eyes on the Prize* won many awards, including six Emmys (the Emmy is an award for excellent television shows). More important, *Eyes on the Prize* helped people learn African American history and understand that it is part of every American's history. Students in colleges, high schools, and elementary schools watch and discuss *Eyes on the Prize* every year.

Imagine you were a brown-skinned child around the time Henry Hampton was a child. If you watched television, you would not have seen many people who looked like you discovering anything, leading anyone, or making a difference for justice and peace. Now the picture is different—you can see every color of skin. No matter who you are, someone has probably made a television show about an inspiring person who has something in common with you. When you see a story similar to

yours, told by someone who looks a bit like you, you might grow up believing that your actions, your voice, and your story are important, too.

Henry Hampton did more than bring true African American stories to television. He changed who makes television. Hundreds of television researchers, producers, writers, camera people and editors from diverse racial and ethnic groups learned filmmaking at Blackside, Inc. Now these people bring their own points of view to the films and television programs they make, and some of them teach others how to turn their own

point of view into a true, honest television show. Maybe some of you will grow up to do this kind of work, too.

Here is more you should know about Henry Hampton: He was connected to Unitarian Universalism, just as you are. Henry studied English literature in college. He went to Boston to continue his studies and worked for a while as the Unitarian Universalist Association's Director of Public Information. Our denomination, Unitarian Universalism, benefited when Henry Hampton blended his voice with all of ours. And we all continue to benefit from how he changed the stories on American television.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 8: LEADER RESOURCE 1: LETTER TO PARENTS AND CONGREGATION TO COLLECT MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

Email or hand out to parents of the Windows and Mirrors group and members of the congregation several weeks before this session meets. Asking the entire congregation may yield more varied media examples.

Dear Parents/Member:

As part of our upcoming Windows and Mirrors session titled "Eyes on the Prize," we are asking that you bring newspapers and magazines, both mainstream (*Newsweek*, *Time*, *New York Times*, etc.) and less widely distributed. Magazines that target specific ethnic groups, such as *Jet* or *Ebony*, for example, would be very helpful.

We would like to invite children to cut images from these publications for an art project. If we may look at your items but you would like them returned intact, please mark them and we will take proper care of them.

Please bring newspapers and magazines to (insert the place where you wish people to leave the publications).

Thank you,

(Co-leaders)

FIND OUT MORE

Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression Guidance from LREDA

The Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) formed a committee called the Integrity Team that is charged with holding the association to working through an anti-racist, anti-oppression lens. The Integrity Team published a [best practices brochure](http://www.25.uua.org/lreda/content/BestPracticesIT.pdf) (at www.25.uua.org/lreda/content/BestPracticesIT.pdf) which has helpful guidance for anyone designing or leading religious education programs. It is available free of charge on the [UUA website](http://www.25.uua.org) (at www.25.uua.org/lreda/content/BestPracticesIT.pdf).

Henry Hampton and Public Television

Henry Hampton was a television executive and filmmaker whose impact on mainstream media is undisputed. Besides breaking down professional barriers that had kept African Americans from being producers of film, news and information, Hampton brought African American tellings of African American stories to mainstream television in the *Eyes on the Prize* PBS series. The [PBS website](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/about/index.html) (at www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/about/index.html) calls Hampton :

... one of the most influential documentary filmmakers in the 20th century. His work

chronicled America's great political and social movements and set new standards for broadcast quality. Blackside, the independent film and television company he founded in 1968, completed 60 major films and media projects that amplified the voices of the poor and disenfranchised. His enduring legacy continues to influence the field in the 21st century.

Independent Lens on PBS

New storytellers continue to bring new stories that change the public face of the America we know. See the [Independent Lens](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/) (at www.pbs.org/independentlens/index.html) home page on the PBS website for documentaries, many with racial justice themes, coming to broadcast/cablecast and links to related blogs and other websites. Another PBS showcase for independent documentaries is the [P.O.V. \(point of view\) series](http://www.pbs.org/pov/utills/aboutpov.html) (at www.pbs.org/pov/utills/aboutpov.html).

The King Center — A Resource

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. left a legacy of working tirelessly for civil rights. His family continues his legacy through the King Center ; read more on the website www.thekingcenter.org/ (at www.thekingcenter.org/).

SESSION 9: LEAN ON ME

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

No matter what accomplishments you make, somebody helps you. — Althea Gibson, 20th-century African American tennis champion

This session explores the ways the bonds of relationships are crucial in times of self-doubt. When members of our family are struggling with insecurity, we offer support, care and love. This can be as simple as offering a hug when a sibling is feeling sad. It can be as involved as going to our child's school to advocate for extra help when they need it. We sacrifice our time and comfort in order to support others.

Our Unitarian Universalist values call on us to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person. This begins with those closest to us. The source for this session derives from the wisdom of the world's second largest religion, Islam. The story is about how the prophet Mohamed, the founder of Islam, was afraid of the first revelations he received from Allah. Mohamed's first wife, Khadija, was steadfast in her support of him and her trust in Allah. It was her trust, people believe, that helped give Mohamed the courage to fulfill his calling and bring Islam to the people of world.

Participants will be asked to envision this story from Khadija's perspective. This will encourage them to consider what it means to support someone who is feeling insecure and afraid.

The Faith in Action activity creates an opportunity for the group to offer their collective support. This will take research and consultation with your minister and religious educator to identify members of the congregation or a group within the congregation who need support, or if there is a cause the children can lead the congregation in supporting.

GOALS

This session will:

- Promote being a source of support to members of our family and our friends, and explore the challenges of being a supporter
- Create a sense of trust among the Windows and Mirrors group
- Guide participants to identify ways they support people they care about in their lives

- Affirm two of our Principles; the first, respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and the second, justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Hear a story from the Muslim faith about how the support of Mohamed's wife, Khadija, was crucial to his acceptance of his calling
- Experience and process a trust walk—a physical exploration of giving and receiving support
- Develop empathy by imagining what it must have been like for Khadija, the wife of Mohamed, to be his first supporter.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — The First Supporter	10
Activity 2: Writing Khadija's Story	15
Activity 3: Trust Walk	10
Activity 4: Window/Mirror Panel — Lean On Me	10
Faith in Action: Congregational Support	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Role Play Khadija's Story	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable; light a candle to mark the time as different from your other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply and perhaps repeat a word or phrase to separate you from the activities of the day. After you open your eyes, consider:

- In what ways do you support people you care about?

- When have you ever had to give up something personally, in order to support another person? Was any sacrifice you made worth it?
- Was it easier to support someone when you fully trusted their motives? Have you ever had to

trust and support someone when you were skeptical of their motives or doubtful about the success of their mission?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post somewhere everyone can see it.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — THE FIRST SUPPORTER (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The First Supporter](#) (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story, "The First Supporter," a few times. Consider telling it dramatically, rather than reading it from the page. Practice telling it. Claim the storytelling; for example, try adopting different voices for different characters. The stories here are written for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.
- For storytelling, be ritualistic. Create a mood and a time that is different from other moments in the session. For example, turn overhead lights off and use lamps. Position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.
- Review the questions and choose some you think might resonate with the group and help these particular children interpret the story and relate it to their own lives.
- If the group is very large, plan to form smaller groups (no less than three participants) for

discussion. An adult leader should facilitate each small group.

- Consider what this story means to you in relation to the purpose of this session. Articulate this in a one- or two-word sentence that you can share with the group at the end of the discussion, perhaps using an example—one this age group will understand.

Description of Activity

Before you begin, ring the chime (or other noisemaker). Make eye contact with each participant.

Read or tell the story. Sound the chime again at the end.

Invite the children to think silently on their own about the story.

Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to help us understand the story from multiple perspectives. Let's find out what one another thought about the story.

Remind them not to assume others share their opinions. Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Encourage the group to listen to each comment and then share some silence. Use the bell or chime to move between speakers.

Begin a discussion by asking participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Then use these questions to facilitate discussion, making sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance:

- What did you think about Mohamed and Khadija?
- Why do you think Mohamed doubted himself?
- How do you think Khadija's support helped Mohamed gain self-confidence?

Pose these questions and invite a few volunteers to share:

- Have you ever doubted yourself?
- Have you shared your doubt with someone?
- Have you ever asked someone to support you when you needed it?

Conclude by articulating what the story teaches about supporting those we care about during difficult times. Ask the group to think about:

- Who am I willing to support in my life? (Window question)

- What do I learn about myself from realizing who I'm willing to support? (Mirror question)

Thank everyone for their observations and sharing.

ACTIVITY 2: WRITING KHADIJA'S STORY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper and pens/pencils for all participants

Preparation for Activity

- Read Alternate Activity 1, Role Play Khadija's Story. If you have time, use it to extend this activity into a more elaborate role play.
- Decide how you will form groups of three (or four).
- Distribute paper and pencils or pens to each participant.

Description of Activity

Tell the children this is an opportunity to write the story they just heard from Khadija's point of view. They will work in groups of three and, when they are done, they will have an opportunity to share their work with the larger group. Suggest that they create a conversation between Khadija and Mohamed to read aloud as a script.

Say something like:

Ask yourselves what was difficult about standing beside Mohamed. What do you think Khadija's family said to her? Where do you think she got her strength? What might a conversation between Khadija and Mohamed have been? Between Khadija and another family member or a friend? Feel free to imagine this. Consider these and other ideas as you write together.

Arrange children in groups of three to write. Allow about five minutes. Then regather the groups and invite them to present their stories or scripts.

Discuss this activity:

- How did it feel to tell this story from Khadija's perspective?
- Did anything surprise you about what it must have been like to be Khadija?
- Would you do the same thing if you were in Khadija's situation? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 3: TRUST WALK (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A few scarves to cover participants' eyes

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a large, open indoor or (preferably) outdoor space to accommodate a trust walk.

Description of Activity

These exercises present an essential idea—the value of interdependence. The group tests the boundaries of their trust in one another by experimenting with dependency. The trust walk also challenges group members to expand their perception of the world to include information picked up by senses other than sight. These exercises work best outdoors, but a large indoor space will do.

Ask group members to pair up. If there is not an even number of participants, be prepared to pair a co-leader with a child.

Explain the trust walk:

One partner shuts their eyes or covers them by tying on a scarf. The other is the guide and will lead their partner around the space by touch. You can decide whether to allow speaking or not. The guide is responsible for the safety of their partner.

Encourage children to explore unusual areas where the ground or the air might feel different. Have all pairs return after a specified time and switch roles.

Including All Participants

Be mindful of accessibility issues. Modify the activity if someone is in a scooter or wheelchair. You can allow a participant to lead someone verbally to a point in the room if it would be difficult to move as a pair.

Some people are uncomfortable being blindfolded; make sure you explain the activity clearly so people know what to expect. Anyone can opt out if they are uncomfortable with the activity.

ACTIVITY 4: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — LEAN ON ME (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Leader Resource 1, [Window/Mirror Lean on Me Figures](#) (included in this document)

- Paper or card stock, cut to a size that can be placed within Window/Mirror Panels
- Optional: Paint and paintbrushes, pastels or other art media
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Leader Resource 1 for all participants, at a size to fit on their Window/Mirror Panels, on paper you would like them to decorate and attach to their panels. Or, you could copy it onto heavier paper to make a few templates for participants to share.
- Have materials easily accessible.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to bring their Window/Mirror Panels to work tables. Distribute Window/Mirror Panel basket(s) and the handouts or templates you have made from Leader Resource 1.

Explain that in this piece of the Window/Mirror Panel they may express their relationship with another person in terms of support they have given, have received or wish to give or receive in a mission or calling. You might say:

Think of a mission of yours that someone else believes in enough, and believes in you enough, to give you extraordinary support to accomplish. Or, think of someone whose mission or calling you have enough faith in to make some sacrifices of your own to help them accomplish. You might even think of a shared mission, in which you and another person support each other.

Tell children they may use writing or any materials available to transform the Lean on Me figures to represent the scenario of support. Point out that the two

figures are mirror images—even though the mission may have begun with one of them, they are in fact mutually supporting each other.

Suggest children cut out the figures to get started. Some might like to fold their piece of paper in half and line up the folded edge to the line down the middle of the template where the two figures' backs meet. Then they can trace just one figure, cut out the outline except for the back, and unfold the paper to have a mirror image.

Alert the group when they have just a few minutes to finish their work and put away their Window/Mirror Panels.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we now have to work together as community to clean the meeting space. First, everyone should clean up their own personal area, put away materials they were using and store their Window/Mirror Panel. Then they may clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until all are done.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT

Materials for Activity

- Congregation newsletter or access to congregation website
- Local newspaper

Preparation for Activity

- Meet with the minister or committee chairs of social action projects. Find out how your congregation has stood by groups or issues that have been difficult for the congregation. Arrange for one or more adult volunteers to visit the group and talk about times when they had to convince members of the congregation to take a stand on an issue not universally popular in the community.
- Gather local newspapers and congregational newsletters (or, find out the URLs for relevant online news sources, including your congregational website, and arrange to have a computer with Internet access when the group meets).

Description of Activity

Gather the group to hear adult visitor's stories.

Then, invite the children to look through the local paper and the congregation newsletter. Have the group decide if there is an issue that the congregation can take a stand on in solidarity with a group.

Or, ask your minister if a member of the congregation or a group within the congregation needs some kind of support the children could provide. Invite your minister and the congregant(s) to present their goal and their need to the children. Together, consider a plan of action:

How do we show our support to this cause or to this person? Could we ask members of the congregation to sign a petition? Could the congregation put a sign on our building in support of this cause? Ask the congregant(s) whether they want this support. Then, follow through on the plan.

Once this Faith in Action is complete, it will be important to process the outcome with the participants. You might ask some of the following questions:

- How did the support offered affect the congregation?
- Do you think members were appreciative?
- Would you consider supporting another congregational issue?
- What do you think was helpful and what do you think could have been more helpful next time?
- What did you learn about yourselves during this? What was easy and what was hard about giving support?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

No matter what accomplishments you make, somebody helps you. — Althea Gibson, 20th-century African American tennis champion

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

We reflected on our willingness to support people we care about whether they are our family or friends. Sometimes, we sacrifice our time and comfort to support others. The group heard the story of Khadija, the first wife of the prophet Mohamed; Khadija is considered the first convert to Islam. Mohamed was afraid of the

revelation he received to bring Islam to the world. Khadija stood by him and helped convince him that Allah was good and would not lead him astray.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

What it means to be a supporter to a family member or friend. Talk about a time in your family when someone needed support. As a caregiver, was there an opportunity to advocate for your child in relation to school? As a child, was there an opportunity for you to advocate for another member of your family? Has anyone in your family shared a doubt in themselves, and has another family member helped restore their self-confidence?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

Consider a family friend or a member of your extended family who could use support. Is there a person who has been having difficulty? Does someone need support because they have adopted or given birth to a new child? Consider ways your family can offer assistance, perhaps plan to bring over a meal that you all make together.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

As a family, look through the local newspaper and find a cause that you believe in. Is there an opportunity to support equal marriage rights? An animal shelter? Environmental action programs in your area? Choose one or more cause to support and make a plan as a family to take action.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ROLE PLAY KHADIJA'S STORY (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Stories/scripts written by small groups in Activity 2, Writing Khadija's Story.
- Optional: Props and costumes

Description of Activity

This activity extends Activity 2, Writing Khadija's Story. Invite a few volunteers to role play Khadija's story. Have the group decide which version of Khadija's story they will role play, perhaps by a show-of-hands vote. Ask for volunteers to play each character in the story. This can be as elaborate or simple as the group is willing and able to make it. After the role play, discuss the activity.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 9: STORY: THE FIRST SUPPORTER

From *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs* by Sarah Conover and Valerie Wahl (Boston: Skinner House, 2010). Available from the [UUA Bookstore](#). All rights reserved.

Khadija was a wealthy businesswoman who needed to hire someone she could depend on to do her trading and to care for her goods when her caravan reached Syria. After a brief search, she hired Muhammad ibn Adjullah, known throughout Mecca as the "The Trustworthy." He accepted the position and performed his tasks responsibly.

After he returned with an excellent recommendation from those who accompanied him, Khadija decided he would make the best of husbands—even though he was fifteen years younger. She asked Muhammad to marry her. He agreed. Together, they had six children and their business continued to flourish.

One day, Muhammad and Khadija's lives changed forever. Muhammad had gone to a cave on a nearby mountain to meditate, something he did frequently. This time, however, the angel Gabriel appeared, filling the cave, and then the horizon, with his enormous presence. He said he had a message from Allah for Muhammad: This message began the revelation of the Qur'an.

When the Angel disappeared, Muhammad raced home. He was trembling as he said to Khadija, "Cover me!" She covered him with a blanket until he was calm.

"O, Khadija! What is wrong with me?" he said. "I am afraid that something bad has happened to me." He then described his overwhelming experience in the cave.

As she listened to his words, Khadija did not share his fears. She realized that something tremendous and awe-inspiring had happened to her husband, but she was sure it was something good. She comforted him by saying, "No, it's not possible that it's something bad. It must be good news! By Allah, He will never disgrace you, for you are good to your family and relatives, you speak the truth, and help the poor and the destitute. You serve your guests generously and help those in distress."

Khadija felt sure that Muhammad had received a true message from God. Seeking to reassure him, she asked him to go with her to see her cousin, Waraqa who was knowledgeable about Jewish and Christian scripture.

Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of Muhammad, O, my cousin!"

Waraqa then said, "What have you seen?" Muhammad described what had happened to him. Waraqa then said,

"This is the same Gabriel whom Allah sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people will turn you out."

Muhammad asked, "Will they drive me out?"

Waraqa replied, "Every prophet of God who said something similar to what you have said was treated with hostility. If I live until you have this problem, then I will support you strongly."

Waraqa died soon after he met with Muhammad. However, Khadija was convinced of Muhammad's prophethood and never wavered in her support of her husband. When the Prophet Muhammad was commanded by Allah to call the people to worship one God alone, Khadija did not hesitate to express in public what she had known in secret for some time. "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah," she said, "and I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

With that one public statement, Khadija lost her position as one of the most prestigious people in Mecca and became an outcast. Even so, she refused to hide, and made a point of going with her husband to the Ka'bah in the center of town for prayer.

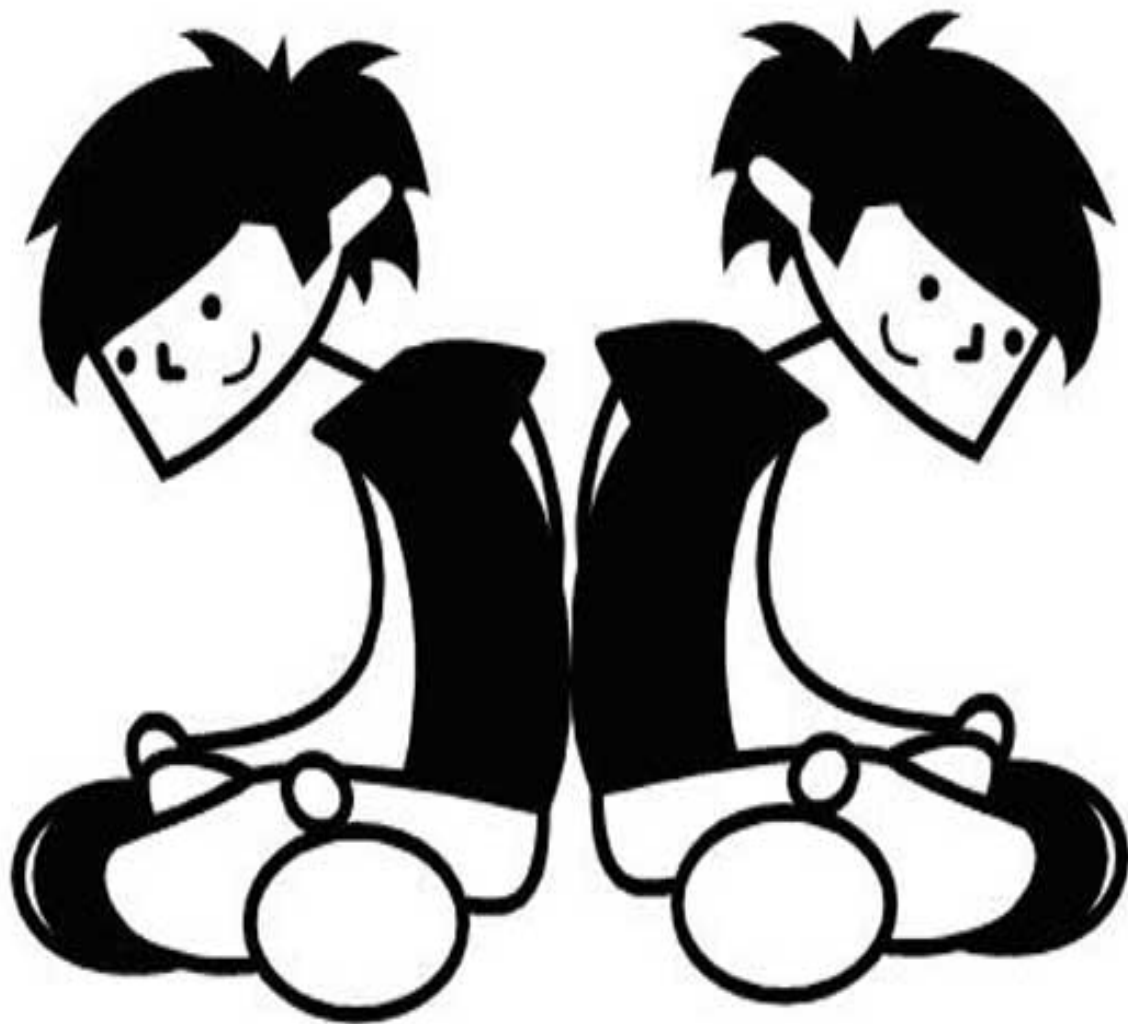
Her clear thinking plus her generous giving of her time and wealth were an enormous help to the small group that declared their faith in public. Some of her money went to free slaves who had embraced Islam and were being cruelly treated because of it.

Eventually all the members of Muhammad's tribe who had kept him from harm, and all poor Muslims, were driven out of Mecca and forced to live in a small ravine in the nearby mountains. Here, the Muslims were exposed to bitterly cold winter nights, and later the fiery hot days of summer with very little food and shelter. No one was allowed to buy or sell with the Muslims. Because she was from a different tribe, and wealthy, Khadija was not forced to join them. However, it was unthinkable to her that she not be with, and support, her husband and the other Muslims. Knowing that it would be especially difficult for her due to her advanced age, she nevertheless moved out to the ravine.

After three very long and difficult years, the boycott was lifted and the Muslims were allowed to re-enter the city, but the years of hardship had taken their toll. Khadija's intellect and faith remained strong, but her body could not recover from its deprivation, and she died soon after.

Some years later the Prophet Muhammad said of her, "She believed in me when no one else did; she accepted Islam when people rejected me; and she helped and comforted me when there was no one else to lend me a helping hand."

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 9:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: WINDOW/MIRROR LEAN ON ME FIGURES



SESSION 10: SERVICE IS THE RENT WE PAY FOR LIVING

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth. — Shirley Chisholm, African American politician and activist

Service is the rent we pay to be living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time. — Marian Wright Edelman, president and founder of the Children's Defense Fund

Two 20th-century African American activists—Shirley Chisholm and Marian Wright Edelman—popularized the saying that titles this session, inspiring us to regard service as a noble duty. The story at the heart of the session, "Arjuna's Service to His People," illustrates how public service work can be hard, underappreciated, controversial, unpleasant and risky. Yet, we are all called to sustain our community by working at the tasks required to feed, protect and nurture us all.

This session focuses on service in terms of occupations which are difficult to do, yet crucial to a stable society. Police officers, firefighters, military personnel, politicians, public administrators and many others face challenges, even dangers, because they choose to work in service. Participants will learn that whether or not they agree with a particular politician or support a war the U.S. military is fighting, those who do the public service jobs in our society deserve our acknowledgement and gratitude.

In this session, make sure conversation about all service jobs remains respectful. Model your belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals as well as your appreciation for those who do difficult jobs that benefit us all.

Activities 3 and 4 involve the same arts and crafts materials. You may wish to introduce Activity 4, Making Cards for Veterans in Hospitals, as soon as some of the children finish their Window/Mirror Panels (Activity 3).

GOALS

This session will:

- Expand children's ethical and spiritual development as they examine their own service and the service of others
- Highlight the inherent worth and dignity of the people who perform tasks for the greater good

that are often overlooked or devalued in the larger society (first Principle)

- Build participants' respect for the interdependent web of all existence (seventh Principle) as expressed in the complexity of service roles a stable, safe society requires.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify and appreciate the service jobs people do that ensure the health and welfare of the larger society
- Explore difficulties and challenges inherent in public service, including the potential complexity of determining one's duty or responsibility
- Hear a story about Arjuna and reflect on a conflict about military service
- Create cards conveying good wishes and appreciation to recovering military personnel at a veterans' hospital.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Arjuna's Service to His People	15
Activity 2: Brainstorm Survival Needs	10
Activity 3: Window/Mirror Panel — My Service to Others	10
Activity 4: Making Cards for Veterans in Hospitals	15
Faith in Action: Service Project for Congregation Staff Member	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Making Cards for Service People in Our Community	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable; light a candle to mark the time as different from your other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply and perhaps repeat one word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day.

Think about the ways you provide service to the greater good—that is the Mirror question for this session. Consider the Window question, as well. How do you value and acknowledge others who do service work that benefits us all? You may wish to use these questions for reflection:

- What do you think of the people who perform the sometimes dangerous, sometimes risky and

unpleasant tasks in our world such as military service, law enforcement, funeral directors, sanitation workers, and so on?

- Do you work in a service profession? If yes, what made you choose it? How does it feel to do a job that serves the greater good? In what ways do you, or don't you, feel appreciated?
- When you disagree with the goals of someone in a service profession, such as a military person or a politician, is it easy or difficult for you to appreciate the gift of their time and energy in service to society? If it is difficult for you, why?

Be prepared to share your insights with the children in the session.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post somewhere everyone can see it.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — ARJUNA'S SERVICE TO HIS PEOPLE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Arjuna's Service to His People](#)" (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story, "Arjuna's Service to His People," a few times. Consider telling it dramatically, rather than reading it from the page. Practice telling it. Claim the storytelling; for example, try adopting different voices for different characters. The stories here are written for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.
- For storytelling, be ritualistic. Create a mood and a time that is different from other moments in the session. For example, turn overhead lights off and use lamps. Position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.
- If the group is very large, plan to form smaller groups (no less than three participants) for both story and discussion. An adult leader should present the story and facilitate each small group. Make a copy of the story for each adult

who will need it and ask them to prepare these steps:

- Consider what this story means to you in relation to the goals of this session. Articulate this in a one- or two-word sentence that you can share with the group at the end of the discussion, perhaps using an example this age group will understand.
- Review the questions. Choose some you think might resonate with the group and help these particular children interpret the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Before you begin, ring the chime (or other noisemaker). Make eye contact with each participant. Read or tell the story. Follow the leader prompts in the story to make it interactive; do not skip the follow-up discussion.

Sound the chime again to conclude the story and discussion time.

ACTIVITY 2: BRAINSTORM SURVIVAL NEEDS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post newsprint where everyone can see it. Draw two columns with the headings "Needs" and "Who Provides?"

Description of Activity

Invite the group to brainstorm the resources they need to survive. Write their ideas on the newsprint in the "Needs" column. Needs might include food, clean water, shelter, clothing, love, transportation, sanitation, schooling, recreation, safety, burial, hospital services, etc. Affirm all ideas that relate to basic quality of life needs all humans share. Gently deflect contributions that are "wants" more than "needs"—for example, telephone service might be a legitimate need, a new cell phone is not.

When the "Needs" list looks full, fill in the "Who Provides?" column. Help children identify people who meet the needs they have named. You might include parents, teachers, bus drivers, police officers, coaches, garbage collectors, public officials, funeral directors, doctors, EMTs, nurses, etc.

Engage the group to think about the different ways service gets done: When is service a paid job? When does service mean constant vigilance? Some needs are met by caregivers and family; adults in a home provide food, shelter and love. People whose jobs are to be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year may meet some other needs on the list; law enforcement, medicine and utilities management (water, gas, telephones, electricity) always have someone on duty to keep us safe, mend our wounds and keep our day-to-day routine flowing. People who enter military careers embark on a regimented life; they must follow a strict code of conduct that includes wearing uniforms and taking orders from higher ranking officials.

Conclude with the observation that we depend on many people, some whom we will never meet, to do service jobs that ensure our survival.

Say, in your own words:

Every day there are people in our lives who do tasks that are unpleasant, stinky, scary or painful because they have accepted responsibility to protect and care for us. Unitarian Universalists are called to show appreciation and gratitude to the people who choose a path in life that benefits all of us.

Leave the newsprint posted for children to use as reference/inspiration when they work on their Window/Mirror Panels in Activity 3.

Including All Participants

Be mindful of children who may have a relative in some kind of service profession. Give participants the opportunity to share their experiences of these family members.

Make sure conversation about all service jobs remains respectful. Model the appropriate acknowledgement that service work is sometimes difficult or unpleasant, and often unseen or unappreciated by those who benefit from it.

ACTIVITY 3: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — MY SERVICE TO OTHERS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Newsprint with ideas from Activity 2, Brainstorm Survival Needs
- Paper or card stock, cut to a size that can be placed within Window/Mirror Panels

- Optional: Paint and paintbrushes, pastels or other art media
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Consider the Mirror and Window questions posed in the Description of Activity. Think about how you might rephrase them to best guide the group—including using examples of your own relationship with service work, if you wish.
- Have materials easily accessible.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to bring their Window/Mirror Panels to work tables. Distribute Window/Mirror Panel basket(s) and the pre-cut paper or card stock you have prepared.

Tell the group their assignment is to capture a mirror or a window view of their relationship with service work. Pose the Mirror and Window questions, or rephrase them to best guide the group's reflection and expression.

The Mirror question for this session is "What role does (or might) doing service for the greater good play in my life—now, or in the future?" You may wish to say:

Think about ways you have worked in service to others. Think about things you do at home, in school and here at our congregation. In what ways have you provided service to others? What professional job does the service you give, or want to give, make you think of? Maybe you can see yourself doing this kind of work when you are older.

The Window question is "What are ways I do (or could) express appreciation for the service I receive as a member of my family/community/society?" You may wish to say:

You might like to focus on acknowledging the service others give that maintains your life. You might show your appreciation by representing some important services or the people who provide them, on your Window/Mirror Panel.

Explain that participants can express how they relate to service work now, or how they would like to relate to service work in the future.

Direct children to the newsprint from Activity 2 to help them recall the service jobs they had thought of and the people who do them. They may use the pre-cut paper or work directly on their Window/Mirror Panels. You may wish to remind them about magazines available to cut up which may have images of service providers at work.

Warn children when they have several minutes left, to allow enough time for them to attach smaller pieces to their Window/Mirror Panels.

If you are not doing Activity 4, Making Cards for Veterans in Hospitals, next, ask the group to help clean up and put away the Window/Mirror Panels and arts and crafts materials.

