



Soul Matters

The Gift of **Pluralism**

**RE Resources
Second - Fifth Grade**

May 2024

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Welcome to The Gift of Pluralism!

Welcome to the Soul Matters RE Packet for Second through Fifth Grades for the month of May!

This year's overarching frame is *The Gifts of Our Faith*. We've been focusing on ten beloved UU values and exploring their potential to shape us and, in turn, shape the world. And this month we turn toward the exploration of the gifts of Pluralism.

Leader Note: Pluralism is also one of the values in our UUA's [Article II proposal](#). Here is the wording that is used:

"Pluralism: We celebrate that we are all sacred beings, diverse in culture, experience, and theology.

We covenant to learn from one another in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect."

Click [HERE](#) to read a bit more about the strategies we are using in our RE packets to engage our RE children with the UUA's proposed new Article II values and inspirations statement.

And this month we turn toward the exploration of the gifts of Pluralism.

We offer four sessions this month. The first session looks at what the word pluralism means for children. Additionally, this session, along with sessions two and three, help kids explore what it means to be a people of a pluralistic faith. Or to put it another way, these first three sessions dig into the distinctive messages our faith has for us about pluralism. Those messages are in quotes in the below session titles.

Session Four is a bit different as it offers help for what to do on Memorial Day weekend. Since each congregation has very different approaches to and attendance levels for Memorial Day Sunday, we offer two options of support. We hope one of them, or at least parts of them, is useful as you approach Memorial Day in your own way.

Session One: Many Views: "We Need Each Other to Perceive The Whole!"

Session Two: Many Sources: "We Are Made of Many Roots!"

Session Three: Many People: "No One Get Left Out!"

Session Four: Option A - Many Things to Celebrate

Option B- Many Reasons to Honor Memorial Day

I am so excited for kids to explore the concept of being part of a pluralistic faith by exploring the things our faith calls us to do. For example, in session one, the optical illusion activity is a great way to highlight that we all perceive and understand things from different perspectives or viewpoints. In addition, as a person who loves to cook and involve my own children and RE kids, I am super happy to offer one of my favorite books, *The Sandwich Swap*, and a hummus recipe as a way of exploring and *celebrating* differences, not just tolerating them..

I hope you and your church kids and families have as much fun exploring what it means to be part of a pluralistic faith as I had writing these sessions.

April Rosario, on behalf of the entire [Soul Matters Team](#).

***To read more about our approach to this year's 2023-2024 RE packets, visit our "[Welcome to Soul Matters RE](#)" Google Doc.*

Calendar Connections

May 2024

Monthly Theme: The Gift of Pluralism

View all months at a glance [HERE](#)

Click on the hyperlinked names of each event for more information or inspiration.

Interfaith

- [Beltane](#) (Pagan/Wiccan) - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Yom Hashoah](#) - begins May 5, 2024, at sunset
- [Ascension Day](#) (Christian) - May 9, 2024
- [Vesak](#) - Celebration of Buddha's Birthday (Buddhist) - celebrated by on April 8, 2021 in [some countries](#) and on various rotating dates in May by [other countries](#). (more [here](#), [here](#), & [here](#))
- [Pentecost](#) (Christian) - May 19, 2024 (more [here](#))

Unitarian Universalist

- Anniversary of [William Ellery Channing's Baltimore Sermon](#), "Unitarian Christianity" - May 5th (1819)
- [UUA Founding Day](#) (1961) - May 12 (more [here](#))
- [Emerson's birthday](#) - May 25 (1803)
- American Unitarian Association founded May 25 (1825)

National & Cultural

- Jewish American Heritage Month
- Asian/ Pacific American Heritage Month
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- [May Day](#)/International Workers Day - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Cinco de Mayo](#) - May 5
- [Mother's Day](#) (US & Canada) - May 12, 2024, second Sunday of May
- First HIV/AIDS death in North America - May 15 (1969)
- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia - May 17
- [Brown v. Board of Education](#) - May 17, 1954 (more [here](#))
- [Plessy v. Ferguson](#) - May 18, 1896 (more [here](#))
- [Agender Pride Day](#) - May 19
- Birthday of [Malcolm X](#) - May 19, 1925 (more [here](#))
- [Victoria Day](#) (Canada) May 20, 2024
- [Harvey Milk](#), gay rights activist, born - May 22, 1930
- [Pansexual and Panromantic Awareness and Visibility Day](#) - May 24
- Memorial Day (US) - May 27, 2024

For Fun and On the Fringe

- [World Press Freedom Day](#) - May 3
- [Star Wars Day](#) - May 4
- Debut of Norman Rockwell's "[Rosie the Riveter](#)" - May 29, 1943

Session One:

Many Views

“We Need Each Other to Perceive The Whole!”

Theme Angle

The theme of the month is The Gift of Pluralism. In this session, we engage this value by understanding what the word Pluralism means. We also use this lesson to begin exploring one of the distinct messages our faith gives us about how to be a pluralistic faith.

This first session is an excellent time to explain that this month, we are exploring the [Article II proposal](#) value of Pluralism. Here is the wording that is used:

*“**Pluralism:** We celebrate that we are all sacred beings, diverse in culture, experience, and theology.*

We covenant to learn from one another in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect.”

To help you lift up Article II connections, we’ve added “Blue Box notes” into various sections in this and other sessions.

Light It!

Leader Note: This year, we have created a [Google Doc](#) to crowdsource our favorite Chalice Lightings! Please [share](#) the words and links to your favorite Chalice Lightings.

Extinguish It!

Signal the end of “Chalice time” with a short ritual for extinguishing the chalice. It might be just after any of the below sections or at the end of the session. Use a [candle snuffer](#) if you use real candles for dramatic effect, or just blow it out. We offer the following words for extinguishing the chalice, but there also are resources for other chalice extinguishing words in this [Google Doc](#):

Katie’s Words*

We gather the light of truth, the warmth of love, and the energy of action into our hearts.

Back into the world of do and say,

Carry it forward into the dawning day.

Go Now in Peace, Amen.

** (Move your arms to express the actions: gather using a cupping motion from the flame of the chalice to your heart, spread that outward again.)*

Introduce It!

The Gift Box!

Leader Note: We suggest [buying](#) or [creating](#) a gift box as your wonder box for this section, as a visual representation of this year's overarching theme: "The Gifts of our Faith." The Gift Box and the item inside can be used to help kids make the connection that the values of our faith are gifts we are called to both give and receive, just as we do with a gift or present. The Gift Box and the item(s) inside can also be used as an object lesson during a Time for All Ages or as the opening to your RE group.

"We Need Each Other to Perceive The Whole"

(Leader notes in the suggested script will be noted with [purple font](#) and italics.)

Reflection Object: Multiple Images & items from different cultures, faith traditions, and identities

Introduction

This year, we have been exploring many values that are important to us as UUs. They are like gifts our faith gives to us and asks us to give to the world. It's just like presents for a birthday party! This month, we are exploring **The Gift of Pluralism**.

We have also been talking a lot about how our religion is considering replacing our 7 principles with a new set of 7 values. Values that will help lead us so we can better live in and serve today's world. Pluralism is one of those values. Here is the [wording](#) that our UUA is using to describe this value:

*"**Pluralism:** We celebrate that we are all sacred beings, diverse in culture, experience, and theology. We covenant to learn from one another in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect."*

Reveal

So, with that in mind, what is the gift in today's Gift Box? ([open the box and pull out the net and the toy person](#))
It's a bunch of different things!

Let's explore them... ([lay out all the items from the gift box and explain what each one is or represents](#))

Question

What could these objects be giving us a clue about? What might they have to do with pluralism? ([Pause to allow time for the children to answer.](#))

Theme Connection

Well, to start, part of what these objects tell us about pluralism has to do with how many things are here. In fact, you can think about pluralism as a fancy word for "many" or "lots."

And notice how these objects represent lots of different cultures and religions. This reminds us that our UU Faith believes that diversity of thought, ideas, people, cultures, and beliefs is a gift. And not only that diversity is good but also that having many different beliefs and views helps us understand things better. Or to put it another way, these many objects remind us that our faith tells us that we need everyone's different ideas and perspectives and background to perceive the whole!

Call to Action

So, for today's session, we are going to explore the gift of many views and the idea that we need each other to perceive the whole. So, are you ready to do that?! Great! Let's begin!

Tell It and Talk About It!

Leader Note: Our Tell It section offers two choices: a Picture Book and a “Tellable Tale” (often also called a wisdom tale or sacred story). We suggest you pick the one that fits your storytelling style best. **Picture books** are great for those who are more comfortable reading a story and have the ability to project slides of the pictures. **Tellable Tales** are great for those who like to incorporate the tradition of oral storytelling and are best done when they are memorized.

Our Tell It and Talk About It section can be used during your Time for All Ages or as the opening to your RE groups. If you use this section as your Time for All Ages, we suggest holding the group questions (the Talk About It portion) until you are in your RE space.

Oral Storying Telling Tips:

- <https://twowritingteachers.org/2014/04/06/a-mini-crash-course-on-oral-storytelling/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsLTvVn-HIk>

Option 1 - Tellable Tale: The Four Seasons of a Tree/The Pear Tree Story

Suggested Introductory Words

So, let’s begin our exploration of the gift of many views with a story. This one is about a man who uses a tree to teach his sons a lesson about perspective. Let’s dive in.

The Story

<https://www.godsotherways.com/stories/2020/3/25/do-the-next-thing-4baw5-8faz4-8858t-9sdzk-7e82s-8b4j4-98wg5>

Reflection Prompts

- What did you like most about this story?
- What lesson do you think the story wants us to remember?
- Why do you think the man uses the tree to teach his sons this lesson of valuing other perspectives or opinions?
 - *The moral of the story is that as humans we have a tendency to claim absolute truth based on our limited experience and sometimes that leads us to ignore or not take into account other people's experiences, which may be equally true.*
- In the story the brothers thought the others were lying about having been to the tree because they all saw it during different seasons, from different perspectives. Have you ever had a time where you had to try and see something from someone else’s point of view or perspective?

Option 2 - Book: A Tale of Two Beasts by Fiona Robertson

Suggested Introductory Words

Have you ever heard someone say there are always two sides to a story. *(Pause to allow time for the children to answer.)* This is a story about a little girl who rescues a little beast from the forest and decides to take him home and keep him. But turns out the little beast was not happy and runs away. Why? Well, because there are two sides to every story. Are you ready to hear it this funny and charming tale about seeing both sides of the story? Great! Let's begin.

Book: [Here](#) **Read-Aloud:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyrnC_L2ZtU

Reflection Prompts

- What did you like most about this story?
- What lesson do you think the book wants us to remember?
- In this book, the little girl is completely confused when the creature escapes and runs away. Why do you think that is?
- Why did the creature feel like the little girl treated him terribly?
- In the story the little girl thought she was doing the creature a favor and helping him, but the creature did not see it that way. Have you have tried to do something you thought was nice and helpful but the person you were trying to help didn't find it helpful?

Explore It!

(Activities & Games for Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 2 that you feel best suits the needs and interests of your group.

Activities

Optical Illusions

This activity works with 4 or more children, so you can have at least two teams.

Leader Note: *This activity is one that requires the participants to respond to what they are seeing, if you have any children with a vision impairment please do not use this activity as it can't be made accessible.*

Set-Up

- 8-10 “many imaged” optical illusions pictures: A simple Google search should yield plenty to choose from, but if you need some help, we suggest looking [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- Enough paper and pens for each child.

Object of the Game

The goal is to see which team can identify the most total images from all the pictures shown. The idea is that it takes multiple people to see the pictures “fully.”

Suggested Introductory Words

Today we are exploring how it often takes many views to see or perceive something in its entirety. That means that not everyone sees things the same way. Our activity is going to help us understand how that works a bit more.