ACTIVITY 4: MAKING CARDS FOR VETERANS IN HOSPITALS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Postcard-sized card stock in various colors, at least one sheet for each participant
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons
- Stickers of festive shapes and designs

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a hospital for military veterans which will welcome participants' cards of appreciation. The [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs](http://www.va.gov/) (at www.va.gov/) website lists hospitals all over the country. If possible, choose one near your congregation. Find out to whom you can send the children's cards.
- Designate a co-leader or adult volunteer to collect the finished cards and make sure they are sent or delivered to the appropriate contact.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Engage the group to send wishes and prayers in cards to hospitalized military veterans. Say in your own words:

We will be making cards of appreciation and good wishes for men and women who have served our country in the military. Some of them have risked their lives. All of them have chosen a job that helps to protect us and our country.

Ask, "Why is it important to acknowledge the service of others?" Allow some comments.

Ask, "In what way can we show our gratitude on a postcard?" Invite the children to think of messages to write on the cards. Write their contributions on the newsprint you have posted.

You may wish to clarify that veterans may be in a hospital for a war injury or for a reason unrelated to their military service. Explain that once a person becomes part of the military, they are entitled to some public support for the rest of their lives; that is one way society shows its gratitude.

Let the group know exactly where the cards will be going. Talk with children while they make the cards.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we now have to work together as community to clean the meeting space. First, everyone should clean up their own personal area, put away materials they were using and store their Window/Mirror Panel. Then they may clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until all are done.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: SERVICE PROJECT FOR A CONGREGATIONAL STAFF MEMBER

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Leader Resource 1, Letter to Board of Trustees

Preparation for Activity

- Approach any staff member(s) the children might choose to help. Gauge their openness to this project. Work with them to minimize the time they need to spend instructing you or the children on how to properly do tasks. See if there is a particular day they would like to have off, should this project be approved by the Board. Remember, the aim is to show your appreciation of a service worker, not make extra work for them.
- Ask the permission of your minister and/or Board of Trustees before offering paid staff a day off. (See Leader Resource 1, Letter to Board of Trustees)
- Secure the assistance of several parents and adult or youth volunteers.

Description of Activity

Outline a service project the children can do for someone who serves the congregation with hard work which may be underappreciated.

Engage the group to talk about how the congregational facility is maintained. Who takes out the garbage? Who is in charge of the recycling? Who mops the floor? Who tidies the sanctuary after worship and puts away the chairs after coffee hour?

Guide the children to identify someone, perhaps the congregation's custodian, whose work the group can do on a Saturday, Sunday or school vacation day (a day when enough participants and adult volunteers will be available to fulfill all the worker's regular responsibilities). With the appropriate congregational leader(s)' permission, invite the person to take a paid day off.

Including All Participants

Be mindful of accessibility issues. If anyone in your group has limitations of movement, offer them a job they can accomplish.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth. — Shirley Chisholm, African American politician and activist

Service is the rent we pay to be living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time. — Marian Wright Edelman, president and founder of the Children's Defense Fund

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

We explored the concept of duty and the importance of jobs that serve for the greater good. The children learned that our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to respect and appreciate people who accept the responsibilities that maintain a healthy, safe, stable society—for example, firefighters, law enforcement officers, military personnel, teachers and sanitation workers. In this session's Hindu story, the celebrated warrior Arjuna is called to lead a war he does not want to fight—a war against some of his own kinspeople. The story shows how service can be hard, underappreciated, unpleasant and risky. Nevertheless, there are times we all may be called to duty, in order to help feed, protect or otherwise sustain our community.

We talked about various jobs done at home, in our community and in our congregation that help all of us, and we talked about who does these jobs. The children wrote cards of appreciation which we will send to hospitalized military veterans.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

Household chores and why they are necessary to keep the household running smoothly. Talk about specific chores, who does them and how they help the family as a whole.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

See if you can identify the people in your community who perform needed services, particularly the risky, unpleasant and difficult jobs. You might mention military service people, sanitation workers, funeral directors, water or electric utility workers, police officers, firefighters, assisted living staff, hazardous waste clean-up professionals, bus drivers, teachers or public administrators. How many of these individuals can you identify by name? What are some ways you do, or could, express appreciation of the service they do? What are some ways you could contribute to the jobs others perform on your behalf?

A FAMILY RITUAL

If your family gathers for prayer, meditation or a grace at mealtime, make it a point to include in your spoken thoughts people who serve in the military—whether or not you approve of the specific, current work of our U.S. forces. If saying a blessing for those who serve in the military is difficult, talk together about why that is so. Acknowledge that service jobs can be unpleasant or even controversial. Talk about why some people do service jobs anyway, and make sure children have a chance to voice their perspectives.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: MAKING CARDS FOR SERVICE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint with ideas from Activity 2, Brainstorm Survival Needs
- Postcard-sized card stock in various colors, at least one sheet for each participant
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons
- Stickers of festive shapes and designs

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain address of some local service departments the children might choose, and, if possible, individual service workers' names.
- Designate a co-leader or adult volunteer to collect the finished cards and make sure they are sent or delivered to the appropriate contact.
- Post the newsprint with "Needs" and "Who Provides?" lists from Activity 2.

Description of Activity

Invite the group to make colorful thank-you cards for people who perform needed services in the community.

Decide with the group who they will make cards for. Refer to the list of needs and the service people who meet those needs they brainstormed in Activity 2. They might consider sending cards to the local police department, the staff of a local clinic or emergency room, your community's library staff or the fire department.

Distribute card stock and arts and crafts materials for children to share at work tables.

As they work, ask the group to think about the work the recipients of the cards do. How does it feel to acknowledge these people? At the end of the activity ask the group to offer a moment of prayer of gratitude.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 10: STORY: ARJUNA'S SERVICE TO HIS PEOPLE

Adapted from the Hindu Baghavat Gita.

This story is an ancient Hindu tale. It is important to tell the story interactively, as guided. The prompts and follow-up discussion questions will help you elicit children's thoughtful responses to the tale.

Here is a story from the Hindu tradition. A long, long time ago in India, there was a king with two sons. When the king died, Older Brother was entitled to inherit the entire kingdom, but Younger Brother was jealous. Older Brother graciously divided the kingdom in half, to share with Younger Brother. But Younger Brother was still not satisfied and stole the whole kingdom for himself and his children. He refused to share the land with Older Brother—unless there was a war.

Older brother and his children did not want to fight, but they had only two choices: to fight for their rights, or to turn away from war, and their rightful land, to preserve peace and nonviolence.

One of Older Brother's children was Arjuna, a famous warrior. He had a special relationship with the god Krishna, the god of all gods. Krishna called Arjuna to lead the battle. Of course, Arjuna dutifully came to the battlefield to obey. He had led many battles successfully for Krishna before.

But Arjuna was shocked to see who was getting ready for war on the other side. The people who were called his enemies were, in fact, his own family. Not only his uncle—Younger Brother—but also Arjuna's cousins, some of his uncles, his favorite teachers and very dear friends. He did not want to kill them and was very confused that Krishna—the god of all gods—had called him to lead this war. He was especially confused since Krishna had always said, "The most important thing for a good person to do is to avoid harming any living thing."

Leader: Pause and ask, "Think about that statement: 'The most important thing to do is avoid harming any living thing.' Do you agree with that? Does it sound right to you?" Allow some brief responses; affirm all. Continue the story.

As a warrior, Arjuna's duty sometimes required him to kill. That was hard. But this time, it was an even harder problem. Arjuna argued and argued with Krishna because he wanted to be a good person, he wanted to do his duty, yet he could not stand the thought of doing violence against his relatives and friends.

Krishna told Arjuna many stories to persuade Arjuna to do his duty as a warrior. In one story, there was a hermit who lived in the woods who always told the truth. One day an evil robber chased a merchant into the woods. The robber asked the hermit if he knew where the merchant was hiding. Because he always told the truth, the hermit pointed and said, "Yes, I saw him going that way," causing the merchant to die. Krishna said, "If there is a choice between two good behaviors—for example, telling the truth because it is right or lying to prevent someone from being killed—some good behaviors are better than others. In this case, wouldn't it have been better for the hermit to lie, and protect the life of the merchant?"

Leader: Pause and ask, "What do you think? Did the hermit do the right thing or not? Should he have lied?" Allow some brief responses; affirm all. Continue the story.

In another story, Krishna told Arjuna about farming couple who worried that the weather, their seeds and their tools would not be good enough to create a good crop to feed their family. Because of their worries, the farmers decided not to work their land at all—in the same way that Arjuna was refusing to fight the war. But Krishna said, "The best thing a person can do is their duty, to the best of their ability, without worrying about the results. A farmer—or a warrior, Arjuna—should not worry about the outcome. To work is their duty and they must do their best. The farmers and their family would have nothing if they did not work at all."

Leader: Ask the children, "What do you think of that? Have you ever felt like the farming couple? Have you ever been worried about the results so much that it was hard to do the work you are supposed to do? Some people feel like that about schoolwork, sometimes." Allow some responses. Acknowledge that worrying about the end result can be discouraging when you have a duty to do.

Now ask, "How would you feel about doing the work you are supposed to do, if doing a good job might mean someone would get hurt? Is that a case where you really should worry about the outcome?" Allow some discussion. Continue the story.

Well, Arjuna was still not convinced that leading the battle was the right thing to do. He was pretty sure if he did his duty well, he would hurt people he cared about. He still did not want to do it.

Then Krishna had one more argument to convince Arjuna. He asked Arjuna to think about his father—Older Brother—and the rest of Arjuna's family members who had been wronged. Hadn't their land had been stolen? Were they not also his brothers and sisters, cousins and

dear friends who needed Arjuna to fight and help them get their land back? Krishna said that fighting for your rights is an important duty. If someone does a bad thing to you, that person cannot be allowed to get away with it.

Krishna told Arjuna, “The best way to be a good person is to do your duty, see the goodness in all living beings, treat all beings equally, and do good things for others.” In these ways, Arjuna could be happy and have a closer relationship with Krishna. Arjuna wanted to be happy and stay close with Krishna, the god of all gods. Yet did not see how he could do all these things at once—*not this time.*

Leader: Ring the chime to signal the end of the story. Say, “Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to help us understand the story from multiple perspectives. Let’s find out what one another thought about the story.”

Remind the group not to assume others share their opinions. Ask everyone to use “I think” or “I feel” statements. Encourage the group to listen to each comment and then share some silence. You may wish to use the bell or chime to move between speakers.

Begin a discussion by asking participants to recap Arjuna’s dilemma in their own words. Then, lead a discussion with these questions, making sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance:

- *What do you think Arjuna did? (Did he refuse to fight? Did he fight but ask for forgiveness?)*
- *If you think Arjuna did not fight, what do you think happened next?*
- *If you think he fought, what do you think happened?*

- *If you think he fought, why do you think he did? What convinced him that his duty as a warrior was more important than making sure he didn’t hurt any of his relatives or friends?*
 - *Did he want the gratitude of his father and the others for whom he fought? Do you think they were grateful, and did that make it worthwhile for Arjuna?*
 - *Did he want to keep a good relationship with Krishna? Do you think it worked?*
 - *Do you think anyone accused him of making things worse by fighting?*

Tell the children the Baghavad Gita recounts that Arjuna did fight. Many lives were lost and his side won. Then ask:

- *Does the story prove war is the answer, the way to right a wrong? Why/why not?*

Allow some responses. Then, shift to a more personal discussion about the nature of service. Ask the children to name chores or tasks they may not like to do, but they know are their responsibility and serve the greater good. Examples might include cleaning chores or caring for pets at home, picking up litter in the playground or park, helping out with siblings and keeping most secrets. Be aware, some children do not have specific chores at home or elsewhere. You might suggest actions of service that reflect responsibility to the greater good, for example, recycling, refraining from littering and keeping quiet in the library and during worship.

Invite a few volunteers to share stories about their own experiences with service work. Ask whether any had any conflicts about a service responsibility, as Arjuna did in the story. Ask how they worked them out. Ask who or what they relied on to show them their service responsibilities, as Arjuna relied on Krishna.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 10: LEADER RESOURCE 1: LETTER TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Adapt this letter to seek permission for participants to take on some duties of a congregational staff member and invite the staff member to enjoy a day off.

Dear (Name of Board President)

The 4th and 5th grade Windows and Mirrors group is learning about the importance of valuing the people who do service occupations for the benefit of us all. As a Faith in Action project, we want to do the work of our congregation's custodian, (name of custodian), for one day.

We are requesting permission for (name of custodian) to get a paid day off. We will take responsibility for completing that day's duties.

Sincerely,

(Signatures of co-leaders, participants and adult or youth volunteers who will take part

FIND OUT MORE

Find out how to send cards and care packages to retired veterans or active service personnel on the [US Department of Veterans' Affairs](http://www.va.gov/) (at www.va.gov/) website.

Unitarian Universalists serve in the military both as regular personnel and as chaplains. Read more in an April, 2007 article by Leah Rubin-Cadrain in [UU World](http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/22319.shtml) (at www.uuworld.org/news/articles/22319.shtml).

SESSION 11: PRIVILEGE IS A BLESSING WE GIVE AWAY TO BE IN COMMUNITY

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The tighter you squeeze, the less you have. — Thomas Merton
To whom much is given is much required. — Christian scripture, Luke 12:49

It is easy to "own" our skills and resources which are well practiced or hard-won, such as educational achievements and professional craft. However, we often take for granted knowledge, abilities and opportunities we have by virtue of advantageous birth, fortune or geography—our privileges. This session teaches children to recognize the ways in which they are privileged. Children learn that privileges, like other gifts, are best used and most valuable when we share them with others.

In Unitarian Universalism, we affirm the interdependent web of all existence. Thus we are called to share our privilege as an act of belonging in community. The children hear about Juliette Hampton Morgan, an upper middle class, Southern white woman who was an outspoken critic of segregation in mid-20th-century America. Her family and friends in the white upper class ostracized Juliette Morgan for her public stance, but her conscience would not let her forego acting on her beliefs. She used her privilege, giving it away to stand up for what was right.

Note: Be thoughtful in talking about privilege related to skin color—mindful not only of individual children in the group, but also of the realities of changing context. Fifty years after Juliette Hampton Morgan's fight and death, segregation by skin color is illegal and American has elected Barack Obama as our president. While racism still exists in the U.S., there is no reason to give children notions that their skin color alone, whatever it may be, provides significant privilege in today's society.

GOALS

This session will:

- Nurture spiritual and ethical development through an examination of justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- Guide children's self-examination of their privileges and how their specific gifts might be shared to help others

- Offer an example of how to practice peace, liberty, and justice for all in practical terms, in the words and deeds of Juliette Hampton Morgan, a prophetic woman.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore their own gifts, talents and opportunities
- Learn to distinguish between gifts, talents and opportunities we develop by hard work and practice and those we are born with (privileges)
- Learn the story of Juliette Hampton Morgan and her choice to use her privileges as an upper class white person to fight racial injustice in Montgomery, Alabama
- Experience the personal and community value of sharing one's privileges generously through a game and a Faith in Action project.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: What Is Privilege?	5
Activity 2: Window/Mirror Panel — My Privilege	15
Activity 3: Making a Machine	15
Activity 4: Story — Juliette Hampton Morgan	10
Activity 5: Penny Game	5
Faith in Action: Sharing Our Gifts, Skills and Talents	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Our Privilege and Skills — Reading to Younger Children	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable; light a candle to mark the

time as different from your other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply and perhaps repeat one word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day.

Prepare for the lesson by thinking about the many ways that you have privilege. You might consider:

- What are some privileges you possess? These privileges can include your talents, skills, abilities, education or access to information/ resources/ money/ power that you have by chance of birth or geography.
- What is the source of your privilege?

- How does your privilege make you feel?
- In what ways do your privileges obligate, liberate and/or imprison you?
- What are some ways that you do or would like to use your privileges in the service of others?
- How does your Unitarian Universalist faith inform how you share your privilege?

Be prepared to share your insights with the children in the session.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post somewhere everyone can see it.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS PRIVILEGE? (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post two sheets of newsprint. Label one "Privileges" and the other "Skills."

Description of Activity

Gather the children. Tell them, in your own words:

Our Unitarian Universalist faith challenges us to recognize our privileges and to share them with others. We are also called to discover our gifts and skills, and then share them, too, in order to live a full life while contributing to our society.

Invite the group to explore the differences between privileges and skills. Say something like:

The talents, education, or access to information, resources, money and/or power that we have by chance of birth or geography are called "privileges." These are different from the skills and talents that we develop through practice. For example, having access to a piano, a piano teacher, and the time to take lessons are each privileges; being able to play a classical sonata comes from regular practice and that is a skill you learn. Now we are going to list what we understand to be our privileges and our skills.

Invite volunteers to contribute to both lists. Accept all suggestions. If an item is suggested both as a privilege AND a skill, just write it down. If necessary, suggest some of these ideas:

- Privileges
 - Being picky about food (people who are hungry aren't picky)
 - Having a bed to sleep on at night
 - Having a warm home in the winter
 - Having a stable home where people do not act violent
 - Going to school
 - Not living in a war zone
 - Extra curricular activities and lessons that cost money
 - Access to the Internet
 - Toys (electronic games, especially)
 - Learning the same language from birth that is used in your school.
- Skills
 - Earning good grades
 - Learning a new sport and staying on the team
 - Playing an instrument well
 - Being a neat writer
 - Building a large vocabulary.

When the list looks full, engage the group with some of these questions:

- Does anything on this list surprise you?
- Is there something you did not think is a privilege that someone else believes is?
- Have you ever thought about being privileged?
- Do you think being privileged is the same as being "spoiled?" What is the difference?

Keep the newsprint posted for use in Activity 2, Window/Mirror Panel — My Privilege.

ACTIVITY 2: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — MY PRIVILEGE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels

- Newsprint lists of "Privileges" and "Skills" from Activity 1
- Paper or card stock, cut to a size that can be placed within Window/Mirror Panels
- Optional: Paint and paintbrushes, pastels or other art media
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Have materials easily accessible.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to bring their Window/Mirror Panels to work tables. Distribute Window/Mirror Panel basket(s) and paper or card stock you have pre-cut. Invite the children to look at the list from Activity 1. Say something like:

Look at our list of privileges and skills. Consider the Mirror question: What is my privilege? Consider the Window question: How can we use our privileges to build community? Choose a privilege you feel you have been given and a skill you have earned. Represent one of each—a privilege and a skill—with words, pictures or a combination.

As the group works, invite small group conversation. You may ask questions from the previous activity that were not touched on, or simply invite children to talk about what they are making. Give a warning when several minutes remain for children to finish and clean up. If there is time, invite volunteers to share with the larger group.

ACTIVITY 3: MAKING A MACHINE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Slips of paper with the names of common machines (blender, washing machine, car, etc.) and a basket to hold the slips of paper.

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how you will form "families" of three to five children for this activity. ("Families" need not be all the same size.)
- Prepare slips of paper with the names of common machines. You will need one slip for each small group you will form.
- If possible, identify a separate rehearsal space for each small group; make sure you have enough adult supervision if you plan to send groups to multiple rooms.

Description of Activity

In this game, children experience how everyone's gifts and talents together comprise a community.

Form family groups. Have each family choose a slip of paper from the basket; each slip has a common working machine on it (blender, washing machine, car, etc). Each family will work together to "create" the machine, with each person as one part of the machine, complete with motion and noises.

Have all families practice their machines at the same time, taking care not to "peek" at the other families.

After about three to five minutes, call all the children together and have everyone sit down. Ask for each family unit to come to the front of the room one at a time. Invite them to demonstrate their machine without talking or making sounds; the other families must try to guess what machine they are. If the audience has trouble guessing, ask the performers to add sound. After each group performs, clap and cheer.

Ask if they know how this game relates to gifts and talents we are born with. Point out that each person in the family machine had a specific job to do to make the whole machine function. Each of us has different gifts that we should use to make the community stronger, better, more fair, more beautiful.

Including All Participants

Make sure children in small groups respectfully find jobs for all individuals in the group. You may gain a powerful "teachable moment" from how groups incorporate the different physical abilities among them.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY — JULIETTE HAMPTON MORGAN (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Juliette Hampton Morgan](#) (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story a few times. Consider telling it dramatically, rather than reading it from the page. Practice telling it. Claim the storytelling; for example, try adopting a different voice for Juliette Morgan's writing. The stories here are written for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.
- For storytelling, be ritualistic. Create a mood and a time that is different from other moments in the session. For example, turn overhead lights off and use lamps. Position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.
- Review the questions and choose some you think might resonate with the group and help these particular children interpret the story and relate it to their own lives.
- If the group is very large, plan to form smaller groups (no less than three participants) for discussion. An adult leader should facilitate each small group.
- Consider what this story means to you in relation to the purpose of this session. Articulate this in a one- or two-word sentence that you can share with the group at the end of the discussion, perhaps using an example—one this age group will understand.

Description of Activity

Before you begin, ring the chime (or other noisemaker). Make eye contact with each participant.

Read or tell the story. Sound the chime again at the end.

Invite the children to think silently on their own about the story.

Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to help us understand the story from multiple perspectives. Let's find out what one another thought about the story.

Remind them not to assume others share their opinions. Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Encourage the group to listen to each comment and then share some silence. Use the bell or chime to move between speakers.

Begin a discussion by asking participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Then use these questions to facilitate discussion, making sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance:

- What were Juliette Hampton Morgan's privileges? (education, social status, wealth, white skin in a racist society that oppressed African Americans)
- How were her privileges useful when she wanted to help fight injustice?
- If she'd been a poor white woman, would she have written letters to the newspaper editor? Would her letters have been printed? Would her friends and family have been so concerned about her behavior?
- If Morgan had been a poor African American woman, would her letter have been printed? Why or why not?
- What risks did Juliette Hampton Morgan take by being an ally to African Americans in Montgomery, Alabama during the time of segregation?
- Did Juliette lose any of her privileges by her actions? In other words, by using her privileges to help others, did she then lose them? Which ones? How did this happen? How do you think she felt?
- Why do you think Juliette Hampton Morgan was willing to face these risks? What gave Juliette Hampton Morgan the courage to stand up to racism?

Conclude by saying, in your own words:

As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to take care of one another in our interconnected web of all life. At times that can mean using our privilege and taking risks, as Juliette Hampton Morgan did.

ACTIVITY 5: PENNY GAME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Small bags containing different numbers of pennies for all participants, plus a few extra

Preparation for Activity

- Prior to the session, prepare for each child a small bag containing four, five or six pennies. Make extra for visitors or newcomers.
- Practice the game with adults or by yourself to get a sense of the underlying mathematics.

Description of Activity

Hand each child a small bag containing the pennies. Say:

In this game, you will go around and give your pennies away to different people. When someone gives you a penny, you must give that person two pennies in return. Let's see what happens.

Play for three to five minutes. Then call "time" and ask what happened. See who has the most and who has the least pennies.

After comparing who has the most pennies and who has the least, ask if there were any children who initially took pennies without giving any in return. Ask them:

- Did any of you give only one penny away?
- Did any of you give more than two pennies away?
- What did you enjoy more, giving the pennies away or getting them?

Ask children if they are surprised that the person who gives away the most gets the most. Invite them to compare the game with real life:

- Do you know when your parents are being generous?
- Do you know if your family gives money away to charity or the congregation?
- What are the risks and rewards of generosity?
- Is it better to err on the side of giving away your privilege? Why, or why not?

Including All Participants

Be mindful of inclusion in this game. Make sure every person is approached to give and receive pennies. Be mindful of accessibility issues and be prepared to make

the room accessible for someone who may difficulty walking around exchanging pennies.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we now have to work together as community to clean the meeting space. First, everyone should clean up their own personal area, put away materials they were using and store their Window/Mirror Panel. Then they may clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until all are done.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: SHARING OUR PRIVILEGE AND OUR GIFTS

Materials for Activity

- Determined by the outcome of the preparation; children may bring an instrument, art supplies, something they baked etc.

Preparation for Activity

- Ask your minister and/or religious educator for names of some people in the congregation who are sick or unable to attend church. Make sure there is no confidentiality issue. If possible, contact the individuals and ascertain what type of contact or gift from children in the group they might appreciate.
- Determine any adults or resources (transportation, kitchen facilities, etc.) required to put the plan into action. If so, line up these resources in advance of the time when you and the children will perform the Faith in Action activity.

Description of Activity

One way to build community is to identify people in the congregation who are in need and offer assistance. In this case, help children identify privileges and gifts they have—their time, their energy, perhaps compassion or kindness, perhaps money, any particular skills or talents—which they can share with others in need of those specific gifts.

Ask the children to brainstorm tasks that could perform for members, either as individuals or part of a small team. Share information you have found out about specific members whom they could help. For example, if a child has artistic talent, they can make a card for someone who is sick. If a child has money and knows they will be taken shopping by an adult, they can buy a small gift, like a CD to listen to, or some flowers. If a child has a good sense of humor, they could visit someone to cheer them up. If a child has patience and kindness, they can offer to visit and bring food, drinks, books, etc. Remind children that no matter what they do,

they will use some combination of their privileges and their hard-earned, well practiced gifts or talents.

Develop a plan of action. When will the children perform the tasks? How often? Who will do what? What help do the children need from other adults?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

The tighter you squeeze, the less you have. — Thomas Merton

To whom much is given is much required. — Christian scripture, Luke 12:49

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

The group learned about privilege and what it means to have it and to share it. Privilege is defined, for the purpose of this session, as knowledge, abilities and opportunities we have by virtue of birth, good fortune or where we live. Skills, on the other hand, are learned. The group listed what they thought were privileges and skills. Adequate food, shelter and schooling are privileges, while learning to read, write and play an instrument are skills. The children heard about Juliette Hampton Morgan, a privileged white woman in the segregated South who stood up against segregation. Her family, friends and employers ostracized her as a result.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

The privilege(s) your family enjoys. How does the family share your privileges with others? In what ways does your Unitarian Universalist faith inform the family's choices in how to share their privileges?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

As a family, choose a day to spend together in the service of someone else. Perhaps cook for someone in the congregation who is not feeling well. Is there an elderly person who would like some work done around their home or apartment? Talk with the parish minister about reaching out to those who would appreciate interaction with others in the congregation. Perhaps reach out to someone you have never met before.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING OUR PRIVILEGE AND SKILLS — READING TO YOUNGER CHILDREN (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Books from your congregational or local library, appropriate for pre-school children

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange with your religious educator to have the group read to a pre-school age group. If there are enough people, pair up each pre-schooler with a child in the Windows and Mirrors group.
- Select books with co-leaders and adult volunteers. You may ask the children, also, to recommend books they enjoyed when they were younger.

Description of Activity

The group will share their privilege of age and their learned skill of reading with younger children in the congregation. This activity gives children an opportunity to intentionally share their privilege to help others in the faith community.

If there are enough people, have the older children read to the pre-schoolers one-on-one. Or, elicit volunteers from the group to read.

After the reading time, discuss with the older group what it felt like to read to the youngsters. How did it feel to read to the pre-school group? Did it feel like sharing a privilege to them? Why or why not?

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 11: STORY: JULIETTE HAMPTON MORGAN

Juliette Morgan was the only child of Frank and Lila Morgan of Montgomery, Alabama. Morgan attended the best schools and graduated near the top of her class in college and graduate school. She was a public school teacher and a librarian. Later in her life, she was the director of research at the Montgomery Public Library—a respected position for an upper class, white woman.

For six generations (over 120 years), the Morgans had been an extremely wealthy family. They had other people to do their laundry, cook their meals and do their yard work. Juliette was raised in a time and place where shops and restaurants displayed "Whites Only" signs. Most white people considered African Americans inferior to them. When Juliette was a little girl, she was used to African Americans doing work to keep her comfortable.

One thing about Juliette's life separated her from her privileged friends. She had severe anxiety attacks. That meant she could not drive a car. So, to get to work, she rode the city buses in Montgomery. On those buses, she saw white bus drivers threaten and humiliate African American men and women who paid the same ten-cent fare she paid.

In 1939, 16 years before the famous Montgomery Bus Boycott, Juliette Morgan began writing angry letters to the local newspaper about the mean, unfair behavior she witnessed on the city buses. In her letters, she wrote that segregation was un-Christian and wrong, and the citizens of Montgomery should do something about it. The response was immediate: Juliette lost her job at a local bookstore.

One morning as she rode the bus, Juliette watched an African American woman pay her fare and then get off the bus to re-enter through the back door where black riders were supposed to sit. That was the custom, but, as soon as the woman stepped out, the white bus driver pulled away, leaving the woman behind even though she had already paid. Angry, Juliette Morgan jumped up and pulled the emergency cord to stop the bus. She demanded the bus driver open the door and let the woman come on board. The other passengers on the bus, African American and white, were frozen in surprise. In the days that followed, Juliette pulled the emergency cord every time she witnessed such an injustice.

News spread quickly. Bus drivers began to hassle Juliette Morgan. When she got angry, she would get off the bus and walk where she was going, even if it was

more than a mile. White passengers made fun of her as she got off the bus. Her own mother told her she was making a fool of herself and tarnishing the family's good name.

Then, on December 1, 1955, an African American passenger named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery city bus. Her action sparked a citywide boycott. Most African Americans refused to ride the segregated buses.

Juliette Morgan wrote another letter to the newspaper editor. She wrote in support of the boycott. She began to receive threatening letters and telephone calls. The city mayor demanded the library fire her. Although they did not fire Morgan, library officials told her not to write any more letters. She promised to remain silent. But it was hard. Because of the boycott, white people were bombing African American homes and churches.

In January 1957, Buford Boone, a white newspaper editor, told local racist whites that they were to blame for the continuing violence. Juliette Morgan wrote another letter, this time to tell Buford Boone how pleased she was. She wrote:

There are so many Southerners from various walks of life that know you are right.... They know what they call 'our Southern way of life' must... change. Many of them even are eager for change, but are afraid to express themselves—so afraid to stand alone.... I had begun to wonder if there were any men in the state—any white men—with any moral courage.

Boone asked Morgan's permission to print her letter in the newspaper. She was reluctant, because she had promised her bosses she would not write any more letters. But she felt a personal responsibility to encourage white people to confront racism. She hoped her letter would cause other white people to take a stand for justice. Buford's newspaper published her letter in January. By July, she had lost all her friends, and her job. Her own mother did not want to speak to her. Juliette Morgan died soon after that.

Fifty years later, white people in Alabama began to see that Morgan was right. She was inducted into the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame in 2005 and the Montgomery City Council voted to rename the main public library after her. Juliette Morgan gave away her own privileges to help bring justice for all.

FIND OUT MORE

Juliette Hampton Morgan

Juliette Morgan's public support of desegregation cost not only her social status and family relationships, but also her livelihood. These losses are probably why she took her own life. When the mayor of Montgomery, Alabama failed to convince the city library management to fire Morgan, in July, 1957 he cut the funds that paid for her position. Morgan resigned from her job. The next day, she killed herself by an overdose of pills. She left a note which said, "I am not going to cause any more trouble to anybody."

Examining Privilege and How to Give It Away

Privilege, Power, and Difference (New York : McGraw-Hill 2001), by Allan G. Johnson, is a short book which, according to a review on the Amazon website, offers "an easily applied theoretical model for thinking about systems of privilege and difference. Writing in accessible, conversational prose, Johnson joins theory with engaging examples in ways that enable students to see the nature and consequences of privilege and their connection to it." Reviewers posting on the Amazon website recommend the book for its presentation of the

systemic nature of privilege, particularly in relation to race, gender and affectional orientation.

In her memoir, *Unafraid of the Dark* (New York: Anchor, 1999), the Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt tells of her childhood and illuminates how privilege works in our society. Rev. McNatt is an African American Unitarian Universalist minister who grew up in Chicago in the 1960s. Her mother used Aid to Families with Dependent Children to help the family survive. Rosemary was sent to a Catholic school, where nuns observed her potential and directed her into a liberal high school. Rev. McNatt went on to Yale, became editor of the *New York Times* Book Review and earned an M.Div. from Drew Theological School . She now serves the Fourth Universalist Society in New York City as minister.

Linda Stout is a white lesbian who identifies herself as having grown up in a low-income, working-class family. In *Bridging the Class Divide and Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing*, (Boston: Beacon Press: 1996), she provides guidance on language, organizational models, decision making, strategic planning, marketing and fundraising from the perspective of a working-class activist who frequently finds herself working with middle-class people who want to organize low-income and working-class people. Stout is a founder of the anti-racist Piedmont Peace Project, 704-938-5090.

SESSION 12: MAKING VISIBLE THE INVISIBLE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Let him who expects one class of society to prosper in the highest degree, while the other is in distress, try whether one side of the face can smile while the other is pinched. — Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), British clergyman and author

Grade school children begin to ask the big questions that adults do, such as, "What makes me human? Why am I alive? What happens when I die?" Also like adults, they ask, "Where do I fit in?" Children get their answers the same way adults do—by looking around, comparing themselves to others and noticing how others see them.

This session introduces a working definition of class as one's relative status according to wealth, power and position. We guide children to examine themselves in these terms and to discuss what it means to compare people in these ways. We focus participants' attention on people and classes they might be unaware of—the unseen workers who grow and prepare their food, make their clothing, and build and maintain our societal infrastructure. We come full circle to understanding how our first Unitarian Universalist Principle transcends class and guides us to challenge society's systems of comparative human worth.

Facilitate with care. Assume the group includes a range of socio-economic class identities. Children may offer to self-identify their socio-economic class or speculate about others'. Affirm their right to explore class categories. Emphasize that these categories are subjective. They matter to some people, yet they are not fixed and they do not determine the worth of anyone.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce a working definition of class and guide participants to consider their own socio-economic class
- Demonstrate that perceptions about social class place barriers between people that are antithetical to the first Unitarian Universalist Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every individual
- Guide participants to expand their socio-economic field of vision to include others whom

they may not know but whose lives, through their work, are connected to participants' lives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn a working definition of class and explore what it means to be perceived as, or perceive others as, rich, middle class, working class or poor
- Reflect on where they fit into the world socio-economically
- Discover connections to working people they do not personally know whose labor helped form the enjoyments and necessities of their lives
- Understand the guidance of our first Unitarian Universalist Principle to look past socio-economic distinctions and treat each individual as equally valuable and deserving of respect.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Some People Think They're Better than Others	5
Activity 2: Balance Challenge — Part I	5
Activity 3: Story — Yammani and the Soji	10
Activity 4: The Clothes on My Back	10
Activity 5: Balance Challenge — Part II	5
Activity 6: Window/Mirror Panel — Making Invisible Hands Visible	15
Faith in Action: Thank You Notes	15
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Journaling — From My Class Perspective	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable; light a candle to mark the

time as different from your other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply and perhaps repeat a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. After opening your eyes, consider:

- What is your perception of your class identity in childhood? What positive and negative associations does your memory of your class identity bring?
- How similar or different is your class identity today? How have your perceptions of others changed along with your class identity?

Review what you know about socio-economic class identities within your congregation, specifically among the families whose children are in the Windows and Mirrors group. The group may include children who feel, or whose parents feel, invisible like the Soji underclass in this session's story. Consider how you can create a safe climate for all the children to expand their awareness of socio-economic class. Resolve to develop children's understanding that people's worth is absolute, no matter their wealth.

- What are your expectations for this session? What do you hope to create by the end of it? What difference do you hope it makes?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post somewhere everyone can see it.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: SOME PEOPLE THINK THEY'RE BETTER THAN OTHERS (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post several sheets of blank newsprint.
- Review Leader Resource 1, Class Identity Descriptions, which offers language and definitions about socio-economic class that may help you facilitate discussion.

Description of Activity

Children learn a working definition of class and explore what it means to be perceived as, or perceive others as, rich, middle class, working class or poor.

Tell the children there are plenty of ways people sometimes think they are better or worse than someone else. Ask them if they can name any of these ways. List their suggestions on newsprint.

Tell the group:

As we can see, there are many ways people compare themselves to others and decide who is better. Today we are going to talk about only the ones that are particularly about wealth and power.

Winnow the list to include only those ideas that are common markers of socio-economic class; eliminate items that are not clearly and specifically about money or power and position. You may end up with some of these:

- Home
- Car
- Clothes
- Cell phone/iPod
- School
- Jobs/employment
- Sports, music or other activities that cost money
- Stores frequented
- Vacations

Now say:

There are some categories people often use to think about who has more money and power and who has less. I am going to say four categories. Think about if you think you fit into any of these. You will not be asked to share what you are thinking.

Read slowly:

Rich, middle class, working class, poor.

Now lead a discussion to bring out what the children think of when they think of each of the four categories. Go down the list of money- and power-related items (home, car, clothes, etc.) and ask, "What kind of home does a rich person have?" "What kind of home does a middle class person have?" and so on.

After some discussion, ask the group:

Now that we are talking about these categories in more detail, think to yourself for a moment. Do you still have the same idea of which category fits you best?

Give a moment for reflection. Then say:

Of course, no one is better than anyone else. But we do see a lot on television and hear a lot in music about these things. Many people believe that being rich is what everyone wants and what is best. How many of us believe this is true?

For those who raise their hands, affirm that this is what everyone learns. Also affirm that though everyone may wish to be rich it does not mean people who are rich are better. Affirm that all human beings, regardless of their social class, are worthy and valuable.

Including All Participants

Social class identity is sensitive and discussions can cause embarrassment. Affirm that although no one need be embarrassed, if people experience it this way, we need to accept that and be compassionate. Explain that we will practice trusting each other to be kind and assume all participate here with good intentions. It may also help to use a chime during this discussion, as a reminder to be quiet so that we can hear ourselves and each other speak.

ACTIVITY 2: BALANCE CHALLENGE — PART I (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Books that can be dropped on the floor
- Optional: Timepiece that displays seconds
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- If you wish, list participants' names on newsprint with room to note their scores for the three challenges in this activity and the same challenges later in the session (Activity 5).
- Collect books that can be dropped on the floor, enough for all participants.

Description of Activity

Invite everyone to stand. Ask them to close their eyes if they are comfortable doing so. Tell them:

When I say, "Go!" raise one foot off the ground and hold it up as long as you can. I will count out loud and when everyone has stepped down, we'll share how long we each were able to do it.

Say, "Go!" and count seconds until all participants have lowered their raised foot. If you are recording scores, note each participant's time on newsprint. Otherwise, ask them to remember their score.

Repeat the exercise, asking participants to lift the other foot.

Repeat again, this time asking participants to lift either foot and balance a book on their heads.

Now ask everyone to think about which position was the most difficult to hold (the position they held for the shortest time). Tell the group:

This time when I say "Go!" try the position that was hardest for you.

Say, "Go!" and count seconds aloud until everyone has stopped, then ask participants to tell you how long they

were able to do it and how this compared to the last time.

Invite the children to keep practicing that position from time to time for the rest of the session to try and hold it longer. Tell them they will be able to try for a better score before the session's end.

Including All Participants

If the group has any children who cannot balance on alternate feet, adapt the activity for a balance challenge all can do. Examples might be balancing a book or a sheet of paper on only three fingers, or holding a pencil or crayon between the nose and the upper lip.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — YAMMANI AND THE SOJI (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Yammani and the Soji](#)" (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker
- Optional: Paper and pencils/pens for all participants

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story, "Yammani and the Soji," a few times. Consider telling it dramatically, rather than reading it from the page. Practice telling it. Claim the storytelling; for example, try adopting different voices for different characters. The stories here are written for a Story for All Ages moment — part performance, part ministry.
- For storytelling, be ritualistic. Create a mood and time that is different from other moments in the session. For example, turn off overhead lights and use lamps. Position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.
- Review the discussion questions. Choose some you think might resonate with this particular group and help them share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own experiences.
- If the group is large, plan to form smaller groups (no less than three participants) for discussion. An adult leader should facilitate each small group.

Description of Activity

Before you begin, ring the chime (or other noisemaker). Make eye contact with each participant.

Read or tell the story. Sound the chime again at the end.

Invite the children to think silently on their own about the story.

Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to help us understand the story from multiple perspectives. Let's find out what one another thought about the story.

Remind them not to assume others share their opinions. Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Encourage the group to listen to each comment and then share some silence. Use the bell or chime to move between speakers.

Begin a discussion by asking participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Then use these questions to facilitate discussion, making sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance:

- Who in the story could be called "invisible?" In what way(s)?
- Who had the most power and status in this story? Who had the least?
- What kind of power and status did Yammani have? (respect for her storytelling talent, authority of wisdom)
- What kind of power did the chief have? (ruler of the society)
- Did the child or the Soji have power? What kind? (When child cried, someone listened; the Soji took responsibility for essential work of the society and could help the child because they paid attention to others and noticed what needed to be done.)
- In the story, what qualities give power and status?
- How is this arrangement similar to our own world? Are there Soji in our world? Who are they?

Invite the children to think about their answers to the next question quietly, to themselves. If children are comfortable doing so, you may invite them to close their eyes and give a full minute for the group to reflect on this question:

- Think about the worlds in which you spend time—our congregation, your school, your

family, your group of friends, or a club you belong to. Are you a Soji, a Yammani, a chief or a child? Why do you feel that way?

Variation

You may wish to provide paper and pencils and invite the group to write their responses to the last question privately.

Thank everyone for sharing.

ACTIVITY 4: THE CLOTHES ON MY BACK (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Garments and packaged food items
- Paper and pencils/pens

Preparation for Activity

- Gather garments and packaged foods that have labels identifying fabrics/ingredients and where the item was made. You will need at least one item for each small group of three to five children.

Description of Activity

Tell the children:

Like the society in the story, ours has many people whose work makes other people's lives more comfortable. People we never notice, like the Soji, do some of the hardest, lowest paid jobs that make our lives better. Sometimes these people are invisible to us because they live far away and do their work in farms or factories where we will never go.

Form small groups of three to five children, each with an adult facilitator. Give each group a sheet of paper and a pencil. Tell them:

I will give each group an item of food or clothing. Use any clues you can find on the item (without opening packages or taking any clothing apart) to list all the people who might have worked to bring the item to us.

Give each group at least one garment or item of packaged food. Allow up to five minutes for groups to generate lists. Walk around and affirm groups' work. You may wish to prompt with these questions:

- I see this item was made in China (Hungary, Guatemala, etc.). What kind of work do you think went on there? Who might have done it?
- How did this item get from its point of origin to us today?

- What exactly is the item made of? Where do those materials come from? Are they made, found, or grown? Where and how?

To conclude, reconvene and ask a volunteer from each group to present some of the formerly "invisible" people who helped create the item they analyzed.

Say:

Of course we have never met these people. Most of us eat food and wear clothes without ever meeting anyone who helped make them for us.

What are some ways we can express our gratitude for the people who make things we use—the invisible hands that help us? How can we affirm that the people who do these jobs are as important and valuable as you or I?

Allow some comments. Affirm that by treating every person we encounter with respect, we convey our gratitude for the things we use that others made, and affirm that every person is equally important, no matter where they live or what kind of work they do.

ACTIVITY 5: BALANCE CHALLENGE — PART II (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Books used in Activity 2, Balance Challenge — Part 1
- Optional: Timepiece that displays seconds
- Optional: Newsprint with scores from Activity 2, markers and tape

Description of Activity

Children re-attempt the balance challenge from Activity 2 and experience their own ability to improve a skill by practice. Help children remember which position they each chose to improve and invite them to remember their best score. Invite everyone to stand and practice that skill for a minute or two.

Then quiet the group. Ask them to close their eyes, if they are comfortable doing so, and try for a new best score at their balance skill when you say, "Go!"

Say, "Go!" Count seconds until all participants have left their balance positions. If you are recording scores, note each participant's time on newsprint. Otherwise, ask volunteers to tell whether they beat their best scores, and by how many seconds.

Point out that in a complicated society where some people seem to have so much more money and power than others, it can be hard to remember that every

single person is exactly as important as everyone else; money and power do not give people extra worth or potential. Say, in your own words:

You can improve your ability to see all people as equal by practicing it, just as you can improve your ability to balance.

Including All Participants

If the group has any children who cannot balance on alternate feet, adapt the activity for a balance challenge all can do, as in Activity 2.

ACTIVITY 6: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — MAKING INVISIBLE HANDS VISIBLE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- A variety of illustrated magazines to cut up
- Blank paper, cut to a size that can be added to the Window/Mirror panels
- Optional: Hand-shaped stickers, or rubber stamps with hand images, and ink pads
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Gather magazines for participants to cut up. Look for ones with "lifestyle" images to which children will relate (in sizes that will fit on the paper you provide) such as travel, sports, architecture, and music magazines or clothing, furniture, or toy catalogs.
- Optional: Obtain small hand-shaped stickers or stamps, from an arts and crafts store or online source. Find small palm-print, multicolored

stickers (Helping Hands mini-stickers) on the [Teacher Created Resources website](http://www.buyteachercreated.com/estore/product/1817) (at www.buyteachercreated.com/estore/product/1817).

- Have materials easily accessible.

Description of Activity

Ask the children to bring their Window/Mirror Panels to work tables. Distribute magazines to cut up. Say, in your own words:

Look through the magazines and find an image that represents something you love having or doing. Then, reflect on the image you chose. Think about the place, activity or item in the picture. Who made it? Who owns those unseen hands? Who are the people not in the picture whose work brings enjoyment to you?

Invite the children to cut out a magazine image of an activity, place or item they enjoy, glue it on blank paper or directly on their Window/Mirror Panel, and indicate the invisible contributors by surrounding the image with drawings, additional magazine cutouts, stamps or stickers (if you have brought them), and/or writing.

You might use these questions to help spark participants' thoughts:

- What work went into building that boat/theater/basketball court/piano?
- What kind of factory is that skateboard/iPod/lipstick/bicycle made in?
- Who might have planted the seeds that grew into the plants that were harvested for that meal?
- How does water get to a swimming pool? Who makes sure the pool is filled with clean water at the right temperature?
- Who mowed that lawn? Who picks up the garbage in that park?

Give the group a two-minute warning so they have time to affix their images to their Window/Mirror panels, clean up materials and store their Window/Mirror panels.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we now have to work together as community to clean the meeting space. First, everyone should clean up their own personal area, put away materials they were using and store their Window/Mirror Panel. Then they may clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until all are done.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: THANK YOU NOTES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Blank cards and envelopes
- Pencils and markers
- Optional: Window/Mirror Panel baskets of arts and crafts materials
- List of staff and volunteers who keep the facility clean, comfortable and secure

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain the names of your congregation's building and maintenance staff, contractors and volunteers. Find out specifically what jobs they do.
- Write names and roles on newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

A very simple way to show respect and appreciation for work done by unseen hands is to thank people who help make our communities run more smoothly. In this activity, the children write thank-you notes to congregational staff and volunteers.

Form small groups of children to write and decorate cards for different people. Brainstorm how they can tailor their cards to the specific tasks performed by each person. Cards could mention how clean the bathrooms are, how comfortable the indoor climate is or how safe the children feel. Direct children to the newsprint for correct spelling of names.

Collect completed cards. Share with the group your plan for distributing the cards. You may wish to engage children in distributing them personally, perhaps during coffee hour. And/or, obtain postal mail addresses of employees or contracted staff from your administration and send cards by postal mail.

Including All Participants

Assist any child who has difficulty writing; some may wish to dictate the text of a card for you to write and then decorate the outside themselves. You may invite some children to pair up with one to write and the other to decorate a card.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?

- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Let him who expects one class of society to prosper in the highest degree, while the other is in distress, try whether one side of the face can smile while the other is pinched. — Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), British clergyman and author

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

We reflected on how we view ourselves in terms of socio-economic class, using simple categories of rich, middle class, working class, and poor. We talked about how we learn to compare people in these ways. We reinforced our first Unitarian Universalist Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person—no matter how much money or power they have.

We focused participants' attention on people and classes they might be unaware of—the unseen workers who grow and prepare our food, make our clothing, build our infrastructure and provide our luxuries. The children heard “Yammani and the Soji,” a story by Kenneth Collier about a society where the very reverent, supposedly religious leaders neglect to value workers they consider to be of a low class.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

How notions of socio-economic class affect your family. How do you perceive yourselves? How does embracing a class identity (e.g., rich, middle class, working class or poor) help your family? How does it hurt you?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

A FAMILY ADVENTURE

Visit a downtown area, a museum, a library, a grocery store, a park or a shopping mall together. Bring notebooks and pens and take some time to identify and acknowledge the invisible hands that make it possible for you to enjoy your excursion. Identify the behind-the-scenes workers such as plumbers, farmers, bakers, masons, etc.

A FAMILY GAME

Play one of the board games, Monopoly or Life, as a family, paying particular attention to the ways the game confers status and power on players. What message is sent when a player achieves or loses wealth or power by the roll of the dice? In what ways are these games like, and unlike, real life?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: JOURNALING — FROM MY CLASS PERSPECTIVE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Blank paper or index cards
- Pencils, pens and markers to share
- Optional: Envelopes for completed papers or cards
- Chime, bell or other sound maker
- Soft music to create a reflective mood, and appropriate music player

Description of Activity

Introduce the idea of journaling as a spiritual practice. A spiritual practice is an activity that helps us be more connected to ourselves and to others and to the divine—to God, if one believes. Journaling offers an opportunity to be reflective in a very attentive way that can help us understand life better. Ask if anyone has kept a journal before. If someone raises their hand, ask if they would be willing to share why and how.

Explain that each person is going to consider their class identity silently. Tell participants that when you sound the chime, they may close their eyes if they are comfortable doing so or focus their gaze away from others.

Sound the chime. Say:

Reflect about your life, in relation to what we did here today. How do you see yourself or your family in terms of wealth and power? Do you have a social class identity? Do you choose it, or have others given it to you? What about your class identity makes you feel proud? Are there things that embarrass you about this identity? Write your reflections, or express them by drawing.

After about five minutes, thank the children for their participation. Tell them their reflections are intended to remain private. Ask them to fold their papers and put them their pockets. Optional: Distribute envelopes and invite participants to seal their reflections inside.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 12: STORY: YAMMANI AND THE SOJI

From [Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults](#) by Kenneth W. Collier (Boston: Skinner House, 2007). Used with permission.

It was the first day of the Festival of Purification. All the rites and ceremonies had been celebrated and the people purified, the stain of the sins of the old year washed away so that they might approach the coming year with pure hearts and clean minds. All the village had gathered at the Great Hall for feasting and dancing—and especially for the stories. This year the great storyteller Yammani had come to their village for the festival. Everyone had gathered—that is, everyone except the Soji clan, who were fit only for necessary but demeaning work such as burying the dead and disposing waste.

The people owned no slaves, for they believed that all must be free to live the lives that the gods had granted them. But there were still certain, distasteful tasks that had to be done, and few people would voluntarily do these things. And so, from time out of mind, the members of the Soji clan had been forced to do them. No one knew any longer why or how it had come about, but the Soji and no one else buried the dead and collected the garbage and spread manure on the fields and did the other unclean work. And because they did these things, no one in the village had anything to do with them—unless to give orders. Most people would not even touch a Soji, or if they did, by accident or through necessity, they would go to the river immediately and wash thoroughly.

That night the feast went on and on until all in the village were satisfied, even the few wanderers who happened to be there. Then the dancing began, with its music and beguilingly graceful movements. But even the most graceful body tires eventually, and in time the music stilled and the dancers sat to rest. Then all eyes turned to Yammani, who had been strangely silent all evening.

"So, Yammani," said the Chief of the Elders, rising and turning to her. "You have come into our village this year, and the time has come for us to hear your story."

"So it has," Yammani replied. "So it has. What story would you have me tell? Shall it be a story of the gods or a story of the people?"

"Tell us a story of how the people may approach the gods, for this is the Festival of Purification."

All evening Yammani had seemed to be brooding, as though she was trying to decide how to tell these people the story they most needed to hear. At this suggestion, her eyes brightened, for she knew what to do.

"There was once a family who lived on their farm in the mountains. Their life was one of hard work, but it was sweet enough. Once every year they came in from the farm to sell their crops and buy the tools and other goods that they needed for the coming year. This particular year, the crops were harvested and the family set out as usual for the town.

"On the way, they were attacked by bandits. All men were murdered and the women and children were taken to be sold as slaves or worse in some far country. The only one to escape was a small child, about six years old, who was hidden by its mother and overlooked in the confusion.

"As it happened, the attack was near a village much like this one. The child, driven by hunger, afraid and crying, made its way into the center where many people had gathered in the market that afternoon. The Chief of the Elders was there, but he was so deeply involved in village affairs that he did not notice one more crying child, even though he passed right by it. Many parents were there and they all heard the child, for what parent does not hear a child crying? Many thought that someone ought to help this poor, frightened child, but all were too busy, too hurried or harried, or had barely enough for their own.

"Toward the end of the day, a Soji came to clean out the stalls of the donkeys and the cattle. When this Soji heard the child crying, he stopped his work to look for it. He held the child and comforted it and dried its tears. And when he found out what had happened, he who had so little and was constantly worried about food for his own children, brought this child into his home and loved it and cared for it and raised it as his own."

In the silence, Yammani turned to the Chief of the Elders and asked, "In this village, who approached the gods?" The Elder cast his eyes to the floor, but Yammani demanded an answer with her burning eyes. Finally the Chief of the Elders whispered, "The Soji."

"Yes. It was the Soji," said Yammani, holding the stillness around her. "It was the Soji." And so saying, she swept out of the village to spend the rest of her life among the Soji.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 12:

LEADER RESOURCE 1: CLASS IDENTITY DESCRIPTIONS

Class is relative status according to income, wealth, power, and/or position. In the U.S. , it is a confusing and slippery topic. Definitions that make sense to one person may not make sense to another. These definitions are offered in hopes of starting a discussion with shared language.

The U.S. has no hard and fast divisions between class groups. Income and wealth are on a spectrum, and most of us move a little up or down the spectrum during our lifetimes. Some people grow up in one class and live as adults in another. For immigrants, there's another layer of confusion, as their class status in their country of origin is often different from their class status in the U.S.

Class Identity Indicators/Markers/Descriptions

Low Income/Poor

Because some low-income people see "poor" as a negatively loaded term, many activists use "low-income" as a more respectful term.

- Rarely have enough money to pay all their bills or cover needs
- Poor-quality housing or homelessness
- Use of government money or charity to pay for necessities, i.e., free lunch or food stamps
- Rare visits to health-care provider
- Move frequently
- Chaotic life
- Varied in race, values, and political beliefs
- Disproportionately people of color, women, and children
- Heads of households may have not graduated from high school

Working Class

- Little or no college education; in particular did not graduate from a four-year college
- Rental housing or one, non-luxury home long saved-for and lived in for decades
- Do physical work or work in very structured environments with strict rules
- More likely to have strong ethnic and religious identities than middle-class people
- Varied in race, culture, values and political beliefs
- Majority white, but compared with the composition of the whole population, they are disproportionately people of color and women.

Middle Class

- College-educated, salaried professionals and managers; doctors; lawyers
- Four-year college graduates, especially at private and/or residential schools, sometimes professional school
- Secure home ownership, often with several moves up to bigger houses in a lifetime
- Independent work environments with little supervision
- More economic security than working-class people but no way to pay bills without working
- Varied in race, culture, values and political beliefs
- Disproportionately white

Rich/Owning Class

- Have enough income that they do not have to work to pay basic bills
- Elite private schools and colleges
- Large inheritances
- Luxuries and international travel
- Own multiple homes
- Varied in culture, values and political beliefs
- Disproportionately white

FIND OUT MORE

The story in this session, "Yammani and the Soji," comes from [Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults](http://www.uuabookstore.org/contributorinfo.cfm?ContribID=296) (at www.uuabookstore.org/contributorinfo.cfm?ContribID=296) by Kenneth W. Collier (Boston : Skinner House, 2007).

SESSION 13: IMAGES OF INJUSTICE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The world of the powerful and that of the powerless... are never divided by a sharp line: everyone has a small part of himself in both. — Vaclav Havel, Czech poet and president
The way a rich nation thinks about its poor will always be convoluted. The richer people become in general, the easier it theoretically becomes for them to share with people who are left out. But the richer people become, the less they naturally stay in touch with the realities of life on the bottom, and the more they naturally prefer to be excited about their own prospects rather than concerned about someone else's. — James Fallows, in a March 19, 2000 New York Times piece, "The Invisible Poor"

Nearly everyone, whatever his actual conduct may be, responds emotionally to the idea of human brotherhood. (Charles) Dickens voiced a code which was and on the whole still is believed in, even by people who violate it. It is difficult otherwise to explain why he could be both read by working people (a thing that has happened to no other novelist of his stature) and buried in Westminster Abbey. — George Orwell

The biggest divider of "haves" from "have nots" is money. Money helps secure our fundamental human needs such as food and clean water, basic healthcare, and a safe and comfortable place to live. A little more money can mean opportunities to better our quality of life.

As Unitarian Universalists, we do not turn away from noticing the gaps that separate "haves" from "have nots." To work against inequity, we know we first have to see it.

Unitarian Charles Dickens saw it. Born poor, he later earned a living as a writer and joined a more comfortable economic class. Dickens used colorful character portraits and complex, often humorous plots, to expose tragic inequities in 19th-century British society. He showed that people at opposite ends of an economic spectrum belong to the same "we," united by our common humanity and destiny—a lesson which resounds with our contemporary Unitarian Universalist Principles.

This session challenges participants: How can we look at our world as Dickens looked at his, take compassionate note of poverty, and see where humanity is needed?

Note: The first activity asks you to introduce the group to Dickens' portrayal of "have-not" children and their lives. While it may be best to prepare to describe and summarize *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol* and perhaps others, we suggest a number of book and video resources in Activity 1 and in the Find Out More section.

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate the value of observing and documenting inequities as a step toward promoting economic justice
- Guide children to observe a society in terms of its "haves" and "have-nots"
- Introduce author Charles Dickens as a prophetic voice from our Unitarian Universalist heritage whose tales presaged the first and seventh Principles we affirm and promote today.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about 19th-century Unitarian writer Charles Dickens
- Learn the terms "haves" and "have-nots" and apply them to Dickens' society and our own
- Explore how contemporary media portray extreme poverty and extreme wealth
- Identify specific ways for awareness of inequities to guide our faithful actions
- Reflect on their own lives, in terms of "abundance" or "scarcity," and express this reflection on their individual Window/Mirror Panels.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Meet Oliver Twist	10
Activity 2: Story — Charles Dickens	5
Activity 3: Victorian Parlor Games	10
Activity 4: Finding the Poor	15
Activity 5: Window/Mirror Panel — Reflection on Abundance and Scarcity	10
Faith in Action: Changing, Like Scrooge	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: A Dickensian Drama	15
Alternate Activity 2: Dickens, the Movie	

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable; light a candle to mark the time as different from your other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply and perhaps repeat a word or phrase to separate you from the activities of the day.

Allow images of extreme economic poverty to pass through your mind. What do you see? Are these scenes you have witnessed, lived, read about or seen depicted in a movie or on television? How do these images make you feel? In what ways do they make you uncomfortable? In what ways do they make you feel inspired or called to make a difference?

Charles Dickens' close, loving observation and warm humor made extreme poverty less painful to recognize and more compelling to fight against. In today's session, how can you help children welcome and respond faithfully to information about the lives of people who are our society's have-nots?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post somewhere everyone can see it.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is

new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: MEET OLIVER TWIST (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy, preferably illustrated, of [Oliver Twist](#) (included in this document) by Charles Dickens
- Optional: Additional books by Charles Dickens, such as *A Christmas Carol*
- Optional: A DVD or videotape of the musical, *Oliver!* or another film based on a story by Charles Dickens, and appropriate equipment

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the [plot](#) (at www.novelguide.com/oliver Twist/novelsummary.html) and [themes](#) (at www.novelguide.com/oliver Twist/themebanalysis.html) of *Oliver Twist*. You may decide to read aloud a brief excerpt to the group; however, it is recommended that you convey the flavor and topics of his writing by description instead. Dickens' language and subtle irony may be difficult for children this age to apprehend, especially out of the context of the entire story.
- You may like to present Dickens's voice by reading aloud his tale, *A Christmas Carol*. Find a version in your local library.
- Optional: If you have the time and the appropriate equipment, show the group a short excerpt from one of the many films based on *Oliver Twist* or *A Christmas Carol*. The song, "Food, Glorious Food!" from *Oliver!* or a clip

from the Walt Disney story of Scrooge McDuck may work. View the film in advance to choose one or two short clips that demonstrate Dickens's focus on the gap between "haves" and "have nots," and his awareness of the humanity that all people share. See film suggestions in Resources, Find Out More.

Description of Activity

Share one or more of Dickens' stories about children who were "have-nots" in 19th-century Britain by describing the story, reading an excerpt aloud, showing a video clip or any combination.

Introduce the phrase "haves and have-nots," which dates from Dickens' time. "Have-nots" are individuals who lack money, wealth and other material resources—as contrasted with "haves."

Process the scenes or stories, using these questions:

- How does Charles Dickens portray the lives of people who are disadvantaged? Does it seem he might have lived in these conditions, himself? How else would he know so much about being poor?
- What are some details that show some people have more money than others? How does Charles Dickens show who are "haves" and who are "have-nots?"
- Where do we see inequities like these in our society? If Dickens were writing a story about today, what do you think he would write about?

Point out that Dickens' time and place was noted for its extremes of wealth and poverty. The people we think of as middle class, somewhere between haves and have-nots, were a much smaller part of 19th-century British society, quite different from the way middle class people—the have-somes?—are the majority in the U.S. today.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — CHARLES DICKENS (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Charles Dickens](#)" (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story a few times. Consider telling it dramatically, rather than reading it from the page. Practice telling it. The stories here are

written for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.

- For storytelling, be ritualistic. Create a mood and a time that is different from other moments in the session. For example, turn overhead lights off and use lamps. Position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.
- Review the discussion questions. Choose some you think might resonate with the group and help these particular children interpret the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Tell the group you will tell them a bit more about Charles Dickens.

Ring the chime (or other noisemaker), make eye contact with each participant and read or tell the story.

Sound the chime (or other noisemaker) again at the end. Use these questions to facilitate discussion. Make sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance.

- What do you think made Charles Dickens want to write about people who were extremely poor, after he was no longer poor himself?
- If you lived at the time of Dickens, and you could read and had time for it, what would you think of his stories? Would you want to read them or not?