Directions

- Divide into teams
- Pass out the paper and pens.
- Explain to the youth that you will show them a number of pictures and it is their job to each write down as many things as they see in each picture. Tell them that they will have a limited amount of time to view each picture.
- Explain that the winning team is the one with the greatest total amount of things seen after viewing all the pictures.
- Show each picture, limiting the amount of time you show each to 15-30 seconds. You will want to give less time to some pictures than others.
- After all 8-10 pictures have been shown, tally up the total number of *different* items each team noticed/wrote down. Duplicate items seen only count as one point.
- Go through the pictures one by one again, noticing - as an entire group - the many images that were embedded in each.

Theme Exploration Questions

- Were you surprised by what other people saw in the pictures?
- Once you knew that they had seen something different, did it change how you saw the picture?
- Will you now ask others if they are seeing something differently than you?

1. Finish the Drawing

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/90423905012796416/>

This activity works with any number of kids.

Set-Up

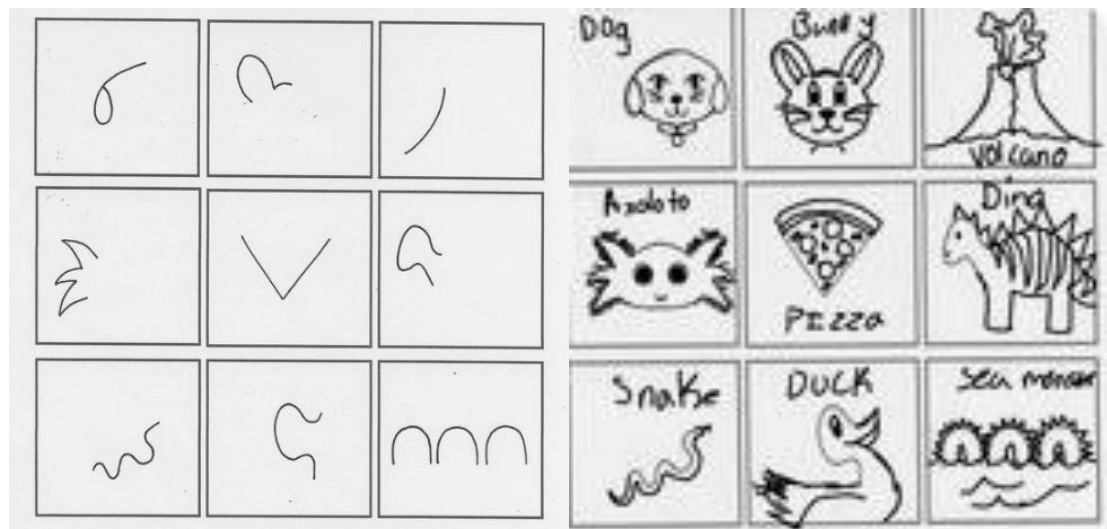
Materials: Print doodle sheets (on the next page) and set out coloring supplies

Suggested Introductory Words

For our next activity we are going to see how differently or similarly we each perceive and view things.