Conclude by affirming:

Charles Dickens was a good observer, a creative writer and someone who did not believe poverty should be hidden. He used his talent for writing stories to help everyone see things that were not equal and not fair in his world.

ACTIVITY 3: VICTORIAN PARLOR GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- For Lookabout: A small object
- For Charades: Scrap paper and pencils for all participants, two baskets or bowls, a timepiece with a second hand

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange chairs or identify a carpeted area for children to sit in a circle.
- Optional: For Charades, you may wish to prepare a list of Charles Dickens book and story titles, a list of phrases from the Unitarian

Universalist Principles or a list of names of congregational members and staff for children to act out. If you prepare the phrases, you need not form teams; instead, invite one volunteer at a time to mime for the group.

Description of Activity

Gather in a seated circle. Tell the children:

In Charles Dickens's day, in England, indoor games were popular with all ages. There wasn't much equipment needed so the very wealthy or the very poor might have played the same games. Let's play a few now to experience how Charles Dickens and his family might have spent a Sunday afternoon.

Lead as many games as time allows.

Lookabout

Ask a volunteer to be the hider and give them a small object. The hider shows it to the others, who then leave the room. Ask the hider to hide it someplace the lookers can see it without having to move anything out of the way. Bring others back and invite everyone to look for the item in silence. When they spot the item, they should sit down. The last one looking becomes the next hider.

Forfeits

One person volunteers to be the auctioneer, and leaves the room. Each of the others "forfeits" a special item that belongs to them and sets it in the center of the circle. Then, the auctioneer returns and chooses an item to "sell." In order not to forfeit their item, the owner must claim it and do something the auctioneer or the group requests. Owners may choose to forfeit an item instead of complying with a request; auctioneers might say "Going once, going twice, not sold!" and move on to another item.

To give multiple participants a chance to be the auctioneer, invite each child who reclaims an item to auction off the next item. However, allow the original auctioneer to continue choosing the items for "sale," as they are the only child who will not know who forfeited which item.

Set parameters for requests ahead of time; participants might be asked to sing, dance, balance a book on their head, tell a riddle or a "knock-knock" joke, etc.

Make sure items are returned to their owners after the game.

The Minister's Cat

Choose a participant to go first. Move clockwise around the circle to continue.

The first player describes the minister's cat with an adjective beginning with an "a;" for example, "The minister's cat is an awkward cat." The second player describes the minister's cat with an adjective beginning with a "b," the third uses an adjective beginning with a "c," and so on. When the alphabet is done, start again with "a."

A player is "out" when they cannot think of an adjective or they say one already used.

You can set a pace and time limits by having the group clap on their thighs throughout the game; players who miss their rhythm cue are "out."

Charades

Charades is the quintessential parlor game. Form two teams and ask each to gather on opposite sides of the room. Distribute paper and pencils to all participants and give each team a basket. Instruct each person to write down a common phrase, famous person's name, book title or movie title on paper, fold the paper, and place it in the basket.

Teams alternate turns. For each turn, one team member chooses a paper from the basket and acts out what's on it so their teammates can guess the phrase, person, book title or movie title. Common charades gestures are:

- Miming opening a book or cranking an old-fashioned movie camera
- Fingers held up to indicate the number of words in a phrase
- Fingers placed on forearm to indicate the number of syllables in a word.
- Fingers held up to indicate which word or which syllable will be mimed
- Miming stretching a string to indicate a longer version of a word that has been guessed.

Including All Participants

If the group includes children with vision impairment, do not play Lookabout or Charades.

ACTIVITY 4: FINDING THE POOR (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A variety of current newspapers, news magazines and lifestyle magazines
- Pads of sticky notes, one for each small group
- Optional: Audio/visual media and appropriate equipment

- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Collect newspapers and magazines for participants to explore. You may wish to identify with sticky notes the publications participants may cut up for a collage in Activity 5, Window/Mirror Panel.
- If you plan to include audio/visual media, obtain and text needed equipment.

Description of Activity

Form groups of three to five children at work tables. Assign each adult facilitator several groups to assist. Give each group a pad of sticky notes and an assortment of newspapers and magazines.

Say:

Today, we can get more information about the world than anyone in Charles Dickens's time could. And our world certainly has extreme poverty. But do we get information about the people living in poverty? Maybe we need another Charles Dickens today.

In your groups, look in the newspapers and magazines (and/or, listen to television, radio, and/or Internet news). Mark with sticky notes (or write notes about) the information you find about people who do not have enough money to live safe and healthy lives.

Observe the details you read, see or hear about people's lives in extreme poverty.

Give groups five minutes. Then re-gather and let each group present one or two of their findings and/or respond to these questions:

- Was it easy or difficult to find images/stories of very poor people?
- What details told you when you found something about people in poverty?
- How true do you think the images/stories are? Why?

You may like to post blank newsprint and use it to record the details they mention on newsprint.

When all the small groups have presented, lead a discussion with the whole group:

- How do you feel when you take time to examine fully these pictures of economic want?
- What do you feel you could do?
- What do you feel you ought to do?

- What do you feel resistant to? What do you NOT want to do?

Affirm all responses. One goal is to help participants articulate the discomfort that can result from seeing others in real distress. Use the discomfort that emerges to help children understand we are all connected to all human experience. Conclude by saying something like:

When you have an opportunity to be of service or to share what you have, remember that there is real human need and you can make a difference.

Including All Participants

Include non-sighted participants by adding audio/visual media. Obtain the equipment to provide news programming from television, radio or streaming internet for this activity. Assign a mixed group of sighted and non-sighted participants to monitor audio/visual news for reports of extreme poverty.

ACTIVITY 5: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — REFLECTION ON ABUNDANCE AND SCARCITY (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Collect illustrated magazines for participants to cut up. If needed, purchase stickers with images children may want to use in this activity.
- Have materials easily accessible.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to bring their Window/Mirror Panels to work tables. Distribute Window/Mirror Panel basket(s) and pre-cut paper if you have prepared some.

Say:

Let's imagine Charles Dickens is coming to take a look at our Window/Mirror Panels. Remember, he was a very observant person. Would he find us to be a community of abundance or scarcity? Would he see extreme wealth, extreme need, something in between or a mixture?

Decorate a piece for your panel that expresses who you are in terms of abundance (having more than you need) or scarcity (not having enough). For your illustration or collage, you can include pictures of real things, drawings (either abstract or representational), words or any combination. Feel free to be comical and exaggerate your wealth or your poverty, as Dickens often did.

Walk around and assist. Some participants may need to engage verbally before they find their direction in this relatively unstructured assignment.

You may want to offer that the shiny materials in the Window/Mirror Panel baskets might be one way to convey "wealth."

Give the group a two-minute warning so they have time to complete their projects, affix them to their Window/Mirror panels, clean up and store their panels.

CLOSING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, Namaste

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we now have to work together as community to clean the meeting space. First, everyone should clean up their own personal area, put away materials they were using and store their Window/Mirror Panel. Then they may clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until all are done.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1 Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: CHANGING, LIKE SCROOGE

Materials for Activity

- Optional: A book or film version of *A Christmas Carol*
- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Find out about charity projects that will accept new or gently used items donated by children. Possibilities include homeless shelters for families and children, organizations serving children in foster care, international aid organizations and Gulf Coast relief organizations still working to resettle families. If possible, obtain printed information about the project you will ask the group to support.
- Prepare a note to parents that describes this project and explains when and where children may bring items to donate. In your note, ask for the help you will need to collect, sort and deliver items.

Description of Activity

Read aloud part of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* or show some or all of a film version (see Find Out More).

Tell the children:

Ebenezer Scrooge saw that his greed and selfishness were directly responsible for the Cratchit family's hunger and poor health. Dickens was NOT saying we cause others' misery when we treat ourselves well. Instead, he was using Scrooge as an extreme example, to teach us something: When we take more than we need, there is likely someone nearby who needs that extra bit, or more.

Present the charity project you have selected. Describe the new or gently used books, socks, scarves, toys or other items you would like children to consider donating to a child who may need them more. Explain that children should consult with their parents before giving away any belongings.

Including All Participants

The group may include children who cannot or do not donate "extra" items. Plan a donation process that does not put any child on the spot. Avoid conveying any judgment about children's contributions.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

The world of the powerful and that of the powerless... are never divided by a sharp line: everyone has a small part of himself in both. — Vaclav Havel, Czech poet and president

The way a rich nation thinks about its poor will always be convoluted. The richer people become in general, the easier it theoretically becomes for them to share with people who are left out. But the richer people become, the less they naturally stay in touch with the realities of life on the bottom, and the more they naturally prefer to be excited about their own prospects rather than concerned about someone else's. — James Fallows, in a March 19, 2000 New York Times piece, "The Invisible Poor"

Nearly everyone, whatever his actual conduct may be, responds emotionally to the idea of human brotherhood. (Charles) Dickens voiced a code which was and on the whole still is believed in, even by people who violate it. It is

difficult otherwise to explain why he could be both read by working people (a thing that has happened to no other novelist of his stature) and buried in Westminster Abbey. — George Orwell

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

The children became familiar with Charles Dickens, a Unitarian for part of his life. They heard an excerpt from his novel, *Oliver Twist*, and explored his technique of painting detailed, sometimes comical portraits of the extremely wealthy and the extremely poor in order to illustrate our common humanity. We investigated current newspapers and magazines for representations of people's lives in extreme poverty today. Children worked on their Window/Mirror Panels. We encouraged them to use comical exaggeration, as Dickens did, to represent themselves as a "have," a "have not" or someone who is a bit of both.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

Charles Dickens's portrayals of the very rich and the very poor. Imagine that Dickens could observe your community. Would he find extremes of wealth and poverty? Are there people who lack basic necessities, such as food, clothing, shelter, and health care? Talk frankly about how you as a family perceive yourselves on a continuum of extreme wealth to extreme lack.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

A FAMILY DISCOVERY

If any family members are unfamiliar with him, introduce them to Charles Dickens's character, Ebenezer Scrooge. Read *A Christmas Carol* together or view a film version. After that Scrooge is comical rather than frightening for two reasons: One, because most people can recognize themselves in him; and two, because in the end, he changes, practically exploding with love, compassion and charity.

Talk about times when you have been greedy, and how you might have shared what you had with someone who needed it more. Invite your child and other family members to share their stories. Allow that to be greedy sometimes is human. Try to create an environment in which everyone feels safe talking honestly about times they were not their best selves. Everyone deserves to explore their own actions without risking others' judgment.

A FAMILY GAME

Teach the terms "abundance" and "scarcity" to the entire family. On a family outing, when watching a television program together or on another occasion, take note of the presence of one condition or the other. Share your findings. You may have some interesting conversations,

especially if people disagree about definitions of excess and need.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: A DICKENSIAN DRAMA (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper and pencils for small groups to use
- Optional: Simple props suggesting Victorian-era wealth or poverty, such as costume jewelry, dress-up garments and accessories, ragged garments, or food items from a play kitchen
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Identify an open area for small groups to present improvised skits.

Description of Activity

Form small groups of three to seven participants. Tell them that each group will create a Dickens-style skit that illustrates extremes of wealth and poverty. Allow that some group members may opt out of performing the skit as long as enough others are willing to perform and each non-performing child participates meaningfully (as a planner/writer, props person, director, etc.).

Invite groups to choose a situation and setting where the very rich and the very poor would naturally encounter one another. You may wish to suggest or assign settings—for example, a playground, a restaurant, a bookstore, a shopping mall, a church or a public park.

Give groups five minutes to plan their skits. Sound the chime when time is up, and reconvene the entire group. Invite groups, one at a time, to present their skits.

After each skit, guide the entire group to process:

- What were the poor people like in the skits?
- What were the rich people like?
- In what ways were the poor and the rich people alike? What did they have in common?
- How realistic or exaggerated were your performances? What did it feel like to pretend to be these characters?
- What can we learn, and how can our faithful actions be guided, by noticing and responding to inequities in our society?

Including All Participants

Position children with vision or hearing disabilities where they can best experience the movie.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: DICKENS, THE MOVIE

Materials for Activity

- DVD or videotape of a film based on a Charles Dickens story, and appropriate equipment

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a film to show; see Find Out More for an annotated list. Purchase, rent or borrow a DVD or videotape. Preview the film to make sure it is appropriate for the group. If you like, select the excerpt(s) you want to show.
- Adapt the suggested discussion questions.
- Make sure to leave time for the group to process their viewing experience immediately after the film.

Description of Activity

Gather the group. Explain that one reason modern storytellers—movie-makers—like to retell Charles Dickens's stories is that they present a sharp view of economic injustice and at the same time they convey the humanity we all share. If you feel it necessary, offer a context for the story the group will see. Then show the film or excerpt(s).

Afterward, invite volunteers to sum up the plot. Pay attention to their version(s) of the story for clues to what most impressed them.

Adapt the following questions to lead a discussion.

- Where do you see extreme poverty in the film?
- Where do you see excessive wealth?
- Are the poor always good? Are the rich always bad?
- What are some human qualities that Dickens seems to admire?
 - Who in the movie demonstrates those qualities? How?
 - Which of those qualities are also qualities we value in our Unitarian Universalist faith? How do we show them?
- If you wanted to tell this story about our current society, who or what might be in your movie?

Including All Participants

Position children with vision or hearing disabilities where they can best experience the movie.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 13: STORY: CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens was born in England in 1812, about 200 years ago. He first earned a living as an assistant in a lawyer's office, then as a newspaper reporter. He was still a young man when he became famous for the funny essays he wrote from his own imagination. At first, no one knew who he was, though, because he used a pseudonym, "Boz."

His essays were so popular that Dickens quickly started publishing stories using his own name. Some of them, such as *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations* and *A Christmas Carol*, are still told in books and movies today.

(Leader: You may wish to pause and invite the group to name Dickens's stories they have read or have seen in a film.)

In London, in Dickens's day, many children did not have the chance to go to school. Some lived on the streets and worked or begged for pennies to buy food. Some were so poor they did not have clothes or shoes to wear to school, never mind money for paper, pens, ink or books. Charles Dickens, himself, knew about that sort of poverty. When he was a child, his family was not well off. One time, his father was put in jail because he owed someone money. That year, Charles was 12. He worked at a shoe polish factory instead of going to school.

When Charles Dickens was a father with children of his own, some people started a few special schools in London to educate poor children. Dickens gave some of his money to support these Ragged Schools. He used to say the poorest children needed a chance to be clean, too, and the schools should provide warm water for them to wash and take baths.

By writing stories and sometimes charging money to tell his stories aloud, Dickens earned plenty of money. He shared his earnings to help provide food, housing, education and hospitals for people who could not afford them. He also believed that people who read his stories might discover more about the needs of others. They might be inspired to help others and work to change society for the better.

By 1865, Charles Dickens had written more novels, including *David Copperfield*, which told some of the story of his own life. Then, Charles Dickens, his friend Ellen Ternan and Ellen's mother were all hurt in a big train accident. He helped some of the passengers escape from the wreckage. He lived only five more years—to the day—after that.

Dickens was not the only person of his time who cared about children or the poor. But he played a special role. His popular books influenced politicians, the wealthy and all readers who had the means and the care to help. He helped make the world a better place and his stories still teach us today.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 13: STORY: EXCERPTS FROM OLIVER TWIST

The full text of Charles Dickens's 1838 novel, *Oliver Twist*, can be obtained online at [The Literature Network](#)'s website. The novel is copyright-free and in the public domain.

Explain that Oliver Twist is a fictional character Charles Dickens created to tell a story. The story begins, just after Oliver is born, with his mother's death in a workhouse for the poor. Oliver's fortunes take him into worlds of economic need that wealthier English people never saw.

From Chapter II, "Treats of Oliver Twist's growth, education, and board"

The hungry and destitute situation of the infant orphan was duly reported by the workhouse authorities to the parish authorities. The parish authorities inquired with dignity of the workhouse authorities, whether there was no female then domiciled in "the house" who was in a situation to impart to Oliver Twist, the consolation and nourishment of which he stood in need. The workhouse authorities replied with humility, that there was not. Upon this the parish authorities magnanimously and humanely resolved, that Oliver should be "farmed," or, in other words, that he should be dispatched to a branch-workhouse some three miles off, where twenty or thirty other juvenile offenders against the poor-laws, rolled about the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing, under the parental superintendence of an elderly female, who received the culprits at and for the consideration of sevenpence-halfpenny per small head per week. Sevenpence-halfpenny's worth per week is a good round diet for a child; a great deal may be got for sevenpence-halfpenny, quite enough to overload its stomach, and make it uncomfortable. The elderly female was a woman of wisdom and experience; she knew what was good for children; and she had a very accurate perception of what was good for herself. So, she appropriated the greater part of the weekly stipend to her own use, and consigned the rising parochial generation to even a shorter allowance than was originally provided for them. Thereby finding in the lowest depth a deeper still; and proving herself a very great experimental philosopher.

Everybody knows the story of another experimental philosopher who had a great theory about a horse being able to live without eating, and who demonstrated it so well, that he got his own horse down to a straw a day, and would unquestionably have rendered him a very spirited and rampacious animal on nothing at all, if he

had not died, four-and-twenty hours before he was to have had his first comfortable bait of air. Unfortunately for the experimental philosophy of the female to whose protecting care Oliver Twist was delivered over, a similar result usually attended the operation of her system; for at the very moment when a child had contrived to exist upon the smallest possible portion of the weakest possible food, it did perversely happen in eight and a half cases out of ten, either that it sickened from want and cold, or fell into the fire from neglect, or got half-smothered by accident; in any one of which cases, the miserable little being was usually summoned into another world, and there gathered to the fathers it had never known in this.

Occasionally, when there was some more than usually interesting inquest upon a parish child who had been overlooked in turning up a bedstead, or inadvertently scalded to death when there happened to be a washing—though the latter accident was very scarce, anything approaching to a washing being of rare occurrence in the farm—the jury would take it into their heads to ask troublesome questions, or the parishioners would rebelliously affix their signatures to a remonstrance. But these impertinences were speedily checked by the evidence of the surgeon, and the testimony of the beadle; the former of whom had always opened the body and found nothing inside (which was very probable indeed), and the latter of whom invariably swore whatever the parish wanted; which was very self-devotional. Besides, the board made periodical pilgrimages to the farm, and always sent the beadle the day before, to say they were going. The children were neat and clean to behold, when they went; and what more would the people have!

From Chapter V, "Oliver mingles with new associates. Going to a funeral for the first time, he forms an unfavourable notion of his master's business."

Oliver, being left to himself in the undertaker's shop, set the lamp down on a workman's bench, and gazed timidly about him with a feeling of awe and dread, which many people a good deal older than he, will be at no loss to understand. An unfinished coffin on black tressels, which stood in the middle of the shop, looked so gloomy and death-like that a cold tremble came over him, every time his eyes wandered in the direction of the dismal object: from which he almost expected to see some frightful form slowly rear its head, to drive him mad with terror. Against the wall were ranged, in regular array, a long row of elm boards cut into the same shape: looking in the dim light, like high-shouldered ghosts with their hands in their breeches-pockets. Coffin-plates, elm-chips, bright-headed nails, and shreds of black cloth, lay

scattered on the floor; and the wall behind the counter was ornamented with a lively representation of two mutes in very stiff neckcloths, on duty at a large private door, with a hearse drawn by four black steeds, approaching in the distance. The shop was close and hot. The atmosphere seemed tainted with the smell of coffins. The recess beneath the counter in which his flock mattress was thrust looked like a grave.

... Nor were these the only dismal feelings which depressed Oliver. He was alone in a strange place; and we all know how chilled and desolate the best of us will sometimes feel in such a situation. The boy had no friends to care for, or to care for him. The regret of no recent separation was fresh in his mind; the absence of no loved and well-remembered face sank heavily into his heart. But his heart was heavy, notwithstanding; and he wished, as he crept into his narrow bed, that that were his coffin, and that he could be lain in a calm and lasting sleep in the church-yard ground, with the tall grass waving gently above his head, and the sound of the old deep bell to soothe him in his sleep.

Oliver was awakened in the morning, by a loud kicking at the outside of the shop-door: which before he could huddle on his clothes, was repeated, in an angry and impetuous manner, about twenty-five times. When he began to undo the chain, the legs desisted, and a voice began.

"Open the door, will yer?" cried the voice which belonged to the legs which had kicked at the door.

"I will, directly, sir," replied Oliver: undoing the chain, and turning the key.

"I suppose yer the new boy, ain't yer?" said the voice through the keyhole.

"Yes, sir," replied Oliver. "How old are yer?" inquired the voice.

"Ten, sir," replied Oliver.

"Then I'll whop yer when I get in," said the voice; "you just see if I don't, that's all, my work'us brat!" and having made this obliging promise, the voice began to whistle.

Oliver had been too often subjected to the process to which the very expressive monosyllable just recorded bears reference, to entertain the smallest doubt that the owner of the voice, whoever he might be, would redeem his pledge, most honourably. He drew back the bolts with a trembling hand, and opened the door.

For a second or two, Oliver glanced up the street, and down the street, and over the way: impressed with the belief that the unknown, who had addressed him through the keyhole, had walked a few paces off, to warm himself; for nobody did he see but a big charity-

boy, sitting on a post in front of the house, eating a slice of bread and butter: which he cut into wedges, the size of his mouth, with a clasp knife, and then consumed with great dexterity.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Oliver at length: seeing that no other visitor made his appearance; "did you knock?"

"I kicked," replied the charity-boy.

"Did you want a coffin, sir?" inquired Oliver, innocently.

At this the charity-boy looked monstrous fierce; and said that Oliver would want one before long, if he cut jokes with his superiors in that way.

"Yer don't know who I am, I suppose, Work'us?" said the charity-boy, in continuation: descending from the top of the post, meanwhile, with edifying gravity.

"No, sir," rejoined Oliver.

"I'm Mister Noah Claypole," said the charity-boy, "and you're under me. Take down the shutters, yer idle young ruffian!" With this, Mr. Claypole administered a kick to Oliver, and entered the shop with a dignified air, which did him great credit. It is difficult for a large-headed, small-eyed youth, of lumbering make and heavy countenance, to look dignified under any circumstances; but it is more especially so, when superadded to these personal attractions are a red nose and yellow smalls.

Oliver, having taken down the shutters, and broken a pane of glass in his efforts to stagger away beneath the weight of the first one to a small court at the side of the house in which they were kept during the day, was graciously assisted by Noah: who having consoled him with the assurance that "he'd catch it," condescended to help him. Mr. Sowerberry came down soon after. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Sowerberry appeared. Oliver having "caught it," in fulfillment of Noah's prediction, followed that young gentleman down the stairs to breakfast.

"Come near the fire, Noah," said Charlotte. "I saved a nice little bit of bacon for you from master's breakfast. Oliver, shut that door at Mister Noah's back, and take them bits that I've put out on the cover of the bread-pan. There's your tea; take it away to that box, and drink it there, and make haste, for they'll want you to mind the shop. D'ye hear?"

"D'ye hear, Work'us?" said Noah Claypole.

"Lor, Noah!" said Charlotte, "what a rum creature you are! Why don't you let the boy alone?"

"Let him alone!" said Noah. "Why everybody lets him alone enough, for the matter of that. Neither his father nor his mother will ever interfere with him. All his relations let him have his own way pretty well. Eh, Charlotte? He! he! he!"

"Oh, you queer soul!" said Charlotte, bursting into a hearty laugh, in which she was joined by Noah; after which they both looked scornfully at poor Oliver Twist, as he sat shivering on the box in the coldest corner of the room, and ate the stale pieces which had been specially reserved for him.

... They walked on, for some time, through the most crowded and densely inhabited part of the town; and then, striking down a narrow street more dirty and miserable than any they had yet passed through, paused to look for the house which was the object of their search. The houses on either side were high and large, but very old, and tenanted by people of the poorest class: as their neglected appearance would have sufficiently denoted, without the concurrent testimony afforded by the squalid looks of the few men and women who, with folded arms and bodies half doubled, occasionally skulked along. A great many of the tenements had shop-fronts; but these were fast closed, and mouldering away; only the upper rooms being inhabited. Some houses which had become insecure from age and decay, were prevented from falling into the street, by huge beams of wood reared against the walls, and firmly planted in the road; but even these crazy dens seemed to have been selected as the nightly haunts of some houseless wretches, for many of the rough boards which supplied the place of door and window, were wrenched from their positions, to afford an aperture wide enough for the passage of a human body. The kennel was stagnant and filthy. The very rats, which here and there lay putrefying in its rotteness, were hideous with famine.

There was neither knocker nor bell-handle at the open door where Oliver and his master stopped; so, groping his way cautiously through the dark passage, and bidding Oliver keep close to him and not be afraid, the undertaker mounted to the top of the first flight of stairs. Stumbling against a door on the landing, he rapped at it with his knuckles.

It was opened by a young girl of thirteen or fourteen. The undertaker at once saw enough of what the room contained, to know it was the apartment to which he had been directed. He stepped in; Oliver followed him.

There was no fire in the room; but a man was crouching, mechanically, over the empty stove. An old woman, too, had drawn a low stool to the cold hearth, and was sitting beside him. There were some ragged children in another corner; and in a small recess, opposite the door, there lay upon the ground, something covered with an old blanket. Oliver shuddered as he cast his eyes towards the place, and crept involuntarily closer to his master; for though it was covered up, the boy felt that it was a corpse.

The man's face was thin and very pale; his hair and beard were grizzly; his eyes were bloodshot. The old woman's face was wrinkled; her two remaining teeth protruded over her under lip; and her eyes were bright and piercing. Oliver was afraid to look at either her or the man. They seemed so like the rats he had seen outside.

FIND OUT MORE

Charles Dickens

A friend and ally of his era's Unitarian thinkers both in England and the U.S. (for example, William Ellery Channing and Ralph Waldo Emerson), Dickens for decades attended a Unitarian church in London. However, he had been raised in the Anglican church and belonged to an Anglican church at the end of his life. Find a detailed [biography by Wesley Hromatko](http://www.25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/charlesdickens.html) (at www.25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/charlesdickens.html) on the [Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biography](http://www.25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/) (at www.25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/) website.

A 2005 *UU World* article, "[Ebenezer Scrooge's Conversion](http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/2273.shtml)," (at www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/2273.shtml) by Michael Timko, describes how Charles Dickens's story, *A Christmas Carol*, exemplified 19th-century Unitarianism.

The website [Charles Dickens online](http://www.dickenslit.com/) (at www.dickenslit.com/) has biographical information and many other resources.

One source of information for the story "Charles Dickens" was the [Hibbert Assembly web site](http://www.hibbert-assembly.org.uk/index.html) (at www.hibbert-assembly.org.uk/index.html), supported by the Hibbert Trust, founded in 1847 under the will of Unitarian Robert Hibbert. In addition to extensive children's worship and religious education resources to study [the life and works of Dickens](http://www.hibbert-assembly.org.uk/dickens/index.htm) (at www.hibbert-assembly.org.uk/dickens/index.htm), find resources on other noted Unitarians and spiritual and religious topics.

Dickens Literature Resources

On David Perdue's [Charles Dickens Page](http://www.fidnet.com/~dap1955/dickens/carol.html) (at www.fidnet.com/~dap1955/dickens/carol.html), find a plot summary, copies of the original illustrations and more details from the 1843 publication of *A Christmas Carol*. The website also provides extensive information and links to other resources for *Oliver Twist* and many other Dickens works. [SparkNote](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/summary.html) (at www.sparknotes.com/lit/oliver/summary.html)s offers a plot summary for *Oliver Twist*.

Dickens on Film

Adaptations of *A Christmas Carol* available on DVD include the [1970 musical film, Scrooge](http://www.amazon.com/Scrooge-Albert-Finney/dp/B0000AQS5D), (at www.amazon.com/Scrooge-Albert-Finney/dp/B0000AQS5D) starring Albert Finney, and 1951's [Scrooge](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Scrooge-Alastair-Sim/dp/B00004D0CE) (at www.amazon.co.uk/Scrooge-Alastair-Sim/dp/B00004D0CE), starring Alistair Sim. A 2005 Disney DVD, *Classic Cartoon Favorites, vol. 9: Classic Holiday Stories*, presents "Mickey's Christmas Carol," in which three Christmas spirits teach Scrooge McDuck to mend his miserly ways.

David Lean directed the first film version of *Oliver Twist* in 1948; Roman Polanski directed [another film version](http://www.sonypictures.com/homevideo/olivertwist/index.html) (at www.sonypictures.com/homevideo/olivertwist/index.html) in 2005. [Oliver! , the musical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver!_(film)) (at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver!_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver!_(film))), premiered in London's West End in 1960 and on Broadway in 1964. Directed on film by Sir Carol Reed, [Oliver!](http://www.amazon.com/Oliver-Mark-Lester/dp/076781326X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=dvd&qid=1228163102&sr=1-1) (at www.amazon.com/Oliver-Mark-Lester/dp/076781326X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=dvd&qid=1228163102&sr=1-1) won the 1968 Academy Award for Best Picture. It was revived at the Royal Drury Lane Theatre in London in 2008.

"The Invisible Poor"

In a [March, 2000 article](http://www.nytimes.com/library/magazine/home/20000319mag-poverty.html) (at www.nytimes.com/library/magazine/home/20000319mag-poverty.html) in *New York Times Magazine*, James Fallows addresses the discomfort economically comfortable Americans feel in the presence of people who are poor. He writes, in part:

Because I had a long commute I often stayed late to wait out the traffic. Around 9 p.m. I'd hear a knock on the office door. A woman in her 60s, wearing a stiff-fabric vest with the logo of an office-cleaning company, stepped into the room to empty my wastebasket and collect Mountain Dew cans from the recycling bin. She would say something I could barely understand, and I would nod back. It seemed that she was Russian. She walked as if her feet hurt. She did not have the bounce of the people I saw during the day. She kept making her rounds until about midnight.

Eventually I started leaving the office to go home as soon as I heard her a few doors down. I was willing to read articles about the travails of the working poor or the adjustment problems of older, unskilled immigrants. I just didn't want to watch her limp.

Hurricane Katrina

Many emergency relief workers and volunteers who went to the Gulf Coast after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita bore witness to poverty that had preceded the natural disaster. Their reports brought the economic inequities to national attention. Writing in a *Vanderbilt University* magazine in 2005 ([American needs to face the "invisible poor"](http://media.vanderbiltorbis.com/media/storage/paper983/news/2005/11/09/UndefinedSection/America.Needs.To.Face.The.invisible.Poor-2472120.shtml) (at media.vanderbiltorbis.com/media/storage/paper983/news/2005/11/09/UndefinedSection/America.Needs.To.Face.The.invisible.Poor-2472120.shtml)), J. Mark White shared what he had seen in Washington Parish, Louisiana .

We spent a lot of time clearing brush and fallen trees from people's yards, straining all kinds of muscles many of us had long forgotten. The greatest strain came, however, in visits to particularly poor areas on Monday morning of the trip.

At one residence, the home of the Burch family, the ceiling and roof were infested with brown recluse spiders, the floor of the house in some places revealed the crawl space below, and the roof dangled precariously off the back porch in disrepair. It was difficult to tell if the house had been affected by the hurricane, since there was so much prior damage. The 4-year-old boy of the house ran around the yard dodging broken glass, a pig pen, loose chickens, and a dead rat.... The list of appalling details goes on and on.

In meeting the Burch family, I faced the poverty of which I frequently speak and write. I had seen poverty before; I had driven through poor neighborhoods in Chicago, Boston, New York, and poor areas of rural Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia . But I had never stopped and talked to the people, played with the kids, and witnessed the daily devastation that is their lives.

In a September, 2005 article, "[Katrina Exposes the 'Invisible Poor,'](#)" (at www.naacpldf.org/content.aspx?article=674) on the NAACP Legal Defense Fund web site, Theodore M. Shaw writes:

The nation watched as New Orleans was evacuated—or so we thought. Those who could

left by the tens and hundreds of thousands. Those who could not—the "invisible" poor—stayed. As the hurricane hit, most people thought that a relatively small number of people who could not or would not leave were safely ensconced in the Superdome to ride out the storm. The ugly reality, that those who were too poor to own cars and who had no place and no means to go numbered in the hundreds of thousands, only became apparent as New Orleans descended into a hellish nightmare that most Americans like to think could happen anywhere but here. Yet it did.

As the faces of the "invisible" poor were revealed, they were overwhelmingly black. Once again, race exploded openly into the national conscience.

Social Reform Photography

"The poor are always with us and almost always visible, yet not always seen," writes Vicki Goldberg in a [1995 New York Times article](#) (at query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=990CE1D9163EF93AA35757C0A963958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all) about contemporary exhibitions of social reform photographs by Jacob Riis, Dorothea Lange and others.

Find a [slide show of Jacob Riis photographs](#) (at riishine.culturalstudios.org/slideshow/riis_slideshow.html) and other multimedia resources on the web site, [Documenting "The Other Half": The Social Reform Photography of Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine](#) (at riishine.culturalstudios.org/slideshow/riis_slideshow.html), developed by Kay Davis at the University of Virginia in 2000.

SESSION 14: ALL WORK HAS HONOR

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*I wear garments touched by hands from all over
the world
35% cotton, 65% polyester, the journey begins
in Central America
In the cotton fields of El Salvador
In a province soaked in blood,
Pesticide-sprayed workers toil in a broiling sun...
Third world women toil doing piece work to
Sears specifications
For three dollars a day...
And I go to the Sears department store where I
buy my blouse
On sale for 20% discount
Are my hands clean? — Bernice Reagon*

Some Unitarian Universalists work in professional occupations, such as teacher, physician, attorney, engineer or social worker. Others work in factories; in service roles such as waiter, custodian or repair person; on farms; or at telephone or computer desk jobs. Still others may own their own businesses or earn a living in the arts. We all make choices about our jobs based on our interests, abilities, opportunities and needs.

Our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people tells us everyone has the right to dignity of work—that is, the ability to earn a decent livelihood; a work environment that supports one's safety, health and self-respect; and appreciation for the value one's work brings to us all. Yet, as a society we tend to value some jobs more than others—even though we know that when a person's work is disrespected, undervalued or taken for granted, both they and their community suffer.

This session teaches the concept of dignity of work and makes children aware of their own work, whatever it consists of. They hear a story, "Beautiful Hands," about a child ashamed of her work-worn hands until a teacher articulates how her hands show the beauty of physical work. Children refine their understanding of dignity of work by examining and discussing photographs of children at labor. In Faith in Action, they engage in an advocacy project that promotes a fair minimum wage and universal dignity of work.

GOALS

This session will:

- Affirm that all kinds of work that contribute to society deserve appreciation and respect, that is, dignity of work
- Connect our first Unitarian Universalist Principle with the dignity of work we believe all people deserve
- Guide participants to conceive of themselves as workers, articulate what their work is and reflect on how they want their work to be supported and received.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify the work they do at this time in their lives
- Learn the phrase "dignity of work" and identify its components, which include safe working conditions, others' respect and fair compensation
- Explore ways child labor is antithetical to dignity of work and learn about anti-child labor protests at the start of the 20th century
- Understand the guidance of our first Unitarian Universalist Principle to consider all individuals' work as equally valuable and deserving of respect.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: What Is My Work?	5
Activity 2: Story — Beautiful Hands	10
Activity 3: When Children Work	20
Activity 4: Window/Mirror Panel — A Circle of Workers	15
Faith in Action: Let Justice Roll	20
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Animal Labor Strike — Click, Clack, Moo!	10
Alternate Activity 2: Singing Labor Songs	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable; light a candle to mark the time as different from your other activities. Close your

eyes and breathe deeply and perhaps repeat a word or phrase to separate you from the activities of the day.

After opening your eyes, consider:

- How do you feel about your work? Do you find it meaningful or rewarding?
- Think about the communities to which you belong: your congregation, the families at your children's school(s), your neighborhood, your town. How well does each community celebrate the contributions of everyone whose work makes the community possible?
- What jobs have you held? What were some considerations you thought about when choosing a job? Did you feel pressure to pick a certain kind of work due to familial, societal or financial pressures?
- Do you believe people can find meaning and success and achieve dignity of work in a wide range of employment? Why or why not?
- What are your expectations for this session? What do you hope is created as a result of it? What difference do you hope it makes?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: Bell , chime or other sound instrument

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post somewhere everyone can see it.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life," or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else who is musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life.

If you choose not to sing, use a bell to signal the group to still themselves for another moment of silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS MY WORK? (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Photos or items that represent your work

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare to speak for one or two minutes about your current work or a job you have done in the past.
- Optional: Gather photos of yourself at work, a tool you use in your work or something you made as part of your work.
- Post several sheets of blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Gather the children. Tell them the group's work today will be to learn about work. If you are employed at a job, tell the group about your work in general terms: your job title, where you do your work, your general duties, how you get to work, what kind of clothing you wear, and what tools or materials you use. If you do not currently hold a job, choose one or two past jobs to describe. Be sure to include one or two things that you enjoy(ed) about your work. Show and/or pass around any photos or work-related items you have brought.

Now ask the children to tell you about the jobs they do. Write these down as the children call them out. You may choose to have children call them out, "popcorn" style, or raise their hands. Children often hear from adults that their job is going to school, so expect this response. Prompt to help children broaden their thinking and reflect on their own work. Responsibilities for children this age might include care of siblings, a pet or house plants. Some may have jobs such as keeping track of their own borrowed library books or DVDs, cleaning their bedrooms or play areas or making their own breakfast or lunch.

You might ask:

- Who here has chores you are asked to do at home?
- What other things do you do to help at home, even if they are not assigned chores?
- What's the difference between "fun" and "work?"
- Can work be fun?
- Can work be unpaid? Besides money, what is the difference between work we are paid to do and work we are not paid to do?

Ask one last time if the list of jobs is complete. Leave it posted for reference throughout the session.

Including All Participants

Repeat each item as you write it down so children who cannot read or see the material on the newsprint can participate fully.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — BEAUTIFUL HANDS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Beautiful Hands](#)" (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story, "Beautiful Hands," a few times. Consider telling it dramatically, rather than reading it from the page. Practice telling it. Claim the storytelling; for example, try adopting different voices for different characters. The stories here are written for a Story for All Ages moment—part performance, part ministry.
- For storytelling, be ritualistic. Create a mood and a time that is different from other moments in the session. For example, turn overhead lights

off and use lamps. Position yourself where all can see and hear you. You may wish to wear a storytelling shawl.

- Review the discussion questions. Choose some you think might resonate with this particular group and help them relate the story to their own experiences.

Description of Activity

Ring the chime (or other noisemaker), make eye contact with each participant and read or tell the story.

Sound the chime (or other noisemaker) again at the end. Invite participants to think silently on their own about the story. Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to help us understand the story from multiple perspectives. Let's find out what one another thought about the story.

Remind them not to assume others think or feel the same way. Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Encourage the group to listen to each comment and then share some silence. Use the bell or chime to move between speakers.

Invite participants to retell the story, briefly, in their own words. What children recall and relay tells you what they found most meaningful or memorable. Then, use these questions to facilitate discussion, making sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance:

- At the beginning of the story, why was May embarrassed about her hands?
- Do you think May was the only person in her class who did work at home? What jobs do you think her classmates might have done at home? (Invite children to find ideas on the list of their own jobs they made in Activity 1.)
- How would you feel if you were May?
- Was May's work at home important? What would have happened if she did not do her work?
- Who appreciated May's work? Does appreciation matter?
- Would it have made any difference if May earned money for her work? How would it be different?
- Think about the people you know. Do you know someone whose hands are rough from work?

- May really liked to draw. She signed up for an extra class and drew a picture that wasn't a school assignment. Would you say art work is one of her jobs? Why or why not?
- If May was in this group or in your class at school, do you think you would be friends with her? Why or why not?

Conclude by affirming:

It is nice when others respect the work we do and understand its value, but it is most important that we, ourselves, believe our work is meaningful and valuable. No matter what kind of work we do, we must give ourselves the credit we deserve for doing a job and doing it well.

Thank everyone for sharing.

ACTIVITY 3: WHEN CHILDREN WORK (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Images of children at work ([Leader Resources](#) (included in this document) 1-6)

Preparation for Activity

- Review Leader Resources 1-6, Child Labor Photographs. Print images to post and/or to pass around the room. Keep at hand the information from the leader resources about what the children are doing in the individual photographs.
- Obtain more images from books or online. On The History Place website, find a captioned gallery of child labor [documentary images by Lewis Hine](#) (at www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/about.htm).
- If the group is very large, plan to form smaller groups of at least five children. Arrange to have enough adults to facilitate each small group. Make multiple copies of each photo image.

Description of Activity

Tell the children:

In an ideal world, everyone would feel valued, successful and self-respecting about the work they do. However, too often workplaces are not safe. People are not treated with dignity. People are not paid enough money for what they do.

A long time ago, the laws in our country allowed children to skip school and work instead. Plenty

of children did this to afford clothes and food to survive. A hundred years ago, almost two million children in the United States had jobs. They worked in factories, on farms, in shops, and at jobs like shining people's shoes, washing dishes, and mending clothes.

This is against the law in our country today, but there are many other places in the world where children work instead of going to school. We are going to look at some pictures of children at jobs.

Pass the photos around the room or invite children to come look at the photos you have posted. Allow some conversation. Then, looking at photos together, one at a time, ask:

- What are the children making or doing in the photo?
- What kind of industry do you think they work in?
- Besides the fact that you might expect to see them in school instead of working, what might be some challenges they find in this particular workplace? How hard would the work be? How safe? How comfortable physically?
- In what ways might this child experience "dignity of work"? In what ways not?

Allow the group(s) at least five minutes to explore all the photographs in detail. After children have had a chance to speculate about the photos, share the information you have about individual images.

Then say:

About a hundred years ago, some children in the U.S. took action against the long hours they worked, the difficult and unsafe conditions of their jobs, and the low pay. Some of them wanted to go to school. They joined adults in a movement to improve dignity of work for all workers in the U.S. They marched and protested for better wages and safer, healthier places to work and jobs to do.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- What do you think workers should do if they do not find dignity of work?
- What can an individual worker do?
- What can a group of workers do?
- What can people other than the workers themselves do to help?

Affirm all reasonable (non-violent, ethical, justice-motivated) suggestions. To conclude, say in your own words:

Dignity of work should be universal, but it is not. As Unitarian Universalists, we have a responsibility to honor our own dignity of work and give others the respect and appreciation their work deserves, too.

ACTIVITY 4: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — A CIRCLE OF WORKERS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Blank paper, cut in strips
- A variety of illustrated magazines to cut up
- Optional: Paint and paintbrushes, pastels or other art media
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors (including left-hand scissors)
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon and a variety of magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Gather old magazines for participants to cut up, with images of people of all ages engaged in a variety of work. Jobs need not be paid; look for images of people clearly fulfilling a responsibility. Magazines such as [Highlights](http://www.highlightskids.com/default.asp) (at www.highlightskids.com/default.asp), [National Geographic Explorer](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngexplorer/index.html) (at [magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngexplorer/index.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngexplorer/index.html)) and [Time for Kids](http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/) (at www.timeforkids.com/TFK/) are likely to have images that suggest work children can do.
- Cut strips of paper approximately 2" x 11" for all participants. (If participants are working on very

large Window/Mirror Panels, use larger and longer strips of paper.)

- Make a sample Mobius strip: Hold strip of paper in a straight line with both hands. Twist one end, reversing which corner is up and which is down. Then bring the two ends of the strip together and tape them closed.
- Have materials easily accessible.

Description of Activity

Participants will cut out images of work to decorate a never-ending Mobius strip, representing the equal respect and dignity that all kinds of work deserve. Show the group the sample Mobius strip you made. Explain how it is made. Make another sample to demonstrate.

Ask the children to bring their Window/Mirror Panels to work tables. Distribute magazines to cut up, blank strips of paper and Window/Mirror Panel basket(s). Tell them they will decorate their strips first, and turn them into Mobius strips later. Say:

We are learning today how to use our first Unitarian Universalist Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, in thinking about work—the work adults do to support themselves and their families and the work you do. Each of you will make a Mobius strip to represent many kinds of work and to remind us that we value all work and believe everyone has a right to dignity of work.

Invite the children to find and cut out images from the magazines that represent people at work, and use them to decorate both sides of their paper strip. They may also draw images to suggest a variety of different kinds of work, using materials from the Window/Mirror basket, and add any finishing touches they wish.

Encourage children to decorate both sides of their strip of paper; once they twist it into a Mobius strip, both sides will show.

When a few participants have their strips decorated, demonstrate making a Mobius strip with one that is finished.

Give the group a two-minute warning so they have time to affix their strips to their Window/Mirror Panels, clean up materials and store their Window/Mirror Panels. If any participants' strips need to dry before they can be twisted, taped and attached to panels, ask them to remain and complete this work and put materials away after the Closing.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we now have to work together as community to clean the meeting space. First, everyone should clean up their own personal area, put away materials they were using and store their Window/Mirror Panel. Then they may clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until all are done.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute

"thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: LET JUSTICE ROLL (20 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Visit the web site of [Let Justice Roll](http://www.letjusticeroll.org/) (at www.letjusticeroll.org/), an economic justice partner of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, or contact the [UUSC](http://www.uusc.org/) (at www.uusc.org/). Find updates about the "\$10 in 2010" campaign to raise the federal minimum wage and identify actions the group can take to support a higher minimum wage.

Description of Activity

Tell the children that your congregation, through the UUA, is part of a national movement to improve dignity of work for people who work at low-paying jobs. The UUA, along with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), has joined the [Let Justice Roll Living Wage Campaign](http://www.letjusticeroll.org/) (at www.letjusticeroll.org/), a nonpartisan coalition of more than ninety faith and community organizations that support raising the federal minimum wage to \$10 an hour in 2010.

Explain that "minimum wage" is the least amount per hour an employer is allowed to pay a worker. Mention enterprises most children will know that pay minimum wage, such as supermarkets, fast food restaurants and gas stations. Say:

Minimum wage laws are intended to make sure a full-time worker can support themselves and, if necessary, family members. But the minimum wages are in fact so low that many full-time workers cannot earn enough money to take good care of themselves and their families.

In June 2008, the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly passed an Action of Immediate Witness to [Raise the Federal Minimum Wage to \\$10 in 2010](http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/115810.shtml) (at www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/115810.shtml). The action called on congregational leaders to educate themselves about poverty and a minimum standard of living, mark "Living Wage Days" with worship services (January 10-11, 2009), and sign a Faith Leaders Letter to Congress which stated:

An adequate minimum wage is a bedrock moral value for our nation ... For too long, the minimum wage has not provided even a minimally

adequate standard of living ... A job should keep you out of poverty, not keep you in it.

You may wish to share these stories from the [UUSC web site](http://www.uusc.org/content/fedwageraise2008) (at www.uusc.org/content/fedwageraise2008):

Celeste Cook cares for disabled people in their Atlanta homes, preparing meals and medicines, giving baths, and wheeling clients into fresh air on sunny days. She loves her job. It's her passion to make sure that those she cares for live in comfort and dignity.

But Celeste cannot afford health insurance for herself or her family members because she is paid just \$5.15 per hour, the state minimum wage. As a healthcare worker in Georgia, she is not covered by the federal minimum wage.

In downtown Cleveland, Rodney Campbell gets up at 5 o'clock every morning to clean office buildings for \$6.55 per hour. He makes the floors shine and the bathrooms sparkle—and he takes pride in his work. But when Rodney goes home, he struggles to provide for his children, sometimes relying on food banks to put dinner on the table. He worries about his kids' future.

Celeste and Rodney are not alone. One out of every four U.S. workers—more than 28 million workers between the ages of 18 and 64—works in a job that pays minimum wage or less.

If you have chosen an action for the group to do, tell them what it is—for example, making posters or writing letters to congressional leaders or local government representatives. Distribute materials and explain what children will do. Or, lead a brainstorming session to elicit children's ideas for taking action at a later date.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did children make with the activities and/or the central ideas? How could you tell that was occurring?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

I wear garments touched by hands from all over the world

35% cotton, 65% polyester, the journey begins in Central America

In the cotton fields of El Salvador

In a province soaked in blood,

Pesticide-sprayed workers toil in a broiling sun...

Third world women toil doing piece work to Sears specifications

For three dollars a day...

And I go to the Sears department store where I buy my blouse

On sale for 20% discount

Are my hands clean? — Bernice Reagon

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

Our Unitarian Universalist belief in every person's inherent worth and dignity tells us that everyone, no matter their occupation, has a right to dignity of work—the ability to earn a livelihood (a living wage), a work environment that supports their self-respect and the respect of others who acknowledge their work as bringing value to society. Yet, as a society we tend to value some work more than other work. When someone's work is disrespected, undervalued or taken for granted, both that person and their community suffer.

Children identified their own work, whatever it consists of, and worked on a Window/Mirror Panel to express the universal dignity of work. They heard a story, "Beautiful Hands," about a child ashamed of her work-worn hands, until a teacher articulates how her hands show the beauty of physical work. Children saw and talked about photographs of children at labor. Faith in Action engaged them in an advocacy project promoting a fair minimum wage and universal dignity of work.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . Talk about ...

What do the adults in your family do for their jobs? Tell your child about jobs you have had—what you did, where you worked, what tools you used, what you wore. Tell some things you liked about your jobs including ways you were successful, satisfied and appreciated, financially and in less tangible ways.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Research careers with your child in bookstores and libraries, online and by guiding your child to talk with a

variety of working adults about what they do. Find out about the training needed for jobs which may exist when your child reaches adulthood. A federal government web site, [Kids.gov](http://www.kids.gov/k_5/k_5_careers.shtml) (at www.kids.gov/k_5/k_5_careers.shtml), spotlights an array of jobs and includes annotated links to career-oriented web sites for children. The Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium (Washington State) offers [career discovery workshops](http://www.pdza.org/page.php?id=50) (at www.pdza.org/page.php?id=50), described online.

A FAMILY GAME

Play Monopoly or Life as a family, noticing the ways the game confers status and power on players. When a player achieves or loses wealth or power by a roll of the dice, what message is implied? How are these games like, and unlike, real life?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ANIMAL LABOR STRIKE — CLICK, CLACK, MOO! (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- The picture book *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type* by Doreen Cronin (New York : Simon and Schuster, 2000)

Description of Activity

The book, *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type*, is written for younger children, but provides a jumping-off point to discuss the labor strike as a tool to make working conditions more fair. On the [Ohio Employer's Law Blog](http://ohioemploymentlaw.blogspot.com/2007/05/lessons-from-childrens-lit.html) (at ohioemploymentlaw.blogspot.com/2007/05/lessons-from-childrens-lit.html), Jon Hyman writes:

Farmer Brown's cows and hens decide that they need electric blankets to keep warm at night in the barn. They deliver their demand to Farmer Brown on notes typed by the cows on a typewriter. When Farmer Brown refuses their demands, they go on strike, withholding milk and eggs. Ultimately, in a deal brokered by the duck, Farmer Brown agrees to accept the cows' typewriter in exchange for electric blankets. The labor dispute ends, and the cows and hens go back to producing milk and eggs. The deal backfires on Farmer Brown, though, as Duck absconds with the typewriter and leverages it into a diving board for the pond.

Read the story aloud to the group. Lead them to analyze:

- Why were the cows and hens dissatisfied?
- How was their dignity of work compromised?

- What method did they choose to speak out? Why was their effort successful?

Including All Participants

You may, for your own reasons, wish to use this activity to speak up for working animals. Be mindful, the group may include children from vegan households or whose parents are activists for humane treatment of farm animals. Tell the children *Click, Clack, Moo!* points out, in a silly way, that farm animals are, in fact, workers that do not have a voice about their working conditions.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: SINGING LABOR SONGS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the songbook, *Rise Up Singing!*
- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Choose one or two songs from the Work and Labor section of the songbook to teach the group. Write lyrics on newsprint and post.
- You may wish to invite someone who is musical to play piano or guitar and/or lead the singing.

Description of Activity

U.S. and international labor movements have popularized many songs that are easy to teach and sing. Choose one or two to teach the group.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 14: STORY: BEAUTIFUL HANDS

By Barb Pitman, in *uu&me! Collected Stories*, edited by Betsy Hill Williams (Boston: Skinner House, 2003).

She was bewildered. Bewildered and ashamed. The other hands in the classroom were smooth with nails cleanly cut. Hands raised to answer the teacher's question. Hands engaged in the age-old art of spit-ball forming. Hands writing on the blackboard. They all seemed so new, so unused, so beautiful.

May hid her hands. In kindergarten she hid them under the table. In first grade she hid them under the table. In second grade, third grade, and even fourth grade, she hid her hands in this way. Winters were always easier, thanks to Grandma's handmade mittens. Colorful and bold, decorated with baby ducks and later, with purple and blue stripes, the mittens meant May felt no shame walking to school carrying books and lunch for herself and her sister.

Exclamations like, "Oh, how beautiful," and "I wish my grandma would make some mittens with stripes," stirred up hope inside May and for a brief moment she would tell herself she was one of them, for they would forget her hands and remember instead her beautiful mittens.

Back in the classroom, May would catch someone looking in her direction and shove her hands back under the desk. She never raised her hand, never applauded with excitement. She wrote in hurried strokes of the pencil so as not to have her hands in full view for very long.

One day she was walking through the school hallway, with her hands shoved into her pants pockets. In the hallway that day, she saw a poster for an art class. It was a special art class, it was going to be taught by her favorite teacher, and each student was going to be able to learn to draw and paint. She signed her name on the poster and all the way home, she thought about the kind of art project she might make. Her mom worked all night long while she watched her younger sister, and she thought maybe Mom would like a pretty picture to look at when she got home from work. She also thought about how tired Mom was during the day, trying to sleep while the rest of the world was awake, and May thought she might make a "Do-not-disturb!" sign for the front door. And then she remembered her beautiful mittens, and thought she might draw a pattern to send to Grandma so Grandma could make new mittens, even some for her sister.

As soon as May got home, she sat her sister, Kate, at the kitchen table for a snack. As she did the breakfast

dishes and tried to keep Kate quiet so they would not wake up Mom, May thought of all the wonderful art projects she could try. May was so busy planning her project, she forgot about her hands. She finished the dishes, got out the mop to clean up the milk that didn't quite make it to Kate's mouth, and chopped potatoes for dinner. Mom was up by now, and was rushing out the door to get to work. Mom kissed May on the head, told the girls she loved them so-o-o-o much, and went off to work.

May helped Kate with her bath, tucked her into bed, made up Mom's bed, and vacuumed the front room. After doing her homework, May went to bed and dreamt of being a famous artist. Everyone in town marveled at her beautiful paintings, she won awards from her school, and even got to give a speech in front of the governor.

When May woke up, she jumped out of bed, excited about the art class. As she braided Kate's hair, she saw her hands and suddenly realized she could not paint or draw without the other children seeing her hands.

She could not get Kate ready fast enough, and practically pulled her all the way to school. May ran to the hallway to cross her name off the poster. It was not there. The poster and sign-up sheet were gone. She went to class and told her teacher she needed to drop out of the art class. The teacher said she would have to go to the art class and tell the art teacher that she was no longer interested in the class.

When May went to the art class that day, she tried to get the teacher's attention, but there were so many other children in the class and such a lot of noise that May decided she would wait until after the class to talk to the art teacher.

After the teacher got the class to quiet down, she talked a little bit about drawing things, how important it was to draw what you saw, even if no one else saw the same thing. She said they would eventually draw their pets and maybe even a family member, but that their first lesson was to draw their own hand. May was stunned, and tried her very best not to cry in front of the other children. Though there were many things she wanted to draw, her hand was certainly not one of them. Still, she did her best though she was ashamed to even look at the rough redness around her nails. She had little bumps on her palms, and the lines in her hands reminded her of Grandma's hands. May finished her drawing and left as quickly as possible, even before the teacher had collected the hand pictures and told them what they would be doing the next day.

The following morning, May was determined to tell the art teacher she could not take the class anymore. When she got to art class, the teacher talked about all the

wonderful hand drawings she had gathered from their desks the day before. The art teacher laughed about the hand drawing that showed pink-and purple-dotted fingernails. She laughed about the hand that had diamond rings on every finger, and four diamond rings on the thumb. Then she held up a hand drawing that was familiar to May. It showed a small hand, with fingers curled toward the palm as if holding a precious stone or delicate butterfly. May shoved her hands under the desk, and wanted to crawl under there to hide along with her hands.

The teacher said, "Of all the hand drawings I saw yesterday, this is the one I could not stop looking at. This is an interesting drawing, a beautiful drawing, for it shows a hand that is not idle. It shows a hand that has worked hard. The fingers are curved, as if to protect something fragile." She walked to May's desk, and asked May, "Could I please see your hand?" May did not want to show her hand, but being accustomed to obeying teachers, she pulled her hand out from under the desk. The teacher took May's hand into her own.

"Now," said the teacher, "as I hold in my own hand the hand from this drawing, I can see that I was not wrong. It is a hand that has caressed little kittens and held small daisies. It is a hand that has washed many dishes,

folded laundry, given baths, and combed hair. Yes, this is a very interesting hand. It is a beautiful hand."

With that, the teacher went back and started talking about that afternoon's drawing assignment.

After class, May ran all the way home, dragging Kate part of the way, and carrying her the rest of the way. She put the drawing on Mom's bed, and with her rough, red hands, she washed the dishes, fixed dinner, bathed Kate, and finished her homework. As she lay down in bed, she noticed that the glow from the moon was shining on her hands. They look different tonight.

May thought of the many dishes and counters she washed when Mom was sleeping. She thought of the times she had bathed her sister and cleaned up the house when Mom was at work. She thought about the way her palm fit over Kate's cheek, and how wonderful her sister's skin felt to her hand. She remembered the tender kisses Mommy gave her hands when she came home from work in the dark hours of the early morning. She would hear her mommy say, "Thank you, May, for all your help. I could not do this without you."

Just as the little girl with the red, rough hands was starting to nod off, she looked one more time at her hands. And she smiled, for they really were most interesting hands.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 14:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: CHILD LABOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Girl carrying tile. Used with permission of [UNICEF](#).



WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 14: LEADER RESOURCE 2: CHILD LABOR PHOTOGRAPHS

[Tobacco farming in Mexico](#). By Robert Romano. Used with permission.



WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 14: LEADER RESOURCE 3: CHILD LABOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Coffee-picking in Kenya (1 of 3). By Robert Romano. Used with permission.



WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 14: LEADER RESOURCE 4: CHILD LABOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Coffee-picking in Kenya (2 of 3). By Robert Romano. Used with permission.



WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 14: LEADER RESOURCE 5: CHILD LABOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Coffee-picking in Kenya (3 of 3). By Robert Romano. Used with permission.



WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 14: LEADER RESOURCE 6: CHILD LABOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Children making rugs. Used with permission of the U.S. Peace Corps.



FIND OUT MORE

"Are My Hands Clean?"

The song, "Are My Hands Clean?", written by Bernice Johnson Reagon, is excerpted as a quotation to introduce this session. Reagon performed the song at Carnegie Hall in 1987 with her a capella group, Sweet Honey in the Rock. [Hear the song](http://www.ladyslipper.org/rel/v2_viewupc.php?storenr=53&upc=01896401062) (at www.ladyslipper.org/rel/v2_viewupc.php?storenr=53&upc=01896401062) on the Ladyslipper Music web site.

"Beautiful Hands"

The story, "Beautiful Hands," by Barb Pitman, appears in *uu&me! Collected Stories*, edited by Betsy Hill Williams (Boston : Skinner House, 2003). The book offers 26 stories culled from *uu&me!*, a children's magazine published by the Church of the Larger Fellowship.

The Worst Jobs in America

A July 30, 2007, [Time magazine article](http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1648055,00.html) (at www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1648055,00.html) details some of the health hazards of supermarket workers, nail salon technicians, and others who work for minimum wage.

Child Labor and Protests, Then and Now

The photographs Lewis Hine took at the start of the 20th century remain the definitive documentation of industrial age and rural child labor in the U.S. During the Depression, Dorothea Lange photographed children at work as part of a federal project documenting poverty.

Children have sometimes joined the fight to end exploitative child labor practices. The Library of Congress has images of children engaged in protest, including one from a 1909 labor march.

A book for older grade-school children is *Kids on Strike!* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999), illustrated with photographs, including some by Lewis Hine. According to the Barnes & Noble web site, the book presents:

... children who stood up for their rights against powerful company owners, from a "turn-out" in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1836 led by eleven-year-old Harriet Hanson to the dramatic strike of 1912 in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

The New Deal Network, an online resource, offers a [1933 account from The Nation](http://newdeal.feri.org/texts/document_details.cfm?DocumentID=238) (at newdeal.feri.org/texts/document_details.cfm?DocumentID=238) magazine of male, female, and child workers' plight and effective labor strikes—including "baby strikers (children)"—in Pennsylvania .

Internationally, child labor remains a significant problem.

A 2004 documentary about child labor and slavery, *Stolen Childhoods*, has a web site with comprehensive [links to anti-child labor organizations](http://www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/2005/02/individual_acti.php) (at www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/2005/02/individual_acti.php), a resource for exploring how to help as a donor, an advocate, a fair trade/child labor-free consumer, or a teacher or youth leader who can get children involved.

SESSION 15: PRAYER IS A PLACE TO GROW A SOUL

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Oh God, if there is a God, save my soul, if I have a soul. — Joseph Ernest Renan, French philosopher and historian

Prayer helps us to identify our motives, our pains, our cravings, and joys. As we come to know ourselves, we are changed beyond selfishness into harmony with those Presences from which we spring and to which we return. Prayer is not a request to shape the future to our desires, but a way for us to offer ourselves to the Larger Process. Martin Luther said that we pray not to instruct God but rather to instruct ourselves. — Vern Barnett, minister emeritus, Center for Religious Experience and Study (Kansas City, Missouri)

Christians pray, Buddhists pray, Jews pray, Muslims pray, humanists pray, atheists pray, agnostics pray, philosophers pray, the righteous pray, the unrighteous pray, some Unitarian Universalists pray and some do not, in the formal sense, but I believe, in the broader sense, Unitarian Universalists, of all the people I know, pray hard and long. We are praying people. Emerson, remember, called prayer "the soul's sincere desire." I've never heard it put better. — Rev. Thomas Mikelson, in a January 7, 2002 sermon at the First Church in Cambridge (Massachusetts)

Prayer is a constant in human experience across eras and cultures, with petitions, lamentations, gratitude and requests for intercession expressed in a great variety of words, art and physical postures. Prayer can be our window to whatever energy, life force or deity we believe exists beyond our selves. It can also provide a mirror to examine our deepest personal and spiritual needs and concerns.