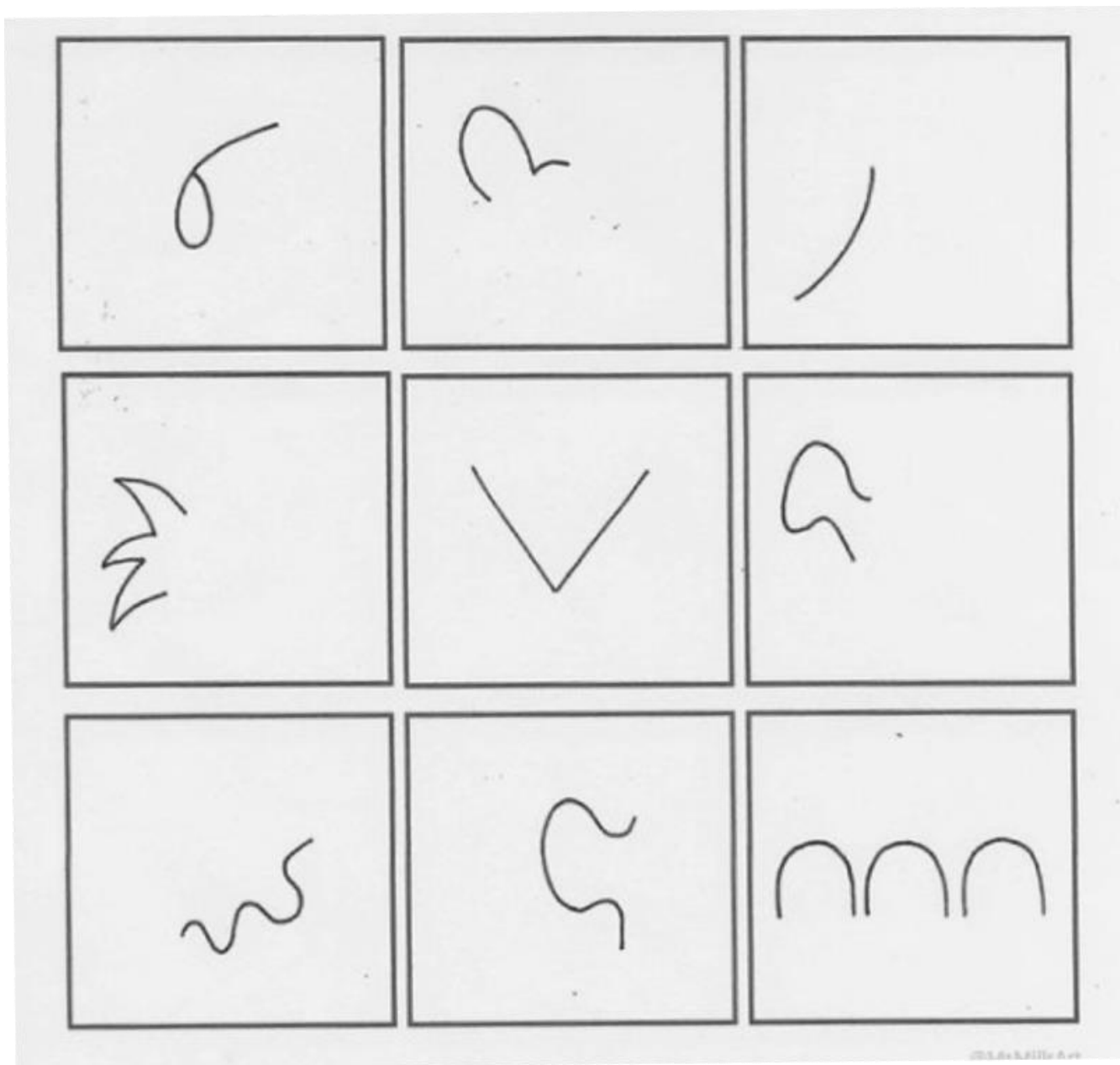
Directions

- Pass out doodle sheets and coloring supplies
- Invite kids to turn each of the squiggles into a picture, when they are done with the whole sheet let them show how they perceived and viewed each image.



Suggested Ending Words

Being part of a pluralistic faith reminds us that there are many points of views and that often times we need each other to perceive the whole story.



Games

2. Hide and Seek With God Puppet Show

Adapted from the Worship Web Story [Hide and Seek With God](#) written by [Mary Ann Moore](#)

This activity works best with groups of 4 -8 kids.

Set-Up

Materials: Gather and set out supplies to make puppets.

Print out copies of the script (see next page)

Suggested Introductory Words

There are probably more views and perspectives about what God is or isn't than we can count. For this activity, we are going to put on a puppet show to the story, [Hide and Seek With God](#). This puppet show will help us understand and explore some of the many views about God and maybe help us think about how we personally view God

Directions

- Assign character parts to each child and then invite them to create a puppet that represents their character.
- Once the puppets are done pass out the scripts (on the next page) and invite kids to act out and read their parts.
- When you are done with the puppet show invite kids to have a discussion using the below theme exploration questions

Theme Exploration Questions

This story lifts up how people of many different religions may talk about God, or "the holy."

- What was your favorite hiding spot for God? Why
- Where else do you think God might hide?
- Do you know people who have different ideas about God than you do?

Suggested Ending Words

Being part of a pluralistic faith reminds us that there are many points of views and that oftentimes we need each other to perceive the whole story.

Hide and Seek with God Puppet Show

Script

Narrator: Once upon a time God said:

God: "I'm bored because I don't have anything to do. I want to play with my friends."

Narrator: And because God is God, as soon as the words were spoken, God's friends were there. When God saw them all gathered, God said:

God: "I've been bored because I haven't had anything to do. Let's play something."

Friends: "Good idea,"

Friend 1: "What shall we play?"

Narrator: God thought for a minute and then said:

God: "I know, let's play hide-and-seek!"

All Friends: "Yay!"

Narrator: The friends knew that hide-and-seek with God was always exciting and different because God was the one who hid, and God always thought of wonderful places to hide.

God's friends closed their eyes tight and counted to ten. When they opened their eyes, God wasn't there anymore. So they all went off to look for God.

Friend 1: I will look in the forest and in the meadow.

Narrator: While the friend was searching, they stopped to admire the tender new sprouts of green grass pushing their way up toward the sun. As they bent over to look more closely at the tender green, they realized there was something special and amazing and wonderful about it.

So they jumped up and ran back to home base, calling out,

Friend 1: "I found God! God is green and growing. I found God in the grass!"

Friend 2: I have decided to look for God in the night.

Narrator: This friend watched the sun go down and heard the work-a-day noises stop and saw the lights in the houses go out. As it got darker and the peaceful night wrapped itself around her, she listened very hard, and then she realized there was something special and amazing and wonderful about it. And when it was so still that she could see and hear nothing at all, she suddenly jumped up and ran to home base, calling out:

Friend 2: "I found God! God is dark and peaceful. I found God in the night!"

Narrator: A third friend looked on the earth and felt the mystery of the grass growing toward the sun. He stayed and watched the night come on, and he felt the mystery of the darkness and the stars. He on his walk back to home base thought to himself:

Friend 3: "These mysteries are special and amazing and wonderful."

Narrator: But when he finally came back to home base, he said:

Friend 3: "I found wonderful mysteries but I'm not sure if I want to call them God."

Narrator: A fourth friend decided to look for God where people were. She joined a group of people going home from work and went with them into the store where they bought food. She went with them back out on the street as they started for their homes. She was with them when someone came up and said:

Hungry Person: "Please, I'm very hungry. Could you share a little food with me?"

Narrator: The people readily agreed and as she watched them share, she realized there was something special and amazing and wonderful about those people. She turned around and ran to home base, calling out:

Friend 4: "I found God! God is love and sharing. I found God in people who care for others!"

Narrator: Finally, two more of God's friends, decided to look for God together. After a time, they came to a house and decided to look for God in the house. In the house they saw a room, and they looked for God in the room. In the room they saw a mirror, and they looked for God in the mirror. As they looked into the mirror, they realized there was something special and amazing and wonderful being reflected in it. They turned around and ran to home base, calling out:

Friends 5&6: "We found God! We found God in us!"

Narrator: At this God appeared again and said:

God: "I had so much fun! Weren't those good hiding places? Some of you found me, others weren't sure, and others are still looking. That's OK because the most important thing is just to play the game. Let's do it again! I'm sure I can think of some other good hiding places."

All Friends: "Olly, olly, oxen free, free, free!"

Narrator: And the game started all over again.

3. Weather Game

Article II Changing Weather Game

This activity is designed for 4 - 12 kids with variations for less or more kids.