Unitarian Universalism is theologically inclusive, and thus embraces many concepts and practices of prayer. Some would identify viewing a sunset or attending a peace march as a prayer experience. Some find meaning in traditional prayer words and rituals from our Jewish and Christian faith heritages or another faith tradition in which they were raised. Some use Buddhist- or Hindu-rooted meditation as prayer. Some Unitarian

Universalists make deep spiritual connections yet see no role for prayer in their lives.

This session presents a definition of prayer that young Unitarian Universalists can use whether they embrace humanism, atheism, deism or theism or their beliefs have yet to settle. In keeping with the window/mirror theme, participants respectfully experience prayer practices which may be new to them and explore or imagine a role for prayer in their own lives.

Note: You may wish to use the six prayer figure silhouettes by the late religious educator Reverend Barbara Marshman (Leader Resource 1) to decorate your meeting space for this session.

Prayer Stations — Which Prayer Practices?

The practices you present in Activity 4, Prayer Stations, will depend on the adult volunteers available to demonstrate, explain and lead practices with which they themselves are familiar. The Description of Activity section offers Unitarian Universalist interpretations of a variety of prayer practices from diverse faith and cultural traditions, including our own. Adapt them as you are comfortable. Present only those for which you have a true practitioner handy. Do not attempt to provide a crash course in world religions. Rather, aim to widen children's awareness of prayer practices and offer tools they might adopt in their own lives of contemplation.

If possible, arrange to use additional rooms, so adults staffing the prayer stations can play quiet music, lead singing or chanting, or have children spread out to stretch their bodies without disrupting another prayer station.

To give prayer stations more time, consider including Activity 5, Window/Mirror Panel, as a prayer station. You might set up Window/Mirror Panel work tables as the "last stop" for all the children. A co-leader can lead the Activity 5 discussion with individuals or small groups as they arrive to begin work on their panels.

Anticipate participant discomfort with unfamiliar or difficult practices. Some children may express discomfort with inappropriate giggling or mockery. It may help to remind the group of your Windows and Mirrors covenant and/or to go over Handout 2, Respecting Others' Spiritual Practices, at the start of the prayer station activity. Identify an adult whose sole task is to take aside any child who behaves disrespectfully. Most children this age will be able to take a short break to

collect themselves and then rejoin the activity at another prayer station.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce prayer as a personal religious practice Unitarian Universalist faith can guide and support in a variety of forms
- Explore prayer's purposes of thanks, regret and hope
- Present a variety of prayer practices used in different faiths and cultures, including our own
- Teach participants how to respectfully explore unfamiliar prayer practices
- Lead participants to reflect on why, how, and to what or whom they do—or might—pray.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand a Unitarian Universalism definition of prayer
- Explore purposes and meanings of prayer through a Unitarian Universalist lens
- Experience several prayer practices and rituals, expanding their cultural literacy about various faiths' and cultures' practices
- Reflect on how various approaches to prayer do or might serve their own spiritual needs and their search for truth and meaning
- Demonstrate respect for the religious practices of others.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Letter to Nancy	5
Activity 2: Praying Thanks, Regret and Hope	5
Activity 3: Finger Labyrinth	5

Activity 4: Prayer Stations 25

Activity 5: Window/Mirror Panel — Reflections of Prayer 10

Faith in Action: Building and Walking a Labyrinth

Closing 5

Alternate Activity 1: Story — Finding God in Silence 10

Alternate Activity 2: Journaling 10

Alternate Activity 3: Sun Salutations 20

Alternative Activity 4: Body Prayer Library 15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In private or in public, in solitude or with others, prayer is a highly personal experience. Whether you pray regularly, have never prayed or have prayed or meditated before, you may find this session challenging and revealing, as you guide children to explore prayer as a window into the human experience of the divine, and a mirror into our hopes, regrets and gratitude.

Whether you are atheist, humanist, deist or theist, or your beliefs have yet to settle, consider your relationship with prayer. If you do pray, why do you? To whom or what do you pray? What expectations do you bring to your prayers? What prayer practices have been satisfying and meaningful for you?

Whether or not you pray, consider the practices or rituals you use to draw strength during difficult times, celebrate life's joys or explore answers to life's questions. Are your prayer practices traditional ones that follow common rules, or have you blended or invented to personalize your practices? Do you use different practices for different needs? Do you use these practices alone, or with others? In silence or with sound? With movement or by being still? Consider how you could describe your own practices to children in the session.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print out Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket. Cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life" or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life. If you choose not to sing, ask the group to still themselves for another moment of silence. Sound the bell or other instrument to begin and end a short silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — LETTER TO NANCY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copy of the story "[Letter to Nancy](#) (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story. Try adopting a different voice for Nancy's minister.
- Create an atmosphere to set this time apart from other activities of the session. Turn off overhead lights and use lamps. You might don a storytelling shawl to enhance the moment and help you claim the storytelling.

Description of Activity

Gather the children to hear a story. Ask the group, "Who has an idea what 'prayer' is?" Allow some responses. Then ask, "I wonder if any of you have prayed or seen someone pray?" Allow a few volunteers to share.

Say:

Unitarian Universalists do pray, though not all of us pray, and we certainly do not have to pray to be part of our religion.

We share beliefs about many things. We believe in every person's worth, the importance of love and justice, and the value and power of working together in our communities. Yet, we may believe quite different things about an energy, spirit or god that may exist which is bigger than us and our daily actions and thoughts. We may each have our own ideas about whether such a force exists, what it might be like, whether it is outside us or something inside us, whether it listens to us, and what it can do. Have you thought about some of your ideas about that?

Whatever our beliefs, many of us seek this greater force through prayer or meditation. That's what our session is about today.

Ring the chime, bell or other noisemaker and make eye contact with each participant. Tell the story.

At the conclusion, ring the chime again to signify the end of the story. Ask the children to sum up the three purposes for which the minister suggested Nancy could use prayer. Affirm gratitude, express regret and articulate a hope.

ACTIVITY 2: PRAYING THANKS, REGRET AND HOPE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Paper and pencils for small groups

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether to conduct this discussion as a whole group or in small groups. If you prefer small groups, each will need an adult facilitator and you should reserve a few minutes to reconvene the entire group to share.
- On a sheet of newsprint, write the title "Why Do People Pray?" Post this sheet where you can write on it.
- Optional: On another sheet, draw two columns, "Once" and "Regularly." Set this sheet aside.

Description of Activity

Gather the group where all can see the posted newsprint. If using small groups, form groups at a good enough distance so conversations will not disrupt one another. Provide each group an adult facilitator and a pen/pencil and paper to record ideas.

Invite the children to share their ideas about why people might pray or meditate. Begin with the possible purposes of prayer or meditation. To start, suggest the

purposes identified in the story, "Letter to Nancy"—to express thanks, regret or hope.

Then, elicit possible goals of praying or meditation. Ask, "What do people hope to get when they pray or meditate?" / "What do you think people expect as a result of their prayers or meditation?" Another helpful prompt question might be, "What do people mean when they say something is 'the answer to my prayers'?"

Affirm all answers and sum them up on newsprint or paper. Goals and purposes of prayer may overlap; it is not important to make a distinction. If these are not mentioned, you may like to add:

- a sense of personal or spiritual strength
- an experience of wonder and awe
- access to deep creativity
- a feeling of inner peace or contentment
- the courage to be an activist
- the comfort of solitude
- a feeling of connection or community with others.

If you are using small groups, give groups at least five minutes. Then gather the entire group. On newsprint, compile responses to the question "Why Do People Pray?" You might like to have each group contribute one idea at a time, to avoid the first group "covering all the bases" and leaving little for subsequent groups to add.

For Further Discussion

If you have time, you may wish to explore differences between praying or meditating once and using a regular prayer practice. Post the sheet of newsprint with two columns ("Once" / "Regularly") to record comments. You might ask:

What might make someone who has never prayed before decide to try it one time?

How do you, or would you, know if your prayer or meditation was successful? How can you tell what the results are? What if you did not see or feel a result right away?

What might be a reason someone might decide to meditate every morning? Say a prayer each night, like Nancy in the story we heard? Light a candle and say a particular blessing every Friday night?

Another avenue to explore, if you have time, is children's reactions to the story "Letter to Nancy." You might ask:

How do you think Nancy got started with prayers, in the first place?

I wonder why she asked her minister about praying?

Do you think the minister left out anything important in his advice? What other thoughts about praying would you share with Nancy, if she were your little sister or your friend?

Thank everyone for their observations and sharing.

Including All Participants

Adults who are present to lead a prayer station (Activity 4) may be included in this activity. However, make sure adult voices do not lead or overpower the children's explorations and comments.

ACTIVITY 3: FINGER LABYRINTH (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Finger Labyrinth](#) (included in this document), for all participants
- Quiet music and music player
- Timepiece

Preparation for Activity

- Find quiet, instrumental music to play during a three-minute meditation.
- Copy Handout 1 for all participants. Make some extra; children may wish to use them in Activity 5, Window/Mirror Panel — Reflections of Prayer.
- Dim the lights.

Description of Activity

Ask children to sit comfortably, not touching anyone else, in a position they can maintain for about five minutes. Distribute the handout. Say, "Meditation is a kind of prayer. We are going to do a silent meditation using a finger labyrinth."

Speaking slowly and clearly, say:

People from many religious traditions walk labyrinths to meditate. Some labyrinths are large and complex and take hours to walk. Some are made of stone walls. Some are made of flowers or hedges. Some are sketched on the ground or made of tile.

Here we have our own, personal labyrinth we can "walk" with a finger. You may want to trace the path in a slow, deliberate, relaxing way. You might journey back and forth to the center of the labyrinth several times. You could try it with the hand you do not usually use to write or throw, for more of a challenge in concentrating.

Tell the group you will sound the chime (or begin playing the music) to start the meditation time and sound the chime again (or fade out the music) to end it.

Say:

If you wish, focus your meditation on thanks, regret or hope. Or, allow your mind to find its own focus for your meditation.

Ring the chime (or, begin playing the music).

Allow three minutes for children to walk their labyrinths in silence. Then, sound the chime or fade out the music. Invite responses to these questions:

What was it like to use the finger labyrinth?

What feelings did you notice while you were using the labyrinth?

What did you see? Hear? Feel?

How easy or hard was it to be silent?

How was the labyrinth like a maze? Unlike a maze?

Did you think about your gratitude for something, a regret you have, or a hope?

Did you think about who you are inside? Things outside yourself?

Were you thinking in words, in pictures or in another kind of thought? Did other ideas pop into your head while you were using the labyrinth?

Tell children they may keep their finger labyrinths to incorporate into their Window/Mirror Panel (Activity 5).

If you have time, you may wish to share this paragraph, from an [essay by Daniel H. Johnston](#) (at www.lessons4living.com/labyrinth_map.htm) on the Lessons 4 Living website:

A labyrinth looks like a maze but is not. A maze is like a puzzle to be solved. It has twists and turns and dead ends. You have to think and think and be alert for any clues you may find. A maze can be frustrating because you can get lost in a maze. But, a labyrinth has no dead ends. There is only one path, and while it does have twists and turns, you can't get lost. The same path takes you into the labyrinth and out again. With a labyrinth you don't have to think, or analyze, or solve a problem. With a labyrinth you just trust that the path will lead you to where you need to be.

Including All Participants

A non-sighted participant can use a textured surface such as corduroy fabric or a sheet of corrugated cardboard to create a meditative focus. Or, make a

three-dimensional, lap-size labyrinth using quick-hardening glue on cardboard; find instructions for drawing a labyrinth in this session's Faith in Action activity.

Allow children who have difficulty sitting for a meditation to use the finger labyrinth as a map and try to walk the pattern. Children who have difficulty being silent for longer periods may hum quietly along with the music as they follow the pattern.

ACTIVITY 4: PRAYER STATIONS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Respecting Others' Spiritual Practices](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Silhouette images of body prayer postures, from [Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Music, and music player
- Prayer Stations
- Work as Prayer. Lanyard, yarn, ribbon and other materials for braiding or making knots, cut into 12-inch lengths
- Welcoming the Sabbath or Sending Love and Healing with Candlelight. Candles and candle holders (at least two), and a lighter or matches
- Communion. Small, plain crackers or cookies, a small pitcher of grape juice, small cups and (optional) your congregation's Communion silver
- Welcoming the Divine. Yoga mats or small carpets, and a small lamp or a candle and lighter/matches
- Table Grace. A table and a few chairs; a bowl of snacks; and index cards printed with table graces such as "May we be truly thankful for the food we are about to receive." / "May we one day live in a world where no goes hungry." / "I thank all the hands that harvested and prepared this meal." Find more graces in the Tapestry of Faith Creating Home program, Session 11, Leader Resource, [Four Graces](#): (at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/creatinghome/session11/sessionplan/leaderresources/60160.shtml) on the [UUA WorshipWeb](#) (at www.uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/readings/submissions/5888.shtml) pages; or on [Ingrid Goff-Maidoff's website](#) (at ingridgoffmaidoff.com/content.php?id=153))

- Resisting Evil. Sheets of 8 1/2x11-inch card stock, peel-and-stick labels, color markers, wooden craft sticks or rulers, and tape or heavy-duty stapler and staples
- Praying with Icons. Photos, images or models of religious icons such as the Virgin Mary, the Buddha, saints, or gods and goddesses
- Praying with Religious Objects. Item(s) belonging to adult volunteer leaders, such as Catholic rosary beads, prayer beads from another religious tradition, a Tibetan Buddhist prayer wheel or Jewish tefillin
- Counting Prayers. A few strings of fairly large beads, each with at least ten beads
- Altar. A low table, (optional) attractive cloth cover, a candle, a bowl of water, a stick of incense in a holder, small statues or toy animals, and matches or a lighter
- Sitting Meditation. Yoga mats or small rugs
- Dancing with God. Music and music player, (optional) carpet
- Foot Washing. A chair, a pitcher of warm water, a large bowl, and paper towels; (optional) wet wipes
- Receiving the Spirit. Chalk to draw on floor, or a small rug
- Holy Water. A table and a small pitcher or bowl of cool water

Preparation for Activity

- Read the Description of Activity. From the many prayer stations suggested, choose according to the size of the group, the space and materials available and—most importantly—the availability of specific adult volunteers in your congregational who are personally familiar with and knowledgeable about particular practices.
- Next, consider whether your congregation includes any adults who might be able to present another prayer practice not described here. An adult who knows and uses prayer practices from—for example—their own Buddhist, Catholic, Jewish or contemplative religious background could provide a culturally authentic introductory experience.
- Personally contact the adults you want to lead a prayer station activity. Ask them to lead a brief interpretation of the practice, focusing on how it is done and its faith and/or cultural meaning.

Invite adult volunteers to shape their demonstration according to their own knowledge and understanding of the practice. Ask them to avoid both (a) inflating their own expertise in a practice and (b) distancing themselves from the practice, such as by categorizing it as something "Hindu people do," "Catholics believe in," etc. Encourage them to anticipate children's questions and be ready to give answers and/or point children toward further authorities about the practice for a deeper understanding. Ask volunteers what space, equipment or supplies the prayer practice requires. Make the arrangements and obtain needed items before the session. Confirm volunteer visits one or two days ahead.

- Plan the logistics. Decide:
 - How many/which prayer stations will you provide?
 - Who will you invite to lead each practice?
 - Where will you set up each practice? (Which prayer stations require an electric outlet, water, a window, a lit chalice, a carpeted floor? Are all the prayer stations accessible to all participants?)
 - How much time should children spend at each prayer station? How many stations do you want each child to experience? Plan how the children will rotate among the prayer stations. Some stations may work well for one child to experience at a time; others may work well for small groups.
- Review Activity 5, Window/Mirror Panel — Reflections of Prayer. You may wish to combine it with this activity by including Window/Mirror Panel work tables as a prayer station. A co-leader will need to staff this station and guide children to respond to the prayer stations and other session activities. The Description of Activity section in Activity 5 guides you to help the children process and express their experiences.
- Read Handout 2, Respecting Others' Spiritual Practices. Decide whether you will paraphrase its content for the group, read it aloud, or simply distribute the handout.
- Optional: If it will not conflict with music at individual prayer stations, arrange to play

gentle, peaceful music in the area during this activity.

- Optional: Cut out the silhouette images of body prayer postures from Leader Resource 1 and use them to decorate the prayer station area(s). Some figures may perfectly illustrate particular prayer stations.
- Make a card to identify each prayer station. Include the name of the prayer practice, the tradition(s) it comes from and the name of the adult leading it. Post the cards at the prayer stations.
- Set out materials at each prayer station. Make sure adult volunteers are ready for participants to visit their prayer stations.

Description of Activity

Gather the group. Invite them to prepare to experience in their bodies several different spiritual practices that are used by people all over the world. Say, in your own words:

The world's religions, including our own, offer many ways to express gratitude, regret and hope or make some other connection with a spirit or force within or beyond ourselves. In some faiths, people use prayer or meditation to ask or petition for something for themselves or someone else, to lament about how things that have happened, to express a sense of awe, or to show their submission to a deity. Some prayer uses words. Other times, people use their bodies to express their awareness or hopes in prayer.

As you rotate through our prayer stations, search for a practice or posture that feels right for your body and offers something for your spirits.

Present the guidelines you have determined, such as whether children will travel alone or in a small group; how many prayer stations they should visit, in what order; how you will signal the end of the prayer station activity; and where you would like them to end up. You may wish to ask the children to remove their shoes to maintain quiet and keep the prayer areas clean.

Mention that some practices may feel uncomfortable, weird or difficult to one person, yet liberating for another. Ask participants to respect one another's privacy, even in the shared practices, and refrain from giggling or commentary. Let them know it is disrespectful to make fun of anyone's religious practices and they may be removed from the activity if their behavior is disruptive. This may be a good time to refer to the group's behavior

covenant (Session 2). Optional: Distribute Handout 2, Respecting Others' Spiritual Practices. Read the handout together.

Ask participants to move slowly and quietly between stations and to take three deep breaths as they begin each practice. Invite children to begin visiting the prayer stations.

Prayer Stations

Work as Prayer. On a small surface, place colorful 12-inch lengths of lanyard, yarn, ribbon and/or other flexible items for braiding (or making knots). Children will make a small bookmark by tying three or six lengths of material at one end, braiding most of the length of the material, tying off the end tightly. The Shakers believe "Hands to work, hearts to God" and that all work is sacred.

Welcoming the Sabbath or Sending Love and Healing with Candlelight. Place two candles in candlesticks on a flat surface and allow children to light them. Invite them to think of someone they love or for whom they are concerned as they light the candle. You might suggest they whisper "Repair the world" as they light the candles. In many religious traditions, candle-lighting (including lighting the UU chalice) is an act of prayer. Jews light candles on Fridays at sundown to welcome the holy day—the Sabbath.

Communion. Place small snacks (crackers, cookies, etc) and a small pitcher of grape juice on a flat surface. Greet each child by saying, "We are all connected to one another. Take a piece of this cracker (or cookie)] as you are a part of a larger humanity," and guide the child to break a piece of the food and eat it. Then say, "As humans, we all share the same blood. Drink this sip of juice to represent our common humanity." Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Anglicans and many Protestant denominations practice Communion as a remembrance of Jesus at the Last Supper. If your congregation has Communion silver, you might arrangement to borrow it for display or use at this prayer station.

Welcoming the Divine. Place a yoga mat on the floor. Invite each child, one at a time, to step onto the mat in a deliberate way, facing a source of light (a candle, a lamp or an open window). Demonstrate pressing palms together with thumbs extended and touching the chest. Ask the child to stand in that pose, take three deep breaths, and feel their heart opening up with each breath. People who practice yoga use this position to begin and end their practice.

Table Grace. Place a chair, table, index cards with table graces and a bowl of snacks in a separate space. Invite each child who enters the space to sit at the table and

read a few of the graces to find one they like, for example, "May we be truly thankful for the food we are about to receive." / "May we one day live in a world where no goes hungry." / "I thank all the hands that harvested and prepared this meal." Then ask the child to fold or clasp their hands, bow their head and whisper the prayer slowly. After saying the grace, the child may take a snack to eat while remaining seated at the table. Many religious traditions encourage a prayer of gratitude, thanking the many sources of our food.

Group Chanting. Chasidic, Native American, Buddhist, Eastern Orthodox and many other traditions use group chanting as prayer. An adult with experience in this type of prayer practice should lead this prayer station and provide appropriate words or syllables to chant or sing.

Resisting Evil. Set 8 1/2x11-inch card stock, peel-and-stick labels and color markers on a table. Invite each child to express an idea for something in the world they would like to improve. Provide a few examples, such as "Stop wars," "Stop crime," "Make schools better," or "Recycle." Suggest each child write or draw a brief message on a card or labels. Children may place the labels on their clothing over their heart. Or, help children attach their sheet of card stock to a wooden craft stick or ruler to make a placard.

Praying with Icons. Place photos/images of religious icons on a small table. Examples include the Virgin Mary, the Buddha, saints, or gods and goddesses. As children step up to the table, ask them to examine each image and choose one that appeals to them. Ask the child to hold the image with both hands and gaze at it, while taking three deep breaths.

Praying with Religious Objects. These might include Catholic rosary beads or prayer beads from another religious tradition; a Tibetan Buddhist prayer wheel (a wheel mounted on a spindle so it can spin and inscribed with a mantra in Sanskrit); Jewish *tefillin*, (two small, leather boxes which strap onto the prayer's head and upper arm and contain parchment with *mitzvot* (commandments) in hand-written Hebrew).

Counting Prayers. Invite each child to sit cross-legged and hand them a string of beads. Ask them to first notice the feel of the entire string of beads, and then focus on a single bead—its shape, size, texture, etc. Then ask the child to close their eyes and, while counting each bead, whisper, "I appreciate life." Count up to ten beads while taking deep breaths. Muslims, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists and Orthodox Christians are among those who use prayer beads.

Altar. On a table—optionally, covered with an attractive cloth—place a candle (unlit), a bowl of water, a stick of incense (unlit) in a holder, and small items arranged

purposefully such as statues or toy animals. As each child approaches the table, invite them to kneel in front of the table, notice the items, and choose an action of prayer. Suggest they could light the candle or incense, dip a finger in the bowl of water, hold an item for a moment, or simply bow their head. Altars are sacred places for people of the Hebrew, Mormon, Buddhist, Jain and other traditions.

Sitting Meditation. Locate this prayer station away from activity and noise. Invite each child to sit in a comfortable, cross-legged position on a yoga mat or small rug. Ask the child to relax their arms at their sides and place their hands in their lap with palms upturned, one hand resting on top of the other, as if holding a precious gift. Say, "With each deep breath, release any physical tension, worry, or thought to clear the mind. Zen Buddhists use sitting meditation to awaken insights to the mystery of life." Lead the child(ren) in breathing. Repeat the instruction several times.

Laying of Hands. Form pairs and lead partners to take turns placing a hand on the other's shoulder or elbow and/or clasping their hands while saying "May this human touch offer you comfort and healing." Many Protestant denominations use touch to pass blessings among participants.

Dancing with God. Provide a music player and a range of musical choices. Each child may dance for as much as a minute to music they choose. Set this prayer station apart from other sounds. You may wish to use a carpeted area and invite children to remove their shoes. Encourage children to close their eyes while they dance, if they are comfortable. Liturgical dancers, Hindus, Chasidim and Sufis are among the people who use this practice to commune with the Divine.

Breaking Bread. Place a plate small dinner rolls on a table. Invite pairs of children to sit together and split the roll. Before they eat, ask one child to say to the other, "Welcome, my friend, to my home. You are no longer a stranger." In many traditions, prayer is entwined with rituals around sharing food with others.

Repeated Body Prayer. Invite each child to step onto a yoga mat or small rug and stand with hands clasped in front of their chest. Ask them to take three deep breaths, then touch their toes, bend down on hands and knees, rest their hips on their heels, touch their forehead to the mat, stretch their arms forward, and then rise slowly back to standing. Repeat the sequence two more times. Islam, yoga and other traditions use the full body to pray; the repetition builds strength, humility and devotion.

Foot Washing. Set a chair, a pitcher of warm water, a large bowl, and paper towels at this station. Form pairs

and invite the partners to take turns sitting in the chair and placing a bare foot into the hands of the other. Show the foot washer to hold their partner's foot over the bowl, pour a small amount of water over the foot and then dry the foot. Instead of the water, children can use wet wipes to "wash" each other's feet. This practice in Christian traditions highlights humility and service to others.

Compassion Prayer. Ask children to work in pairs. Facing each other, they will clasp both hands and close their eyes. After taking three deep breaths, they will whisper "May you find peace." Many religious and ethical traditions hold compassion as the centerpiece of spiritual practice.

Receiving the Spirit. Draw a circle in chalk on the floor or place a small rug. Ask the child to find a comfortable, open standing position, for example, with palms turned upward, hands cupped and head lifted. Direct the child to take three deep breaths, raise their arms or hands, and say "Come to me, Great Spirit" and just listen and feel. Many religious and ethical traditions encourage the public display of welcoming God, Spirit, Allah, awe, etc.

Holy Water. Place a small pitcher or bowl of cool water on a table. Following three deep breaths, allow each child to dip a hand in the water and drip the water on their face. As the water drips down, lead the child to say "Make my heart and mind clean." Catholics, Hindus, Baptists and others use holy water for a symbolic spiritual cleansing.

Passing the Peace. Ask children in pairs or a small group to face one another, shake hands or hug one another, and say, "May peace be upon you." You may choose to perform this practice after everyone has completed all of the stations.

Including All Participants

Adapt the practices to the needs and abilities of each child. Working one-on-one, or with just several children at a time, will allow ample opportunity for personalized adjustments.

Designate at least one adult to watch for and redirect any children who have trouble participating respectfully in the prayer station activities.

ACTIVITY 5: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — REFLECTIONS OF PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels

- Handout 1, [Finger Labyrinth](#), (included in this document) from Activity 3
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror Panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar(R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors, including left-hand scissors
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon, and a variety of old magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Set out all participants' Window/Mirror Panels and the basket(s) of Window/Mirror Panel materials on work tables.
- Optional: Write on newsprint and post these prompts:
 - Mirror: How prayer is (or could be) useful, meaningful or satisfying to me?
 - Window: What do I understand, question or respect about prayer practices of others?
- If this activity will be incorporated into Activity 4, Prayer Stations, designate a co-leader to lead the discussion (see Description of Activity) with individuals or small groups as participants arrive to begin work on their Window/Mirror panels.

Description of Activity

Participants respond to the session by adding to their Window/Mirror Panel a representation of what prayer means to them or of an aspect of prayer they personally relate to.

Engage children to identify prayer purposes and/or practices which they do now or might in the future find useful, meaningful or satisfying (the Mirror question). Ask them to articulate their understanding, questions and respect for practices others use (the Window question). For some, this may be the beginning of a lifelong introspection about prayer practice. One-on-one conversation with individual participants may be

extremely valuable. Acknowledge that finding a suitable practice is a very personal matter and their choices may change over time.

Use these questions to elicit reflection:

- At which prayer stations did you feel the most open? The most creative? The most loved? The most challenged? The most yourself? The most inspired?
- Can you imagine yourself using any of these practices in the future? What would that be like?
- How can we show respect for spiritual practices that others use?

Invite each child to represent their relationship with prayer on their Window/Mirror Panel, using any media available. As a starting point, suggest they incorporate the finger labyrinth (Handout 1) in some way.

Welcome visiting parents and other adult volunteers to join the children in responding to the session through artwork. You may wish to engage adults with the same questions you ask the children, yet, remember this is the children's time to respond, inquire and reflect. Adults should mostly listen to the children's observations and briefly add information or correct an understanding as needed. You, too, might briefly describe a prayer practice of your own or some observations or questions about prayer practices used by others.

Give a two-minute warning so everyone has time to complete work on their Window/Mirror Panel, clean up materials and store the Window/Mirror Panels.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.

Write the closing words on newsprint and post.

Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).

Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we now have to work together as community to clean the meeting space. First, everyone should clean up their own personal area, put away materials they were using and store their Window/Mirror Panel. Then they may clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until all are done.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: BUILDING AND WALKING A LABYRINTH

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Drawing a Labyrinth](#) (included in this document)
- A large, open space at least 12x15 feet (180 square feet) for constructing the labyrinth
- For an indoor labyrinth: Rolls of blue painter's tape, wide ribbon and masking tape to anchor it to the floor, and/or play construction blocks

- For an outdoor labyrinth: Sidewalk chalk, or a large number of solid objects such as blocks or rocks that will not roll or blow in the wind
- Candles or LED-candles for all participants, and a lighter or matches, if needed
- Optional: Contemplative music, and music player
- Optional: A blank "guest book" and pens/pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a space to draw or build the labyrinth. Any clean indoor or outdoor surface will work, including grass. Identify an alternate space, in case of inclement weather or unexpected competition for space.
- Choose a labyrinth design. Leader Resource 2 shows how to draw a simple, three-path labyrinth.
- Determine the drawing or building materials you will need to create the design you have chosen in the space you have. Obtain the materials.
- Decide how and when the group will engage others in the congregation to share an experience making and walking the labyrinth. Publicize the time and place through your director of religious education and lay leaders and by announcements at worship, web postings and flyers.
- Plan chalice-lighting words, additional words of blessing, meditative music and/or another ritual focus to provide. Optional: Obtain a "guest book" and pens/pencils for visitors to write or draw their comments after walking the labyrinth.
- Practice making the labyrinth. Make sure you have all the materials you need. Gauge how long it will take to assemble and disassemble. Determine how many adult helpers you may need.

Description of Activity

Using Leader Resource 2 or another labyrinth design, find a spot on the ground or floor to begin the pattern. With tape or blocks, create a large, walkable labyrinth. The children can make the labyrinth together with you, or, you may prefer to construct the labyrinth together with the guests who will join the group.

Once the pattern is complete, gather everyone for a chalice-lighting or another ritual you have chosen. Or, simply begin playing contemplative music to start the labyrinth walk. Give each participant a lit candle to

slowly, with deliberation, walk to the center and back out of the labyrinth. Invite them to rest a moment at the center and take three deep breaths. Foster a sense of solitude for each participant by leaving enough time and space between them.

As each participant completes their labyrinth walk, invite them to extinguish their candle and join a silent circle. When all have walked the labyrinth, lead a conversation using these questions:

What was it like to use the labyrinth?

What feelings did you notice while you were using the labyrinth?

What did you see? Hear? Feel?

How easy or hard was it to be silent?

How was the labyrinth like a maze? Unlike a maze?

Did you think about who you are inside? Things outside yourself?

Did you think about your gratitude for something, a regret you have, or a hope?

Were you thinking in words, in pictures or in another kind of thought?

Affirm all responses. When all who wish to speak have done so, ask the group:

What might you take from this experience into a prayer or meditation practice of your own?

What ideas does the labyrinth offer for our congregational worship together?

Thank the children (or everyone) for making the labyrinth and everyone for sharing it together.

Including All Participants

Participants who are non-sighted can walk the labyrinth with an adult. Some participants with limited mobility may be able to maintain a contemplative focus while walking the labyrinth.

If someone needs help, partner them with an adult. Afterward, you might ask each partner in what ways they felt a shared experience, and in what ways they felt solitude while walking the labyrinth.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?

- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could a sense of community be improved with this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Oh God, if there is a God, save my soul, if I have a soul. — Joseph Ernest Renan, French philosopher and historian

Prayer helps us to identify our motives, our pains, our cravings, and joys. As we come to know ourselves, we are changed beyond selfishness into harmony with those Presences from which we spring and to which we return. Prayer is not a request to shape the future to our desires, but a way for us to offer ourselves to the Larger Process. Martin Luther said that we pray not to instruct God but rather to instruct ourselves. — Vern Barnet, minister emeritus, Center for Religious Experience and Study (Kansas City, Missouri)

Christians pray, Buddhists pray, Jews pray, Muslims pray, humanists pray, atheists pray, agnostics pray, philosophers pray, the righteous pray, the unrighteous pray, some Unitarian Universalists pray and some do not, in the formal sense, but I believe, in the broader sense, Unitarian Universalists, of all the people I know, pray hard and long. We are praying people. Emerson, remember, called prayer "the soul's sincere desire." I've never heard it put better. — Rev. Thomas Mikelson, in a January 7, 2002 sermon at the First Church in Cambridge (Massachusetts)

DURING TODAY'S SESSION...

We tested Unitarian Universalist versions of prayer practices based on a variety of religious traditions to discover what felt comfortable and useful in our personal search for truth and meaning. We used our bodies, words and music in different ways to open ourselves to a sense of awe and wonder, exploring the use of prayer and meditation practices to connect with a larger force inside or beyond us. From the story, "Letter to Nancy," the children learned that three purposes of prayer and meditation are to express thanks, regrets and hopes.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

Ask your child what a labyrinth is, its purpose, and how to use the finger labyrinth. If your child has not brought home a finger labyrinth, find one [online](#) (at

lessons4living.com/). A labyrinth offers a journey of self-discovery. Because there is only one path in and out, a labyrinth does not require you to think about anything in particular.

Ask your child about the prayer stations they experienced today. Which were memorable? Comfortable? Challenging? Satisfying? At which stations did your child feel most open? Most loved?

Talk with your child about prayer in your life. Mention any prayer practices or rituals that have meaning for you. If this is the first time you have shared with your child something as intimate as your relationship with prayer, this could be one of the most important conversations you ever have with your child.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...

Talk with people who use various prayer or meditation practices to learn what they do, why they do it, and the rules or customs related to the practice in its faith or culture of origin. The children received a handout today, *Respecting Others' Spiritual Practices*. Review it together. If prayer does not offer you any possibilities and you do not intend to explore or practice prayer or meditation with your child, do reinforce ways we can show respect for others' prayer traditions.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Whether or not you pray or meditate or have ever found such a practice meaningful, consider how you celebrate gratitude, reflect on regret or focus on your deepest hopes. Talk with your children about ways to be intentional in these expressions. Perhaps there is a prayer ritual your family can practice together. Ask your child whether they discovered a practice in this session your family could try.

Many families say a grace or blessing at mealtimes. If you do, do you consider these words a prayer? Make a conscious choice of grace or blessing words to use. Talk together about how the words are a prayer. Why, and to whom or what, do you say them? If you are looking for words, one multi-faith resource is [Simple Graces for Every Meal](http://www.ingridgoffmaidoff.com/) (at www.ingridgoffmaidoff.com/) by Ingrid Goff-Maidoff.

Search "prayer" on the [UUA online bookstore](http://www.uuabookstore.org/) (at www.uuabookstore.org/) website for Unitarian Universalist prayer and meditation resources. The online [UUA WorshipWeb](http://www.uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/readings/submissions/5888.shtml) (at www.uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/readings/submissions/5888.shtml) provides blessings and meditations, searchable by topic. On the Beliefnet website, find guidelines for prayer practice in a "[Family Prayers FAQ](http://www.beliefnet.com/story/60/story_6099_1.html)" (at www.beliefnet.com/story/60/story_6099_1.html)."

A FAMILY GAME

Play Hide and Seek to practice listening to one another and listening for clues about a person's location. In some ways, prayer and meditation can be like playing Hide and Seek with the Divine, a deity or your deepest self.

FAMILY DISCOVERY

Choose a daily prayer practice that everyone in the family can do. Make a commitment to follow it for 30 days. Discuss your goals and expectations for the practice and how children and adults can help each other try it. At the end of 30 days, evaluate how it felt and how it met your expectations. In what ways is a regular practice different from a practice you try just once? How is a commitment to pray different from other motivations, such as emotional urgency or spiritual need? Family members may wish to continue the practice, or try another one.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: STORY — FINDING GOD IN SILENCE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copy of the story "[Finding God in Silence](#) (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Review the story. We suggest using it after children have initially explored the concept of prayer in Activity 2, *Praying Thanks, Regret and Hope*.
- Prepare to read or tell the story to the group. Practice adopting different voices.
- Create an atmosphere to set this time apart from other activities of the session. Turn off overhead lights and use lamps. You might don a storytelling shawl to enhance the moment and help you claim the storytelling.

Description of Activity

Gather the children. Say, in your own words:

Many (but not all) of us find meaning in prayer that is addressed to a particular entity or force, which we might know and address as God, Allah, Bhagavan, Great Spirit, Jehovah, Adonai, Jah, etc. This story explores the mystery of what such an entity might be, whether we believe it

listens to us, and how we might listen for its voice in our prayer or meditation.

Before you begin, ring the chime, bell or other noisemaker. Make eye contact with each participant.

Ring the chime again to signal the end of the story. Lead a discussion with these questions:

Do you think the man in the story was praying? Why, or why not?

If he was not praying, what else might you call his actions?

At the end, does the man think God hears him? Or, that God does not hear him? Does anyone hear him?

Does the man think God speaks to him, or not?

What is the result of the man's experience? What does he learn?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: JOURNALING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Notebooks and pens/pencils for all participants

Preparation for Activity

- This activity is designed to follow Activity 4, Prayer Stations. You might also wish to provide a journaling option as part of Activity 5, Window/Mirror Panel — Reflections of Prayer.

Description of Activity

Journaling is a time-honored spiritual practice for expressing the voice within. If you have time for this activity after Activity 4, journaling will give children an opportunity to extend their prayer experiences and/or process the prayer stations.

Invite children to sit wherever they please in the room to write down their thoughts. Distribute the notebooks and pens or pencils.

Encourage the children to write their thoughts about the prayer practices they tried today. Ask them to think about which practices they might use in the next week, or month. Suggest they think about different ways to express thankfulness, regret or hope—perhaps ways not discussed today at all. Ask them whether they might use prayer to ask/beg something for themselves, ask/beg on behalf of another person, or to complain/lament or to ask. Say:

Think about which kind of prayer you use most often or most would like to use. Write about how the practices you tried today might help you "pray better."

Including All Participants

Children who have difficulty writing may dictate their thoughts to an adult in a private space, or draw their ideas.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: SUN SALUTATIONS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Yoga mats for all participants
- Chairs for participants who may do modified versions of poses
- Leader Resource 3, Sun Salutation

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a co-leader or adult volunteer with experience doing—preferably leading—yoga movement. Also make sure to include an additional adult for every three or four children. Lacking adequate adult supervision, skip this activity.
- Arrange to use a large, open space with room for all participants to stretch on a yoga mat without bumping into others.
- Make sure the room has chairs which individuals can use to try the poses in a modified way. Each chair will need to be placed against a wall for stability. Children using chairs will also need yoga mats.
- Review Leader Resource 3, which gives verbal guidance and illustrations for all 12 poses of a sun salutation. Optional: Watch an [animation of a sun salutation](http://www.abc-of-yoga.com/yogapractice/sunsalutation.asp) (at www.abc-of-yoga.com/yogapractice/sunsalutation.asp) on the ABC-of-Yoga website.

Description of Activity

Invite children to set out and sit on the yoga mats. Say:

In many faiths and cultures, people use movement prayers, and many of these can be done anywhere, in a small space no larger than the yoga mat you are sitting on now.

Give examples:

Catholics who kneel and make the sign of the cross

Muslims who spread a prayer rug to face Mecca and pray five times a day

Buddhist and others who take a special posture for meditation

Jews who "daven," rocking their bodies while reciting Hebrew prayers

Tell the group they will try a sun salutation, a yoga practice that comes from Hindu tradition. Say, in your own words:

Sun salutation involves a series of simple yoga poses. It is used by many people across a variety of faiths for prayer, meditation, and physical and spiritual exercise. Its purpose is to greet and recognize the new day brought by sunrise. Some people do it every day.

Following Leader Resource 3, demonstrate each individual pose on the yoga mat, using a chair, or both. Encourage any child who prefers to use a chair to perform modified poses. The chair back should be placed against a wall, with the yoga mat on the floor extending out from the chair into the room. Stand in front of the chair seat to use the chair as a brace for the forward bend, the lunge (place a foot on the chair seat, hands on chair back), the "dog" pose (hands bracing the chair seat with torso bent and forehead touching the chair seat), plank (hands bracing the chair seat with arms extended, feet several feet away from the chair and body flat as a plank), and "reverse push up" (plank pose with elbows bent and flat torso closer to the chair seat). Move slowly through each of the poses, holding each pose for three breaths. Repeat on each side.

If not using the chair, use the yoga mat or floor to move gently through each pose, holding each pose for three breaths. Repeat on each side.

Invite children to sit on their yoga mats. Discuss:

What felt comfortable?

What felt challenging?

What is attractive about using the sun salutation as a prayer practice? Might you find this a meaningful way to greet the new day?

What kinds of thoughts went through your head?

Is it more or less likely you can focus on gratitude, regret or hope when your body is engaged in the yoga movements? Might that be different if you did these poses every day and your body knew them well?

Including All Participants

Children who are non-sighted, and others who need help, may be guided into poses by an adult. Before offering to help, ask the child if they would like you to guide their body into the right position. Tell them to let you know if your touch or their body position feels uncomfortable.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: BODY PRAYER LIBRARY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Visual resources about body prayer. These books are recommended:
 - Body Prayer: The Posture of Intimacy with God by Doug Pagitt and Kathryn Prill (Colorado Springs, Colorado : Waterbrook Press, 2005)
 - Praying with Our Hands: 21 Practices of Embodied Prayer from the World's Spiritual Traditions by Jon Sweeney (Woodstock, Vermont , Sky Lights Paths Publishing, 2000)
- Optional: Contemplative music and music player; chalice; or other items to set a mood
- Optional: Yoga mats or small rugs

Preparation for Activity

- Collect resources for the Body Prayer Library. Look for photographic documentation of physical prayer practices in books and on websites provided by actual practitioners.
- Set the books, printouts or other resources on a table. Nearby, place yoga mats, small rugs and other items for participants to use in prayer postures.

Description of Activity

Gather and display resources about prayer practices in different faiths and cultures. Provide yoga mats and/or small rugs to encourage children to try movement. Consider lighting a chalice and/or playing contemplative music to set a mood that helps participants connect body and spirit.

You might add this activity to the session, include the Body Prayer Library as a prayer station in Activity 4, and/or invite participants, their families and adult volunteers to explore the library before and after the session.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 15: STORY: FINDING GOD IN SILENCE

By Mary Ann Moore, in *Hide and Seek with God* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1994). Based on tales from Zen Buddhism and Hebrew scripture. Used with permission.

Once there was a man who wanted to know what God was truly like. Other people had told him about God, and he had many ideas himself, but he wanted to see what God would tell him. So he set off to find God.

He searched and searched. Finally he thought he had found God. He said, "God, I want to be sure I know what you are truly like? Some people say you are like a woman and some people say you are like a man. Other people say you are like the sky and yet others say you are like the earth. What are you truly like? Will you tell me, God?"

But God did not speak. God was silent.

So the man went on speaking. "Some people say you are in animals and trees and mountaintops. Other people say you are in the sun and the moon and the stars. What are you truly like? Will you tell me, God?"

But God did not speak. God was silent.

Again the man spoke: "Well, I think you are there in all these things, in earth and sky and animals and people. And I even think you are in me, too. God, why aren't you answering me? God, why don't you tell me what you truly are?"

But still God did not speak. Still God was silent.

Finally, the man stopped talking. He waited to hear what God would say. At first he only heard his own words blowing through his mind like a strong wind: "Man --- Woman---Sky---Earth." The words blew around and around and the man waited, but God said nothing.

Then the wind grew stronger and the words began to break into little pieces and fall away from him: "M—an, WO—m—an, S—k—y, Ear—th." More and more the words broke up and fell away. The man waited and God still said nothing.

When the words were all gone, the man still waited, but God said nothing. And then there was only silence, a calm and peaceful silence, and in the silence he knew God.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 15: STORY: LETTER TO NANCY

Written by UU Minister Christopher Raible, who served as minister of the Unitarian Church West in Brookfield, Wisconsin from 1962 to 1970. Adapted and used with permission.

A seven-year-old girl named Nancy asked her minister, "What prayer shall I say when I go to bed?" He wrote her back this answer.

Dear Nancy,

You may not have realized it, but when you asked me to suggest a bedtime prayer for you, you raised a very important question. It is a question which people have wondered about and argued about for thousands of years. It is a question which many people think they can answer, but they answer it in different ways. It is a question which many other people are not sure can be answered. The question is this: is there a God who can change people and change things if asked to?

Some believe God can give them presents or make it rain or cure their troubles if they ask God in the right way. Some people believe asking God for help is a way of feeling closer to God; no matter what happens in response. Some people believe God will do what is best for everybody and that to ask God for special favors is selfishness. Some people believe God is the force of nature, so we cannot pray to God any more than we can pray to a tree or a stone. Some people believe we ought to think only about people and not about God at all.

As you learn more about the world and about others' beliefs, you will have to decide what you think about all this. With your parents' help, and with the help of others, you will form your own beliefs.

But you have asked me a question which can't wait until you have learned more and thought more. You want me to suggest a bedtime prayer. I think I can help, if, for the time being at least, you think of prayer not as asking God for favors, but as an honest expression of some of your feelings. I especially mean three kinds of feelings.

Sometimes you feel thankful for nice things which have happened to you. If you express your thanks at bedtime, you may enjoy them all over again. Sometimes you feel sorry for things you have done or said. If you express your feeling of being sorry before you go to sleep, you may feel much better. Sometimes you have hopes for yourself and other people. If you express your hopes in prayer, you may see what you can do to make them come true.

I am suggesting that each night you make up your own prayer. It could begin "Tonight I am thankful for...," and then you could think of the most important things you are thankful for. It could continue "Tonight I am sorry for..." and then you could think of the most important things you are sorry about. Your prayer could then end with "Tomorrow I hope..." and you could think of some of the most important things you hope for and think how you can help to bring them about.

When you do this, if you want to pray by thinking you are talking to God, go right ahead. But it doesn't matter as much as it does matter that you really mean what you say. I think you will discover that if you pray like this at night, it may not change God or change things or change other people, but it will change you and change how you think and feel about God and things and other people.

I hope you will want to talk with your mother and father about all this. You may want to talk to your friends of other religions to see what they think. Perhaps you will want to talk to your religious school teacher or your minister. But whoever else you talk to, you will have to decide for yourself. How you work out your thinking and feeling about all this may well be one of the most important things in your life. But don't let that scare you. Understanding your feelings of gratitude and regret and hope is a wonderful process.

Thank you for asking!

Your minister,

Christopher Raible

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 15:
HANDOUT 1: FINGER LABYRINTH



WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 15:

HANDOUT 2: RESPECTING OTHERS' SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

There are more than six billion people in the world. Many use spiritual practices and rituals that may be unfamiliar to you, but offer deep meaning to them. In your own search for truth and meaning, you may want to try an unfamiliar practice. Here are some ways you can show respect:

Ask about restrictions on who can participate in a practice or ritual. For example, your sex, age or language, or something about where or to whom you were born, may make it inappropriate for you to participate, according to cultural or faith rules for a spiritual practice. Even if you really want to participate, if you learn you are not allowed to do so, avoid being rude. Respect the rules of the practice.

If you are invited to participate, watch and listen to others performing the practice until you are sure of what to do.

Before or after (but usually not during!) a practice, ask questions in a respectful way. For example, "I am curious about why you do _____ when you pray" is more respectful than "That looks/sounds/smells weird. Why do you do that?"

Thank the person who invited you to participate.

Learn more about the faith and/or culture that produced the practice so you can have a deeper understanding of the practice's context.

Avoid telling people you are knowledgeable about a practice that you have only read about, observed or performed a few times.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 15: LEADER RESOURCE 1: BODY PRAYER POSTURE SILHOUETTES

Original artwork by Barbara Marshman.

Use these images to decorate the meeting space for this session.

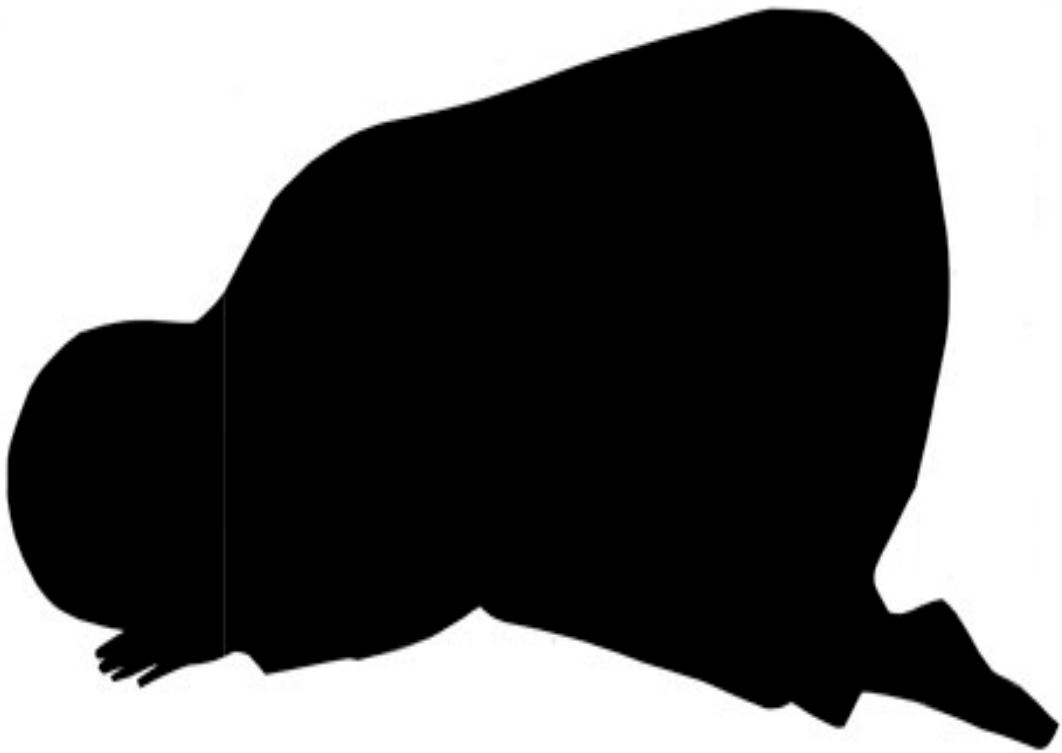












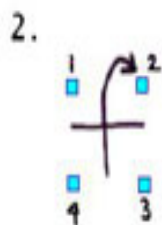
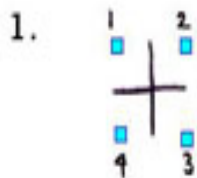
WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 15: LEADER RESOURCE 2: DRAWING A LABYRINTH

Unlike a maze, a labyrinth has no "dead ends." The three-path labyrinth is simple to draw. Use blue painter's tape to create this design in a large, indoor open space, or chalk to draw it on a hard-top, outdoor surface.

Unlike a maze, a labyrinth has no "dead ends."

The three-path labyrinth is simple to draw.

Use blue painter's tape to create this design in a large, indoor open space. Or, draw it in chalk on a hard-top, outdoor surface. Start in the center. Make the pathways wide enough to walk.



WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 15:













LEADER RESOURCE 3: SUN SALUTATION

From [The Yoga Site](#). Permission pending. Online, see an animated figure demonstrate the sequence of poses.

Surya Namaskar, the Sun Salutation, is a series of 12 postures performed in a single, graceful flow. Each movement is coordinated with the breath. Inhale as you extend or stretch, and exhale as you fold or contract. The Sun Salutation builds strength and increases flexibility. Different styles of yoga perform the Sun Salutation with their own variations. However, the flow presented below covers core steps used in most styles.

For the series below, a single round consists of two complete sequences: one for the right side of the body and the other for the left.

On days when you think you have no time for yoga, try and do at least one or two rounds of the Sun Salutation. You'll feel the difference.

<p>1. Mountain</p>  <p>Begin by standing in Mountain pose, feet about hip width apart, hands either by your sides or in prayer position. Take several deep breaths.</p>	<p>2. Hands up</p>  <p>On your next inhale, in one sweeping movement, raise your arms up overhead and gently arch back as far as feels comfortable and safe.</p>	<p>3. Head to knees</p>  <p>As you exhale, bend forward, bending the knees if necessary, and bring your hands to rest beside your feet.</p>
<p>4. Lunge</p>  <p>Inhale and step the right leg back.</p>	<p>5. Plank</p>  <p>Exhale and step the left leg back into plank position. Hold the position and inhale.</p>	<p>6. Stick</p>  <p>Exhale and lower yourself as if coming down from a pushup. Only your hands and feet should touch the floor.</p>
<p>7. Upward Dog</p>  <p>Inhale and stretch forward and up, bending at the waist. Use your arms to lift your torso, but only bend back as far as feels comfortable and safe. Lift your legs up so that only the tops of your feet touch the floor. It's okay to keep your arms bent at the elbow.</p>	<p>8. Downward dog</p>  <p>Exhale, lift from the hips and push back and up.</p>	<p>9. Lunge</p>  <p>Inhale and step the right foot forward.</p>
<p>10. Head to knees</p>  <p>Exhale, bring the left foot forward and step into head-to-knee position.</p>	<p>11. Hands up</p>  <p>Inhale and rise slowly while keeping arms extended.</p>	<p>12. Mountain</p>  <p>Exhale and lower your arms to the sides in a slow, sweeping motion. End by bringing your hands up into prayer position. Repeat 1-12, stepping into lunge with the left leg.</p>

FIND OUT MORE

What Is Prayer in Unitarian Universalism?

Within our faith, prayer has a wide range of functions, meanings and practices. Find eight contemporary [UU ministers' diverse perspectives](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=512) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=512) in the pamphlet, "UU Views of Prayer," edited by Catherine Bowers (Boston: UUA, 1999). Read the text or order the pamphlet online.

From "What to tell young people about Unitarian Universalism," by Charles Scot Giles, in the loose-leaf resource *Unitarian Universalism in the Home*, edited by Ellen Johnson-Fay, Roberta Nelson and Elizabeth B. Stevens, published in 1965 and reprinted in 1981.

Do Unitarian Universalists Pray?

Prayer means many things to many different people. To some people prayer is a way of asking God for special favors. It's safe to say that Unitarian Universalists do not believe that this is possible. Whatever powers and principles run the universe, they certainly can't be bribed and forced to do errands and odd jobs for people! Unitarian Universalists think that this sort of prayer is probably misguided.

However, there is another sort of prayer that many Unitarian Universalists do practice. This is the sort of prayer which helps each of us look inside of ourselves and decide on what part of our personalities and lives need attention, rethinking and working on. This sort of prayer is often called "meditation" and may be silent (which I like to call "the social silence") or spoken, and the word prayer and the word "meditation" are really almost the same. Sometimes a private form of this kind of prayer is called "sitting for ideas" and there are many people who keep a journal of the insights they get during such times of quiet.

Prayer in a Secular, Pluralistic Society

Find [interfaith guidelines for public prayers](http://www.cres.org/pubs/InterfaithPray.htm) (at www.cres.org/pubs/InterfaithPray.htm) such as invocations, in an article by Vern Barnet, a Unitarian Universalist minister and minister emeritus of the Center

for Religious Experience and Study in Kansas City, Missouri . He considers these questions:

How can we honor diversity at moments of public reverence? While it is easy to enjoy friends of many religions in our neighborhoods and workplaces, how can we embrace people of different faiths when we are asked to offer an invocation or blessing at a public event, or when we select someone to offer such remarks?

The Roche Sisters' "Zero Church" Prayer Project

In 2002, musicians Suzzy and Maggie Roche released a CD of prayers set to music, based on work they did with the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue founded by Anna Deavere Smith at Harvard University . Artists Ysaye Barnwell and others contributed arrangements and vocals. "Zero Church" refers to the address of The First Church in Cambridge Unitarian Universalist, where the Roches worked on the CD project. [Hear samples](http://www.amazon.com/gp/recsradio/radio/B00005TPF2/ref=pd_krex_listen_dp_img?ie=UTF8&refTagSuffix=dp_img) (at www.amazon.com/gp/recsradio/radio/B00005TPF2/ref=pd_krex_listen_dp_img?ie=UTF8&refTagSuffix=dp_img) from "Zero Church" online.

Finger Labyrinths

The website, Awakenings, provided the finger labyrinth in this session and contains abundant [information about labyrinths](http://lessons4living.com/) (at lessons4living.com/): "At its most basic level the labyrinth is a metaphor for the journey to the center of your deepest self and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of who you are." Daniel Johnston's essay on this site, "The Labyrinth Map," begins:

A labyrinth looks like a maze but is not. A maze is like a puzzle to be solved. It has twists and turns and dead ends. You have to think and think and be alert for any clues you may find. A maze can be frustrating, frightening, or challenging. You can get lost in a maze.

A labyrinth, unlike a maze, has no dead ends. There is only one path, and while it does have twists and turns, you can't get lost. The same path takes you into the labyrinth and out again. With a labyrinth you don't have to think, or analyze, or solve a problem. With a labyrinth you just trust that the path will lead you to where you need to be.

SESSION 16: CHOOSE TO BE UU

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

It seems to me that if the majority of our kids continue to grow up to be "small U" UUs (but join Episcopalian or Presbyterian congregations because that is what their spouses [and partners] are) or join no congregation at all, then we have not entirely failed but we have failed at something important. That is, we have not helped them to understand and feel that Unitarian Universalism is indeed a real faith tradition in its own right rather than just a place to learn about religion. — Rev. Francis Manley

Ours is often referred to as a chosen faith. Choosing is terribly difficult, but it is an important human freedom. Unitarian Universalists lift up our responsibility to choose as a defining aspect of our faith identity.

Yet our faith is about much more than choice; it has deep roots and religious mandates. Unitarian Universalism asks us to think about and evaluate our spiritual relationship with the Divine, calls us to be mindful of our role in the world around us and compels us to help the causes of peace and justice. Yes, our faith demands, too, that we choose it consciously, perhaps more than once in the course of our lives.

Kate Tweedie Covey in her book, *Full Circle: Fifteen Ways to Grow Lifelong UUs*, offers a challenge posed by religious educator Riley McLaughlin:

So when we raise our children to be UUs are we raising them specifically to join a UU congregation, or to be sustained by UU values in their lifelong effort to be wonderful people?

As Rev. Francis Manley suggests, also in *Full Circle*, we need to explicitly invite our children to choose to be UU. This session extends that invitation. Children learn how choosing to be a UU is an expression of UU faith on many levels.

The session presents a story of Dorothea Dix. A 19th-century woman who chose to become a Unitarian as an adult, she transformed the treatment of mentally ill people in the United States.

If this is the final session of Windows and Mirrors, have a plan ready for presenting the children's Window/Mirror Panels as a group exhibit for the congregation. You may wish to extend this session with Alternate Activity 3, Window/Mirror Panel Group Exhibit, or add another

meeting to engage the children in preparing the display of their work.

GOALS

This session will:

- Provide participants with an understanding of free will as it relates to a Unitarian Universalist identity
- Challenge participants to choose and articulate preferences, including religious ones
- Invite participants to explore, articulate and artistically express their own religious identity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Contemplate the idea of choice and how it relates to Unitarian Universalism.
- Experience finding affinity groups based on their own choices and preferences
- Explore, articulate and artistically express their own religious identity, in a combination of individual and group activities.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Dorothea Dix	10
Activity 2: Forced Choice	5
Activity 3: UU Sorts and Mingle	10
Activity 4: UU Scavenger Hunt	15
Activity 5: Window/Mirror Panel — Choose to Be UU	10
Faith in Action: Worship — What Do I Believe?	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Elevator Speech	15
Alternate Activity 2: Poem — The Road Not Taken	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Make yourself comfortable, lighting a candle to mark the time differently than you do for other activities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for a few minutes, perhaps repeating one word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day.

Today you will guide the group to view their UU identity as a choice. Reflect on your own choice to be UU:

- Consider the difference between saying, "I am a Unitarian Universalist," and saying, "I attend a Unitarian Universalist congregation." Which do you more readily use? Why?
- If you identify as a Unitarian Universalist, how do you remember making this choice? How might you share with the children your moments of consciously identifying as a UU?
- If you do not identify, or do not yet identify, can you articulate why? Is your hesitancy part of a

process of choice, or something else? Is there anything in your non-identification as UU that may be helpful to share with the children? Give careful thought to how you might do so.

- If you attended a religious institution as a child—UU or not—recall its relevance to you at the time. What was important there? What do you still affirm?
- What are your expectations for this session? What do you hope is created at its conclusion? What difference do you hope it makes?

Consider choice from a child's perspective. Children have fewer choices than adults, and adults make most of the important choices for children who are nine, ten or eleven. Do not expect that participants will be ready, or allowed, to "choose to be UU" today. Focus on conveying that a Unitarian Universalist faith path and affiliation are not automatic inheritances, but represent a spiritual orientation and a set of values that each of us has the opportunity to affirm, not just once but dynamically in our lives.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Opening Words Basket and opening words (see [Session 1, Leader Resource 1](#) (included in this document))
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the mirror to enhance its reflection. The chalice may be filled with reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass, to represent the idea of light, reflection and mirrors.
- Write the words to "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or another hymn you prefer, on newsprint, and post.
- Obtain a basket to hold numerous slips of paper with opening words. Print out Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket. Cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Of course, feel free to add your own.
- Prepare to lead the group in singing "Spirit of Life" or another song commonly sung in your congregation. Optional: Arrange to have someone else musical lead the singing, perhaps with instrumental accompaniment.

Description of Activity

This ritual welcoming reminds participants of the relational nature of the group experience. Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Ask a volunteer to take a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Invite another volunteer to light the chalice. Then, lead a greeting:

Now we will take a moment to greet the people next to us. If you are next to someone who is new to our group, offer a welcome, tell them your first and last name, and learn their name.