Leader's Note and Set-Up

Visit our "[Article II Game: Changing with the Weather](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13J-QI42Hc5QDaKwQ_OMsa66lyuAJ6S7E9hM1_ZXLh5I/edit?usp=sharing)" or https://docs.google.com/document/d/13J-QI42Hc5QDaKwQ_OMsa66lyuAJ6S7E9hM1_ZXLh5I/edit?usp=sharing for complete detailed instructions including variations and directions.

Suggested Approach: For each of the months ahead, we suggest strategically playing this game again as a way of introducing each new value. This is especially important because attendance is often inconsistent and so some children and youth will miss out on the first time you explain and play it.

Session Two:

Many Sources

“We Are Made of Many Roots!”

Theme Angle

In this session, we continue our exploration of the gift of pluralism with a special nod to Mother's Day and the idea that we are all “mothered” and nurtured by many things, people, and experiences. We also answer the question of what it means to be a pluralistic faith by exploring how our UU faith, like us, is one that is fed by many roots, some sacred, some secular, and some scientific.

Light It!

Leader Note: This year, we have created a [Google Doc](#) to crowdsource our favorite Chalice Lightings! Please [share](#) the words and links to your favorite Chalice Lightings.

Extinguish It!

Signal the end of “Chalice time” with a short ritual for extinguishing the chalice. It might be just after any of the below sections or at the end of the session. Use a [candle snuffer](#) if you use real candles for dramatic effect, or just blow it out. We offer the following words for extinguishing the chalice, but there also are resources for other chalice extinguishing words in this [Google Doc](#):

Katie’s Words*

We gather the light of truth, the warmth of love, and the energy of action into our hearts.
Back into the world of do and say,
Carry it forward into the dawning day.
Go Now in Peace, Amen.

** (Move your arms to express the actions: gather using a cupping motion from the flame of the chalice to your heart, spread that outward again.)*

Introduce It!

The Gift Box!

(Formally Known as The Wonder Box)

Leader Note: We suggest [buying](#) or [creating](#) a gift box as your wonder box for this section, as a visual representation of this year's overarching theme: "The Gifts of our Faith." The Gift Box and the item inside can be used to help kids make the connection that the values of our faith are gifts we are called to both give and receive, just as we do with a gift or present. The Gift Box and the item(s) inside can also be used as an object lesson during a Time for All Ages or as the opening to your RE group.

We Are Made of Many Roots

(Leader notes in the suggested script will be noted with purple font and italics.)

Reflection Object: A picture of a tree *with roots*.

Introduction

Welcome to our second week of exploring **the Gift of Pluralism!**

Reveal

So, what is the gift in today's Gift Box? *(open the box and pull out the net and the toy person)*

It's a picture of a tree! What do you notice about this tree? *(Pause to allow time for the children to answer.)*

It has roots! A bunch of roots actually!

Question

What gift could this tree, with its roots, be giving us a clue about? What could it have to do with pluralism? *(Pause to allow time for the children to answer.)*

Theme Connection

Well, this tree with its roots and branches is in the Gift Box to remind us that, just like a tree draws its nourishment from many different roots, our faith also is nourished by many sources, such as... *(name some of the spiritual traditions we draw on as in our sources.)* This is part of what it means to be a pluralistic faith.

Additionally, today is Mother's Day, a day to celebrate those many people in our lives who nurture us and help make us who we are. So we also have many roots that nurture us; just like a tree has many roots! .

Call to Action

So, for today's session, we are going to explore a second part of what it means to be part of a pluralistic faith. It means that our faith and each of us *have many roots!* Are you ready to dig into that further?! Get it, "dig"!!! :) Great! Let's begin!

Tell It and Talk About It!

Leader Note: Our Tell It section offers two choices: a Picture Book and a “Tellable Tale” (often also called a wisdom tale or sacred story). We suggest you pick the one that fits your storytelling style best. **Picture books** are great for those who are more comfortable reading a story and have the ability to project slides of the pictures.

Tellable Tales are great for those who like to incorporate the tradition of oral storytelling and are best done when they are memorized.

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Oral Storying Telling Tips:

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- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsLTvVn-Hlk>

Option 1 - Tellable Tale: Spirit Play UU Source Story

Adapted from a story written by Nita Penfold, values language written by Zan Spaihts-Mohns, images created by Debbie Atkins (all sourced from the UU Spirit Play Facebook Group)

Materials Prep:

- Create a brown or black tree with 6 roots and 6 branches
- Printed and Cut out image of a [Chalice with the word Love on it](#)
- 6 Printed and Cut out Leaves each labeled with one of the A2 Values: Justice, Equity, Transformation, Pluralism, Interdependence, and Generosity

Print and cut out [Individual pictures of the 6 UU Sources](#): star with spiral (sense of wonder), person with a heart (men & women), circles within a larger circle of world religion symbols, cross and Star of David on a heart (Judeo-Christian), atom (reason and science), and flower (nature and cycles of life).

Suggested Introductory Words

As I mentioned during our Gift Box time, our faith is nurtured by many roots. So I’ve picked a Spirit Play story that helps us explore those many roots of our faith in detail.

The Story

This is the tree of Unitarian Universalism, our shared faith.

Place the tree in front of you on the floor or attach it to a piece of poster board

Love is at the center of our faith and is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values.

Place the chalice on the main part of the tree.

The branches are the values that we feel the world is calling us to hold up and lean into as we work to be our best selves.

Place a leaf on each branch naming each value as you do.

Justice - Use our voices to end racism and oppression and allow all to thrive.
Equity - Value every person and make space for them to thrive.
Transformation - Grow and change as the world changes.
Pluralism - Honor our differences and learn from one another.
Interdependence - Revere the earth and all beings and treat them with care.
Generosity - Be grateful and share freely with one another.

These branches, these values have grown out our faith because we have many roots feeding us.

Point to roots on the tree.

The roots of our pluralistic faith are called our Sources.

Our beliefs come from our sense of wonder. We learn by asking why.

Place the star with spiral on top of it on the first root.

Our beliefs come from the people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair. We learn by hearing their stories.

Place the person with a heart on their chest on the next root.

Our beliefs about how to live together come from all the world's religions. We learn from many cultures.

Place the circle with the world religion symbols on the next root.

Our beliefs come from Jewish and Christian teachings that tell us to love all others as we love ourselves. We learn to be kind and compassionate.

Place the heart with the cross and Star of David on the next root.

Our beliefs come from the use of reason and the discoveries of science. We learn by using our minds.

Place the atom on the next root.

Our beliefs come from the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life. We learn by knowing we are a part of nature and the cycles of life

Place the flower on the last root.



Reflection Prompts

- What did you like most about this Spirt Play story?
- What lesson do you think the story is trying to teach us?
- What do you think makes these roots grow?
- How big do you think these roots can become?
- I wonder, if you took one root away, could the tree still grow?
- I wonder if there are any other sources that we as Unitarian Universalists draw our ideas from?

Explore It!

(Activities & Games for Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 2 that you feel best suits the needs and interests of your group.

Activities

1. Create a Me Tree: What Roots Make You You?

This activity works with any number of kids.

Set-Up

Materials: Paper and coloring supplies

Suggested Introductory Words

For this activity, we are going to explore all the people, places and things that have nurtured us and helped make us who we are.

Directions

- Pass out paper and coloring supplies.
- Invite kids to draw a tree and then add and label roots for all the people, places and things that have nurtured them.
- When they are done invite them to share their trees and how each root, person, place, or thing has nurtured them.

Suggested Ending Words

Being part of a pluralistic faith reminds us that we draw from many sources and that as people we are made of many roots!

2. “Thank You For Nurturing Me” Cards

This activity works with any number of kids.

Set-Up

Materials: Colorful Paper, scissors, glue sticks, rulers, and markers

Suggested Introductory Words

For this activity, we are going to make cards for anyone who has nurtured you and been one of the roots/sources that has helped make you you.

Directions

- Help you write on the card covers “Thank You For Nurturing Me”
- Play one of the below YouTube tutorial videos pausing along the way so kids can keep up with the directions
 - FLOWER POP UP CARD- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLNGc_OrxqE&t=55s
 - POP UP TULIP CARD - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxW3Th9CXdw>

Games

3. Remembering Our Sources Scramble

This activity works best with groups of 4+.

Set-Up

Materials: Print our Large Images of [6 UU Sources](#) and hang them around the room.

Suggested Introductory Words

If you look around the room you will notice that there are pictures taped in 6 different roots we draw wisdom from. For this activity, we are going to explore these roots or sources that feed Unitarian Universalism a bit more.

Directions

Have kids all stand in the middle of the room and explain that you are going to give them an example of something, and they have to figure out what root the example goes with and then run to that picture.

Examples

- Solving a Mystery (awe and wonder)
- Being surprised (awe and wonder)
- Cuddling with a pet (awe and wonder)
- The night sky (awe and wonder)
- Medicine (science and reason)
- Math (science and reason)
- Evolution (science and reason)
- Climate Change (science and reason)
- Sharing (Jewish & Christian teachings to love others)
- Hugs (Jewish & Christian teachings to love others)
- Protecting Others (Jewish & Christian teachings to love others)
- Kindness (Jewish & Christian teachings to love others)
- Decaying Leaves (harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life)
- Baby Birds (harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life)
- Spring Rains (harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life)
- Celebrating that Solstice and Equinox (harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life)
- Ralph Waldo Emerson (wise people)
- Hosea Ballou (wise people)
- Abigail Adams (wise people)
- Clara Barton (wise people)
- Holi (world religions)
- Buddha (world religions)
- Ramadan (world religions)
- Quran (world religions)

Suggested Ending Words

Being part of a pluralistic faith reminds us that we draw from many sources and that as people we are made of many roots!

4. Seek The Sources Card Game

Created by Devon Southall (sourced from the UU Spirit Play Facebook Group)

This activity works with groups of 2-3
(if you have a larger group you could print multiple sets of cards)

Set-Up

Materials: Print [Card Game](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dUajkqXYSTxgNg9nq3C88OFlcf7Dq5UVefDyEt_N8Lg/edit?usp=sharing) found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dUajkqXYSTxgNg9nq3C88OFlcf7Dq5UVefDyEt_N8Lg/edit?usp=sharing

Suggested Introductory Words

Our next game is a card game similar to go fish but played with the sources instead. The goal is to try to collect 4 matching source cards

Directions

- Deal 3 cards to each player (held in hands) and place the rest of the cards in a pile in the center of the group.
- On the first person's turn, they ask another player if they have a specific source card for example:
 - If a player has a Wonder and Awe card, that player asks another player if they have any Wonder and Awe cards.
- If the second player does have the card, they hand it over. If they do not have the card, they tell the first person to "Go Source" and the first person will draw a card from the pile ending their turn.
- Once a person has 4 matching cards they place them on the table/floor in front of them.
- If a player has no cards, they draw a new card on their next turn.

Suggested Ending Words

Being part of a pluralistic faith reminds us that we draw from many sources and that as people we are made of many roots!"

Session Three:

Many People

“No One Gets Left Out!”

Theme Angle

In this session, we explore how our pluralistic faith calls us to be inclusive and make sure no one is left out or finds themselves outside the circle.

Light It!

Leader Note: This year, we have created a [Google Doc](#) to crowdsource our favorite Chalice Lightings! Please [share](#) the words and links to your favorite Chalice Lightings.

Extinguish It!

Signal the end of “Chalice time” with a short ritual for extinguishing the chalice. It might be just after any of the below sections or at the end of the session. Use a [candle snuffer](#) if you use real candles for dramatic effect, or just blow it out. We offer the following words for extinguishing the chalice, but there also are resources for other chalice extinguishing words in this [Google Doc](#):

Katie’s Words*

*We gather the light of truth, the warmth of love, and the energy of action into our hearts.
Back into the world of do and say,
Carry it forward into the dawning day.
Go Now in Peace, Amen.*

** (Move your arms to express the actions: gather using a cupping motion from the flame of the chalice to your heart, spread that outward again.)*

Introduce It!