Lead the group in singing the hymn you have chosen. Singing a congregational favorite helps children grow in their sense of belonging in congregational life. If you choose not to sing, ask the group to still themselves for another moment of silence. Sound the bell or other instrument to begin and end a short silence.

Ask the child who lit the chalice to extinguish it. Ask the child who read the opening words to return the reading to the Opening Words Basket.

Including All Participants

If you have a non-sighted participant who reads braille, obtain the braille version of *Singing the Living Tradition* from UUA Bookstore. The bookstore orders from an outside publisher, so order several weeks ahead.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — DOROTHEA DIX (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copy of the Story "[Dorothea Dix](#)" (included in this document) "
- A bell, chime, rain stick or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story. Prepare to read or tell it dramatically.
- Create an atmosphere to set this time apart from other activities of the session. Turn off overhead lights and use lamps. You might don a storytelling shawl to enhance the moment and help you claim the storytelling.

Description of Activity

Gather the children. Ring the chime, bell or other noisemaker and make eye contact with each participant. Tell the story.

At the conclusion, ring the chime again to signify the end of the story. Invite the children to think silently on their own about the story. Say:

Now we are going to practice listening and discussing skills—both are needed to help us understand the story from multiple perspectives.

Let's find out what one another thought about the story.

Remind them not to assume others share their opinions. Ask everyone to use "I think" or "I feel" statements. Encourage the group to listen to each comment and then share some silence. Use the bell or chime to move between speakers.

Begin a discussion by asking participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable. Use these questions to facilitate discussion, making sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance:

- What do you think Dorothea Dix was like? What kind of friends do you think she had? What do you think they did together? (this age is so peer-oriented, and we're asking them to think about their religion as a choice, it might be good to help them relate to Dorothea Dix when she was their age — can you think of better or more questions?)
- Why do you think it was so important for her to help poor children?
- Can you imagine what she heard the day she walked into a Unitarian church?
- Do you think it was a difficult decision for her to change churches, even though no one in her family was a Unitarian?
- Have you ever made a choice in your life that was different from your family? If yes, what was that like?

ACTIVITY 2: FORCED CHOICE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A space large enough to play the game comfortably

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange a large, open space where participants can move around freely.
- Become familiar with the rules of the game so you can lead it smoothly.
- Prepare a list of choices the children will find relevant for the Sorts portion of the game. Devise some value-neutral categories or favorites by which children can group or categorize themselves for the Mingle section.

Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather to play a game. Say something like "The first part of the game is the Sorts game." Explain that you will offer two contrasting choices and the group has to move either East or West of the room (e.g. "Do you prefer Target or Walmart?"). Then you will throw out two more choices and they will move South and North. That way, everyone moves somewhere and can't get "lost" in the crowd. Sorts that work well include: movie/book; salty/sweet; dress up/casual; inside/outside; be on the stage performing/in the audience watching, like school/like reading at home; like watching sports/playing sports; math or English homework. Choices should not reflect opposites but different activities, etc. Ask questions rapidly.

After playing for two minutes, invite the group to suggest any additional sorts. Play for another minute. Then bring them together and ask:

- Was it easy or hard to know the answers?
- What questions did you like being asked?
- Did they learn anything new from playing the game?
- What is involved in making a choice? Did they think about the answer or already "know" the answer somehow? Did they watch what others were doing? Did that influence their choice?

Including All Participants

Accommodate children with physical limitations. Assist groups to form around a child who has less mobility.

ACTIVITY 3: UU SORTS AND MINGLE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A space large enough to play the game comfortably

Preparation for Activity

- Ensure that an appropriate space for the game is arranged
- Become familiar enough with the rules of the game that you can lead with out referencing rules very often.
- Review the Sorts and Mingle questions in the Description of Activity. Adapt them to make sure they present religious choices the children of this age, in this particular group, can quickly understand and respond to.

- Become familiar with the Sorts preferences so you can deliver them in a rapid-fire way.

Description of Activity

Explain that now you are going to play the same game, using choices related to religious identity. Review with the group the term identity. You might ask what they think identity means. Affirm that your identity is who you are.

Gather everyone to play. Say something like "Again, the first part of the game is Sorts." Explain that you will offer two contrasting choices and each person has to either East or West (opposite sides of the room) to declare their choice. Then you will offer two new choices and they will move South and North. (That way, everyone moves somewhere and can't get "lost" in the crowd.)

Ask the Sorts questions rapidly, but pause as needed to explain any language you are not sure all participants understand. Ask adults to wait to "sort" themselves until most of the children have chosen.

- Which part of a religious service do you prefer, music or sermon?
- Do you like to visit other congregations or like to come to our congregation?
- What seems more religious to you? Prayer or meditation?
- Which would you prefer to do? Discover ideas on your own or learn about ideas discovered by others?
- Which is more important, an individual's voice or a community's agreement?
- Do you think anyone can be a prophet, or there can be only one real prophet—for example, Elijah, Jesus, Buddha, Mohamed or Brigham Young?
- Is there something divine outside of ourselves or do we all possess divinity within ourselves?
- Do you think the word of God, of many names, can be found in only one book? Or in many books?
- Are we born bad, or are we born good?
- Do you think bad things that happen are punishment or random?
- Who is closer to the holy, ministers, priests and rabbis... or you?
- There are angels that affect the direction of life or there is no such force outside our own will and action?

- Fairness is the most important consideration or keeping one's promise is most important?
- Messiahs have arrived or are still yet to come?
- Messiahs aren't coming at all or are already here?
- Individual reason and evaluation is necessary to live a life of faith or one needs to follow the authority of the word of God (as interpretations as shared by religious authorities).

After playing for two minutes or asking all the questions, ask the group if they have any sorts related to religious issues that they wish to ask. Play for another minute. Then bring them together and ask:

- Was it easy or hard to know the answers?
- What questions were important to you?
- Which were ones you had never thought about before?
- Did others' choices affect your's? How?
- Did you learn anything about yourself from playing the game? (Mirror question) About others in the group? (Window question)

Finally, ask:

- Which choices did you make that you think indicate a Unitarian Universalist identity?

Affirm that all the choices offered are beliefs and opinions held by some Unitarian Universalists. Say, in your own words:

The ability to make religious choices, and to change our minds sometimes, is part of our faith.

Explain that now they are going to Mingle around religious preferences. Explain that Mingling is relating your preference to another's. Mingling allows another way to gauge religious identity. To mingle is interesting and effective in allowing people to recognize one another's religious preferences. Congregations often begin by "mingling."

Assemble the group and remind everyone how to play. Offer a general category (such as a favorite congregational activity) and invite participants to mingle and find others who have the same answer. After about 30 seconds, have each cluster that has formed call out their answer. It's okay if someone has not found anyone else who has the same answer. If two clusters call out the same answer, that may mean the group didn't mingle very well!

Now use these religious identity Mingle questions; after each Mingle, ask the groups to identify themselves quickly before moving onto the next question:

- Why do bad things happen?
- Why do good things happen?
- Where is the best place to look for the truth?
- What happens to us after death?
- What stories help me live a better life?
- What religious practice at our congregation is most spiritual for you?
- What do you believe about God?

Play for about two minutes. Then stop and ask the group if they have any religious preferences they wish to present as a mingle opportunity.

Play for another minute or two, making sure to ask clusters to self-identify. End with:

- What is your religious identity?

Again, ask each cluster to self-identify. Affirm everyone's choice and explore together similarities and differences among the answers. Feel free to affirm your religious identity as Unitarian Universalist.

Gather in a circle to talk about the game. Use these questions:

- When was it easy to find others who liked the same things or thought like you?
- When was it difficult?
- What did you learn from playing the game? About others in the group? About yourself?
- Why do you think we played this game today?

Including All Participants

Be sure the space accommodates full participation by children who have limited mobility. If any child cannot move freely around the room, ask them each "sort" and "mingle" question directly and facilitate their physically joining the appropriate cluster of participants.

ACTIVITY 4: UU SCAVENGER HUNT (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Scavenger Hunt Rules](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape
- Timepiece for each team

- Prizes for the winners, enough of a treat for them to share with the other group participants

Preparation for Activity

- Review Handout 1, Scavenger Hunt List. Adapt the items list as necessary for your congregation. Print out and photocopy for all participants or teams, plus an extra. On the extra handout, assign point values for the different items. You may wish to also post the point values on a sheet of newsprint.
- Inform congregational staff and/or members as necessary that participants will be visiting locations in the building on a scavenger hunt.

Description of Activity

This activity gives participants a fun way to notice places of religious identity in your congregation.

Form smaller groups based on how many adults you have—each group should have an adult leader. Pass out handouts and review rules of the hunt together. Make sure each group has a way of keeping time and knows when to return to the room. Remind them about activities are going on in the congregation and review ways they might enter a room without being too disruptive; for example, one person from the group might enter after knocking, and gesture silence as they move to do what they need to do.

Send them off.

When they return, gather everyone into a group. Ask groups to share what they have gathered and total their points. Declare a winner and bring out the treat.

Explain that their win entitles them to this treat and also to an opportunity for practicing generosity with those they played against. If they whine, ask how much fun the game would have been without competitors? Affirm that winners need someone to play the game with and so all should be included in the treat.

Thank all for participating.

Including All Participants

The speed and excitement of a scavenger hunt, especially in a building that is not fully accessible, can especially challenge children with physical limitations. Adults leading the teams need to make sure every child has a role in finding some items on the list.

ACTIVITY 5: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL — CHOOSE TO BE UU (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Leader Resource 1, [Chalice Template](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Items that symbolize your congregation, such as a postcard with a picture of your church, an order of service, a worship notice in a local newspaper, etc., for children to cut up and include on their panels
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror Panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar (R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - A variety of drawing and writing materials, including color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors, including left-hand scissors
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon, scraps of fabric and a variety of old magazines to cut up

Preparation for Activity

- Use the Leader Resource to make a few handouts and/or card stock templates. Some children may want to cut out and decorate a paper chalice, some may want an intact chalice shape to trace on paper, fabric, etc. or directly on their Window/Mirror Panel and others may like to work creatively with one or more of the shapes that comprise the chalice.
- If this will be the last Windows and Mirrors session, finalize plans for a group exhibit of the children's Window/Mirror panels. You may wish to make a flyer announcing when and where the artwork will be on display for the congregation, or add the information to the Taking It Home handout. Consider developing Alternate Activity 3, Window/Mirror Panel Group Exhibit, to extend this session or hold another meeting for children to participate in creating the group display.

Description of Activity

Ask the children to bring their Window/Mirror Panels to work tables. Distribute Window/Mirror Panel basket(s). Say something like:

Every time we have been together, we have exploring what it means to have a Unitarian Universalist view of the world and of ourselves. Today we explored our Unitarian Universalist identity. Everyone came up with their own way of understanding and defining a UU identity for themselves.

The flaming chalice is a symbol we all use for Unitarian Universalism. It can still be that, yet mean something different for each of us. Find a way to let the chalice represent your own personal UU identity on your Window/Mirror Panel.

Distribute the handouts and/or templates you have made from Leader Resource 1. Invite children to trace the whole chalice shape or the individual parts onto Mylar or another material, using whatever colors they like, and attach it to their Window/Mirror Panel in some way. (You might suggest they can use the chalice in its intact form to represent Unitarian Universalism simply or express with the pieces how they feel about their own Unitarian Universalist identity.) You can also give an option for children to use other symbols for your congregation if you have brought some. As children work, invite small group conversation. Give a warning with enough time left for everyone to clean up and for a few volunteers to share their work with the larger group.

If this is the last Windows and Mirrors session, explain how and when the children's panels will be displayed together. You may wish to develop Alternate Activity 3, Window/Mirror Panel Group Exhibit, for an extension of today's session or an additional meeting, to engage the children in making the group display.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Taking It Home handout
- Optional: A copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 2, [Namaste](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place for participants to store their Window/Mirror Panels between sessions. Keep in mind, there may be times the panels are not entirely dry when the session ends.
- Write the closing words on newsprint and post.

- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (or, email to parents).
- Optional: Review the leader resource so you can briefly explain the origin and meaning of "namaste" and demonstrate the accompanying gesture.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and we now have to work together as community to clean the meeting space. First, everyone should clean up their own personal area, put away materials they were using and store their Window/Mirror Panel. Then they may clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until all are done.

Then bring the group back to the circle. Ask them to think about what happened today that was good or what they wish had gone better. If you are running short of time you can ask them for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on the session.

Invite each participant to say, in a word or sentence, why it is important for them to be a part of this faith community. You may go around the circle for responses; allow individuals to speak or pass.

Then ask everyone to hold hands and say together:

Keep alert;

Stand firm in your faith;

Be courageous and strong;

Let all that you do be done in love. — 1
Corinthians 16

If this is the first time the group is using "namaste," briefly explain its origin and meaning. Then, lead the group in the word and bowing gesture. Or, substitute "thank you." Invite each participant to bow their head to the individuals on either side and then bow to the center of the circle and say "thank you" together.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: WORSHIP — WHAT DO I BELIEVE? (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Large, round mirror to hold the chalice
- Reflective materials, such as beads or pieces of stained glass

- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition* and Opening Words Basket and opening words (see Session 1, Leader Resource 1)

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange to hold a short worship service during the Windows and Mirrors session, and invite parents for the correct time. Or, schedule the worship for another time, perhaps when you plan to display the Window/Mirror Panels for the entire congregation.
- Prepare the space for worship including the chalice and votives, chairs and table. You may wish to invite a musician to accompany and help lead a hymn.

Description of Activity

Engage your religious educator or minister to schedule and, if needed, guide the children's planning of a worship service for parents, families and friends. This might also be the debut of the Window/Mirror Panels group exhibit.

Give each participant to publicly affirm a belief statement or religious or non-religious affirmation of life with parents and group participants present.

Invite each participant to write down a response to the statement, "I believe in _____ and this helps me make meaningful choices in my life." Talk with each child to share about their participation, ideas and experiences from other Windows and Mirrors sessions, including claims made in their UU sorts and mingle game today (Activity 3). Explain that this might help them craft a statement that they feel confident to assert publicly. Work with individual children on their statements. Some children may be adept at helping others, as well.

Choose a hymn for the worship service and practice singing it together; tell children they will help lead the hymn during the worship service. A possible liturgy for this simple worship service is:

- Opening
- Half of the children's statements
- Hymn
- The remaining half of the statements
- Closing

Make sure you inform participants, their parents and other guests about the day, time and location of this worship service. You might include the information in the Taking It Home handout or email.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect and discuss with your co-leader(s)

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident?

If this is the last session of Windows and Mirrors, reflect generally on the program with all co-leaders who have been involved. Revisit the Windows and Mirrors program goals and look together for evidence that the goals have been achieved. You might ask:

- How have we observed the children's increased awareness of multiple perspectives in life, particularly with regard to justice issues, over the course of these sessions?
- How can the children's Window/Mirror Panels serve as assessment information for us? How can we exhibit the panels to best convey the children's learning to the wider congregation?
- How have children shown their growth in faith development, spiritual development, ethical development and/or Unitarian Universalist identity?
- What anecdotes from the Windows and Mirrors sessions illustrate the learning we have achieved together?

Share your reflections with your religious educator.

TAKING IT HOME

It seems to me that if the majority of our kids continue to grow up to be "small U" UUs (but join Episcopalian or Presbyterian congregations because that is what their spouses [and partners] are) or join no congregation at all, then we have not entirely failed but we have failed at something important. That is, we have not helped them to understand and feel that Unitarian Universalism is indeed a real faith tradition in its own right rather than just a place to learn about religion. — Rev. Francis Manley

IN TODAY'S SESSION...

We explored the idea of free will as an underlying theological concept in Unitarian Universalism, identifying ours as a "chosen faith." In the U.S. every individual chooses their faith, even if as an affirmation of the faith

in which they were raised. However, few other faith traditions construct practices around such choice and offer the possibility consistently and openly as does Unitarian Universalism. This openness can be perceived, by children, as disinterest in their choosing Unitarian Universalism at all. Today we affirmed the institutional wish that they do choose Unitarian Universalism.

Additionally, because Unitarian Universalism allows a free expression of faith, children need opportunities to practice articulating their beliefs. Today we played a game where we grouped ourselves by preferences, some religious, and considered how these preferences related to Unitarian Universalism. They heard a story about Dorothea Dix, a 19th-century woman who chose to become a Unitarian as an adult and who made one of the most important contributions in the history of the United States to the treatment of people who are mentally ill.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . T alk about ...

Your wishes for your child(ren)'s religious future. Do you want them to grow up and be Unitarian Universalists? If so, share this with them. Explain why attending a Unitarian Universalist congregation is important to you. Share why you bring them to religious education and what effect you hope it will have on their maturation. Talk about your own religious life as a child—the denominational worship or religious education you attended, if any, and how it differs from the one you attend now. Explain why you changed denominations, if you did. Be as specific as you can: Your intentional faith choices will serve as a model for your children.

A FAMILY RITUAL

Consider articulating a prayer of gratitude or a bedtime ritual which encompasses the beliefs of every family member. Encourage each family member to articulate a bedrock belief or practice to include. Engage everyone in the family in rearranging the wording and/or practice so that this expression of faith flows comfortably for all.

A FAMILY GAME

Ask your children to teach you how to play UU Sorts and Mingle, especially the next time extended family is over. To sort, move to different areas of the room depending on how you answer a Religious Sorts question. To mingle, talk about the question together.

Religious Sorts

- Which part of a religious service do you prefer, music or sermon?
- Like to visit other congregations or like to come to our congregation?

- What seems more religious to you? Prayer or meditation?
- If you had to choose which would you prefer to do? Discover ideas on your own or learning about ideas discovered by others?
- Which is more important, an individual's voice or a community's agreement?
- Do you think there have been many prophets (i.e. Moses, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, Brigham Young and others) or that one prophet is more important than any others?
- Is there something divine outside of ourselves or do we all possess divinity within ourselves?
- The word of God, of many names, can be found in only one book? Or in many books?
- Are we born bad, or are we born good, or both?
- Bad things that happen are punishment or random?
- Are ministers, priests and rabbis closer to the holy than your neighbor?
- Is there one God, many gods or no god?
- There are angels, there are unexplained forces that affect the direction of life or there is no such force outside our own will and action?
- Should fairness be the most important consideration or is keeping one's promise?

Religious Mingles

- Why do bad things happen?
- What religious book contains the most truth?
- What happens to us after death?
- What stories help me live a better life?
- Where do you like to worship?
- What are some religious practices that interest me?
- What actions that help increase diversity in public life interest you?
- Is it important to have a religious identity from birth or to choose one?

Have fun!

FAMILY DISCOVERY

If your extended families or friends attend another denomination, ask to visit with them. Make sure to leave enough time to debrief with your child(ren) when you

return home, perhaps over a meal together. What was similar or familiar? What was different? What did you like? What didn't you like? Is this a denomination where anyone in your family could attend and feel comfortable? Why or why not? Ask family members to compare their visit with participation at your Unitarian Universalist congregation. Reaffirm that you hope your child chooses to be a UU when they are older.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ELEVATOR SPEECHES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pen, paper and scrap paper
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Timepiece
- Chime, bell or other musical noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post: What is a Unitarian Universalist?

Description of Activity

This activity gives participants practice in articulating a Unitarian Universalist identity. By spending deeper attention on children's individual beliefs, you might make this activity an alternative to the Faith in Action worship activity.

Direct children's attention the question you have posted and tell them today everyone will answer it. Explain the "elevator speech:" A few brief yet meaningful words to communicate an idea to a friend or stranger in the time it takes an elevator to go from the first floor to the twelfth floor—the equivalent of a walk from one's classroom to the school cafeteria. An elevator speech should be positive, clear and informative.

Distribute paper and pens/pencils and give the group five minutes to script what they would say to a friend who asked "What is a Unitarian Universalist?" As they work, remind them the elevator speech should be something to help someone understand.

After five minutes or when most seem to be finished, pair participants and ask them to stand together as if in an elevator. Invite one to ask the question when you ring the chime and listen to their partner's answer until they arrive at their floor and you ring the chime again.

Ring the chime, wait 90 seconds, then ring it again.

Help the children form new pairs so that this time, the children who asked the question before now get to answer it with their own elevator speech.

Re-partner the children two more times so that, in total, each child gets to make an elevator speech twice and listen twice.

If participants express frustration with how quickly the time passes, remind them this conversation is happening in an elevator.

Gather everyone together and ask a few volunteers to share their elevator speeches with the whole group. You may wish to stage each speech as if the speaker were riding with a few people in an elevator and invite one of the elevator-riders to ask the question. When they are done, clarify their statements by asking questions and making corrections as necessary.

Ask the group whether the exercise was difficult. Why or why not? Ask if there were similarities or differences in what they heard? Might they use some of the words they came up with or heard others say, if asked about Unitarian Universalism? If you have newcomers in the room, ask if they found the elevator speeches helpful.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THE ROAD NOT TAKEN (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [The Road Not Taken](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils/pens for all participants
- Newsprint, markers and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Review the questions about the poem and choose those you think will resonate with your group. The questions are meant to elicit interpretations of the poem and help children relate it to their lives. It is more important to use the poem well than to use all the questions.
- Plan to read the poem aloud. Or ask a participant or adult volunteer in advance if they will read it; if possible, give them a copy of the poem in advance.
- If the group typically includes more than eight children, consider forming smaller groups of three to five—as many groups as you have adult facilitators. Copy Handout 2 and the Description of Activity for each adult who may facilitate a group.
- Consider carefully what the poem means to you in relation to the purpose of this session. Articulate this in a one- or two-word sentence you can share with the group during the discussion.

Description of Activity

If the group is large, form small groups. Give each adult facilitator a copy of the poem (Handout 2) and a copy of the prompt questions (below).

Settle the group(s) for discussion. Distribute the poem and pencils/pens. Invite the children to read the poem silently and jot down any thoughts about it. Then, read it aloud or have pre-arranged volunteers read it.

Explain that now the children will practice listening and discussing skills to understand the poem from the multiple perspectives in the room (or small group). Ask participants to pay particular attention to the poem and their own reaction to it—not what others say about it.

Invite children to briefly retell the poem in their own words. What children recall and relay tells you what they found most meaningful or memorable. After they have shared, suggest a method discussion, a line-by-line exploration of the poem, reflecting on what each line means to individuals in the group. Use the discussion questions to explore the poem and children's responses to it. Getting through all the questions is less important than drawing out children's individual responses to the poem as a whole; if you are running out of time for the line-by-line study, skip to the final three questions to give the discussion a meaningful conclusion.

If the group has energy around a particular line, begin there. Or, start at the beginning and re-read aloud the first line:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood

Prompt:

- Why do you think the color yellow (gold) is used? What might Frost be trying to suggest here? Have you ever been in a yellow wood?
- What yellow road is well known? (the Yellow Brick Road in Oz) Where did that yellow road lead?

And looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth.

- Why did the traveler look down the road to where it bent? Do you ever think about the future? What do see for yourself there?

And sorry I could not travel both

- Is it difficult to choose between two unknowns? Is it easier to choose or to be told what to do? Where have you had to do choose?

And having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanted wear

- What might this line mean? Do you ever make choices that are different from others but are better for you? How might this apply, if it does, to attending a Unitarian Universalist congregation?

Though as for that the passing there had worn them really about the same

- What does this line tell us? When do you make big choices, do you do so alone or do you seek advice? Who do you ask?
- How does knowing that others have had to make the same choice make a difference to you?

And both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had trodden back

- What does this line tell us? (It implies that both roads were less traveled.)

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.

- What does this mean to you? Have you ever made any choices that are less traveled?

Now step back and talk more generally:

- What about making choices is missing in this poem?
- Do you ever have people giving you advice about which road to choose? How does this help you decide?
- Do sometimes people not make a choice? What happens then?

Invite the group to consider the poem's first and last lines as one sentence:

Two roads diverged in a wood... and that has made all the difference.

- What does this line mean now to you? (You might offer something like "I think it means that making choices is what makes the difference in a life.")
- How is choice related to being a human being?
- How is choice related to be a Unitarian Universalist?

Affirm all responses and thank the children for taking the time to think about this poem.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: WINDOW/MIRROR PANEL GROUP EXHIBIT

Materials for Activity

- All participants' Window/Mirror Panels
- Materials for display of Window/Mirror Panels
- Basket(s) of Window/Mirror panel materials:
 - Sheets of Mylar (R) in several colors, shiny gift wrap, aluminum foil and other reflective paper
 - Sheets of plain or construction paper
 - A variety of drawing and writing materials, including color markers (permanent markers work best on Mylar)
 - Glue sticks, tape (including double-sided tape) and scissors, including left-hand scissors
 - Optional: Stick-on sequins, a hole-puncher, yarn, ribbon, scraps of fabric and a variety of old magazines to cut up

Description of Activity

If this is the last session of Windows and Mirrors, engage the group in completing and assembling their Window/Mirror Panels for a congregational exhibit.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 16: STORY: DOROTHEA DIX

Dorothea Dix lived in the 1800s. At a time when women had fewer choices than men did, Dorothea made extraordinary choices for herself. She did not grow up a Unitarian, but she chose to become one as an adult. Another choice she made was to work hard on behalf of other people.

Dorothea made one of the most important contributions to our society by helping to create hospitals for people with mental illness. In her time, there were no hospitals for people with mental problems. People who acted strange or could not communicate because they had difficulty thinking and interacting the same way most others did, were kept in prisons. Often they were chained and given very little clothing. So what if it was cold in the prison? Nobody cared whether these people were cold. Most people thought people with mental illness did not get cold or feel pain. In fact, many people thought that those with mental illness were not fully human at all.

What gave Dorothea Dix a different idea about them? Maybe it was some of her own troubles that made her think more compassionately.

Dorothea Lynde Dix was born on April 4, 1802 in the town of Hampden in Maine . She was the oldest of three children born to Joseph Dix and Mary Bigelow Dix. Dorothea's mother was often sick and her father was not very nice to his family. He often hit his wife and children. The family moved a lot, from Maine to Massachusetts and finally Vermont . When she was 12 years old, her grandmother sent for Dorothea and her two younger brothers to come live with her in Boston . Dorothea's grandmother was wealthy and she expected Dorothea to behave in a certain way. Dorothea only wanted to care for her younger brothers. She was not interested in learning to be a "lady;" which at that time meant taking lessons in how to behave in society.

It took time for Dorothea to learn and understand how to "behave." But one thing that she did very well, and loved in fact, was to read books and study. It was unusual at the time for a young girl to know how to read and write, but Dorothea's father, a Methodist minister had taught her. Even though he was difficult as a father, he did teach her something valuable.

As Dorothea grew up, her grandmother was very strict and very concerned about her status in society. When Dorothea became involved in opening a school for poor

children, she wanted to use her grandmother's barn as the school. Dorothea was so worried her grandmother would not let her teach the poor, especially in her own barn, that she wrote her a letter to ask permission. Dorothea's grandmother said yes right away and Dorothea spent years as a teacher.

Dorothea was religious, attending her grandmother's Congregationalist church every Sunday. One day, Dorothea decided to visit the Unitarian church where Dr. William Ellery Channing was speaking. What she heard that day changed her life forever. She heard Dr. Channing preach that God was love and we are all a part of that love and we are called to show that love to others. This was very different from the sermons she heard in her own church. Dorothea became a Unitarian. After she got to know Dr. Channing, he offered her a job helping to care for his children. She lived with the Channing family for six months, traveling with them and tutoring the Channing children.

When Dorothea was in her forties, she visited a women's prison and saw women in chains with no clothes on. When she asked why, the prison matron told her those people were mentally ill and didn't understand anyway. Dorothea was appalled. She was so upset, she called her friends in the Massachusetts government to tell them. They told her they would need a written report before they could act. Dorothea went to every prison in Massachusetts and wrote a detailed report about the conditions for the mentally ill in each one. With her reports, Massachusetts began to open hospitals that treated the mentally ill with respect and gave them good food and warm clothing.

Dorothea Dix began to travel to other states, investigating conditions in prisons, filing reports, and testifying before state legislatures. Some of the hospitals she started still stand. So does the view of the mentally ill that she put forth: Even when someone's words or behaviors cannot be understood by others, they are still a person who deserve dignity, respect and love.

Dorothea deeply valued the right to make one's own choices. She trusted her own choices about the right way to live her life. One of her choices was to become a Unitarian. Another was to work to help people with mental illness in ways they were not able to help themselves. She understood they were people whose right to make their own choices had been taken away. She helped everyone understand that people with mental illness are people like us, who deserve dignity and respect.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 16:

HANDOUT 1: SCAVENGER HUNT RULES

1. Your group must stay together.
2. No stealing! You can borrow items, but you must return them—make sure you remember to whom they belong.
3. You must stay in the building or on the grounds.
4. You cannot buy anything.
5. You have 10 minutes. You lose points if you return late.

GOOD LUCK!!

Points Items

5 different things with "Unitarian Universalism" written on them

Congregation's newsletter or bulletin

Signature of a signed member

2 different things with the congregation's name on them

A rubbing of a congregational name or artifact

A symbol of the congregation

A symbol of Unitarian Universalism

Signature of someone who knows what "UUA" stands for

Signature of someone who has been a Unitarian Universalist from birth

Something from pews in the congregation's sanctuary or the worship space

Something available for visitors at no charge

Signature of a leader of worship service on Sunday morning

TOTAL POINTS

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 16: HANDOUT 2: THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

By Robert Frost.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

WINDOWS AND MIRRORS: SESSION 16:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: CHALICE TEMPLATE



FIND OUT MORE

Unitarian Universalism's Heritage of Religious Education

The words of the Rev. William Ellery Channing, written more than 150 years ago, resonate for this session's approach to and respect for the developing faith identities of young Unitarian Universalists:

The great end in religious instruction is not to stamp our minds upon the young, but to stir up their own; not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own; not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth; not to form an outward regularity, but to touch inward springs; not to bind them by ineradicable prejudices to our particular sect or peculiar notions, but to prepare them for impartial, conscientious judging of whatever subjects may be offered to their decision; not to burden the memory, but to quicken and strengthen the power of thought; not to impose religion upon them in the form of arbitrary rules, but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment. In a

word, the great end in religious instruction is to awaken the soul, to excite and cherish spiritual life.

Dorothea Dix

Find a very readable, comprehensive [undergraduate paper about Dorothea Dix](http://www.webster.edu/~woolfm/dorotheadix.html) (at www.webster.edu/~woolfm/dorotheadix.html), by Jenn Bumb, on the website of Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri. *Voice for the Mad: The Life of Dorothea Dix* by David Gollaher (1995) received kudos from Amazon online reviewers for its attention to Dix's political effectiveness and her "essential sadness (which)... made her self-aware yet remote from other people." The [Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biography](http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/dorotheadix.html) (at www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/dorotheadix.html) delves into Dix's relationship with Unitarianism and the William Ellery Channing family in its article on her life, by Wayne Viney. The web page [Dorothea Dix: Unitarian Reform](http://www.teachushistory.org/second-great-awakening-age-reform/approaches/dorothea-dix-unitarian-reform) (at www.teachushistory.org/second-great-awakening-age-reform/approaches/dorothea-dix-unitarian-reform) on the Teach U.S. History website talks about her life and work in the context of the Second Great Awakening.