The Gift Box!

(Formally Known as The Wonder Box)

Leader Note: We suggest [buying](#) or [creating](#) a gift box as your wonder box for this section, as a visual representation of this year's overarching theme: "The Gifts of our Faith." The Gift Box and the item inside can be used to help kids make the connection that the values of our faith are gifts we are called to both give and receive, just as we do with a gift or present. The Gift Box and the item(s) inside can also be used as an object lesson during a Time for All Ages or as the opening to your RE group.

No One Get Left Out

(Leader notes in the suggested script will be noted with purple font and italics.)

Reflection Object: A welcome mat

Introduction

Welcome to our third week of exploring **The Gift of Pluralism!**

Reveal

Like always, we begin by seeing what's in today's Gift Box. *(open the box and pull out the net and the toy person)*

It's a welcome mat!

Question

What gift could this mat be giving us a clue about? What could it have to do with pluralism?

(Pause to allow time for the children to answer.)

Theme Connection

This welcome mat is in the Gift Box to remind us that being a pluralistic faith means working to include everyone. It means making sure everyone is welcomed and no one gets left out. Just like a welcome mat communicates "Come on in!," we are called to be people who say, "Come on in!" and make sure no one is excluded.

Call to Action

So, for today's session, we are going to explore ways we welcome people, include people and make sure everyone feels like they belong. Are you ready to do that?! Great! Let's begin!

Tell It and Talk About It!

Leader Note: Our Tell It section offers two choices: a Picture Book and a “Tellable Tale” (often also called a wisdom tale or sacred story). We suggest you pick the one that fits your storytelling style best. **Picture books** are great for those who are more comfortable reading a story and have the ability to project slides of the pictures.

Tellable Tales are great for those who like to incorporate the tradition of oral storytelling and are best done when they are memorized.

Our Tell It and Talk About It section can be used during your Time for All Ages or as the opening to your RE groups. If you use this section as your Time for All Ages, we suggest holding the group questions (the *Talk About It* portion) until you are in your RE space.

Oral Storying Telling Tips

- <https://twowritingteachers.org/2014/04/06/a-mini-crash-course-on-oral-storytelling/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsLTvVn-Hlk>

Option 1 - Tellable Tale: Mullah Nasruddin Feeds His Coat

Suggested Introductory Words

As we explore the importance of inclusion and making sure no one gets left out, I want us to begin by listening to a wonderfully funny and wise tale that has been adapted from a Middle Eastern Islamic folk tale. It's called, *Mullah Nasruddin Feeds His Coat*

The Story

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/123344.shtml>

Reflection Prompts

- What did you like most about the story?
- What lesson do you think the story wants us to remember?
- Why do you think that Mullah was not welcomed at the feast?
- Have you ever felt unwelcome anywhere?
- What are things we can do to make others feel included and welcomed?

Option 2 - Book: Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson

Suggested Introductory Words

This is a story of a young girl named Maya who neglects a new student at school, thinking that she is better than the new girl. As time goes on, Maya realizes the error of her ways and the harm that her actions have caused. Maya eventually remembers the importance of treating others with kindness and respect, and the power that they have to make a positive impact on the world. Are you ready to hear it? Great! Here we go.

Reflection Prompts

- What did you like most about the book?
- What lesson do you think the book wants us to remember?
- This book talks about how little things, small kindnesses make a big difference, what are some small things you have done to help others feel welcomed and included?

Explore It!

(Activities & Games for Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 2 that you feel best suits the needs and interests of your group.

Activities

1. The Welcome Challenge

This activity works with any number of kids.

Set-Up

- Set out a circle of chairs for all participants and the leader, plus one extra chair
- In the center of the circle, place a welcome mat or a sheet of newsprint with the word "Welcome!" on it.

Suggested Introductory Words

When you go somewhere new, what makes you feel welcomed there?

(leave time for kids to answer)

If we look around our space, what do you think we have that would make people coming for the first time feel welcomed and included? *(leave time for kids to answer)* Are we missing things that would help new folks feel welcomed? What could we add to our space that would help people feel included? *(leave time for kids to answer)*

For this activity, I am going to describe a child who might sit in our empty chair. After I describe them, I would like you to all think of a way we could or something we could do that would be welcome to that child. When you have an idea, raise your hand. Ready? Great, here we go!"

Directions

- Have everyone sit in the circle of chairs and using the below examples describe a child that would be in an empty chair.
- As you call on a child, invite that child to come to the welcome mat and state their idea, and then return to their seat.
 - Call on a few kids for each example to generate a few ideas for welcoming each child you describe. You can also encourage children to name things, NOT to do actions and words that would not be welcoming. Aim to have each participant come to the welcome mat at least once. A non-English speaking child
 - A child who has just moved to the neighborhood
 - A child who is visually impaired
 - A child who has never been to a UU congregation before
 - A child who uses a wheelchair or crutches
 - A child who does not or cannot speak
 - A child who misses their parent
 - A child who you recognize because they are also new at your school

Suggested Ending Words

Our pluralistic faith calls us to be inclusive and make sure no one is excluded or finds themselves outside the circle.

2. Welcome Mat Posters

This activity works with any number of kids.

Set-Up

Materials: Poster Board, Stickers, Coloring Supplies, Stencils, and other art supplies

Leader Note You can also re-paint old doormats. This is a bit more involved, but if you have time to send out the word to parents and other church members to give you their old welcome mats, it can be a super fun - and helpful - project! Here are some suggested guides about how to do it and what supplies you will need:

- <https://www.homejelly.com/doormat-makeover-ho-hum-hello/>
- <https://www.kierstinsmythdesign.com/blog/2021/9/24/how-to-restore-your-welcome-mat-lettering>

Suggested Introductory Words

For this activity, we are going to make welcome mat posters that we will then hang on our walls, so that when new friends join us there will be no question that we are glad they are here and excited to welcome and include them!

Directions

Pass out supplies and invite kids to make their own welcome mat posters

Suggested Ending Words

Our pluralistic faith calls us to be inclusive and make sure no one is excluded or finds themselves outside the circle.

Games

3. Reverse Musical Chairs

This activity works best with groups of 5+ kids.

Set-Up

Materials: A chair for everyone in the group

Suggested Introductory Words

Our next game is a game of musical chairs, but with a twist. This is reverse musical chairs, and the goal of the game is to find a way to include everyone when the music stops. As the game goes on you will have to work harder and harder to make sure everyone is included, and no one is left out.

Directions

- Begin the first round with a chair for everyone, so when the music stops everyone has their own seat.
- To begin the second round, take away one chair, tell the group that when the music stops, they must quickly find a seat, but this is where **the twist** comes in: When the music stops, the group must find a way *for everyone*^[SEP] to have a seat. They can sit on each other's laps, sit next to someone else on the same seat, or line the chairs up so that more people fit. They will have 1 minute to figure it out.
- Play music and have the group walk around the chairs.^[SEP]
- Play a few more rounds, removing a chair each time. Each time the group has to find a way to accommodate someone who would normally be excluded in a traditional game of musical chairs.^[SEP]

Theme Exploration Questions

- What did you like about playing the old game in this new way?
- Did a small part of you miss the old way of playing this game? It's not something to feel bad about because most of us have a little part of us that would feel that way. If a small part of you does miss the old way, why do you think that is?
- We adapted this game, a game where people are often excluded, so that everyone was included. What are some other things in our lives where people end up being excluded or left out? How could we adapt those things to be more inclusive?

Suggested Ending Words

Our pluralistic faith calls us to be inclusive and make sure no one is left out or finds themselves outside the circle.

4. Understanding Exclusion Games

This activity works best with groups of 4+ kids.

Suggested Introductory Words

All day we have been talking about the importance of being inclusive and making sure no one gets left out. One of the best ways to stay committed to being inclusive is to explore what it feels like to be excluded. That's what this next game is about.

Directions

- Begin by explaining that the group will act as if it is excluding someone.
- Ask for a volunteer to be the “outsider” and then invite kids to form a circle and hold hands in a circle.
- On go, the “outsider” will do their best to find a way into the circle through the spaces between people, while everyone else tries to keep them out.

Remind the group to be gentle when blocking the outsider! ^[L]_[SEP]

- When the outsider gets into the circle, stop the game and ask for another volunteer.
- After playing several rounds (enough that everyone has a chance to be the “outsider” at least once), use the exploration questions below to begin a conversation around being inclusive and exclusive.

Leader Note: if you have a large group you can play this same game but with two or three outsiders at one time.

Theme Exploration Questions

- What did it feel like to be an outsider? ^[L]_[SEP]
- Did anyone want to let the outsiders inside the circle? ^[L]_[SEP] Did you let them slip in? ^[L]_[SEP] Why or why not? ^[L]_[SEP]
- Why is it important to try to include everyone? ^[L]_[SEP]

Suggested Ending Words

Our pluralistic faith calls us to be inclusive and make sure no one is left out or finds themselves outside the circle.

Session Four

Option A:

Many Things to Celebrate

Theme Angle

The theme of the month is The Gift of Pluralism. With this being Memorial Day weekend and understanding that many congregations celebrate this holiday differently and that often times there is overall general lower attendance, we are offering two options for your session on Memorial Day weekend Sunday.

In Option A, we explore one of the ways we answer the question of what it means to be a pluralistic faith is by *celebrating* differences not just tolerating them. This all-ages session is filled with a diversity of party games.

Light It!

Leader Note: This year, we have created a [Google Doc](#) to crowdsource our favorite Chalice Lightings! Please [share](#) the words and links to your favorite Chalice Lightings.

Extinguish It!

Signal the end of “Chalice time” with a short ritual for extinguishing the chalice. It might be just after any of the below sections or at the end of the session. Use a [candle snuffer](#) if you use real candles for dramatic effect, or just blow it out. We offer the following words for extinguishing the chalice, but there also are resources for other chalice extinguishing words in this [Google Doc](#):

Katie’s Words*

*We gather the light of truth, the warmth of love, and the energy of action into our hearts.
Back into the world of do and say,
Carry it forward into the dawning day.
Go Now in Peace, Amen.*

** (Move your arms to express the actions: gather using a cupping motion from the flame of the chalice to your heart, spread that outward again.)*

Introduce It!

The Gift Box!

(Formally Known as The Wonder Box)

Leader Note: We suggest buying or creating a gift box as your wonder box for this section, as a visual representation of this year's overarching theme: "The Gifts of our Faith." The Gift Box and the item inside can be used to help kids make the connection that the values of our faith are gifts we are called to both give and receive, just as we do with a gift or present. The Gift Box and the item(s) inside can also be used as an object lesson during a Time for All Ages or as the opening to your RE group.

Option A - Many Things to Celebrate

(Leader notes in the suggested script will be noted with *purple font* and italics.)

Reflection Object

Party Items like a party hat, noise blower, streamers, balloons, etc.

Introduction

Happy Memorial Day everyone and welcome to our fourth week of exploring **The Gift of Pluralism!**

Reveal

So, with that in mind, what is the gift in today's Gift Box? (*open the box and pull out the net and the toy person*) It's (*name each item as you pull them out of the gift box*)!

Question

What gift could all these objects be giving us a clue about? What could they have to do with pluralism? (*Pause to allow time for the children to answer.*)

Theme Connection

All these party items are in the Gift Box to remind us that there are many things and ways to celebrate .

This weekend is Memorial Day, and many people are having celebrations, parties, and cookouts. But imagine what it would be like if everyone had to celebrate the exact same way or have the exact same kind of party! It would be so boring if we could only have party hats but not balloons, if we could only have hot dogs at the cook out and not hamburgers too.

All month we have been exploring the gifts of pluralism by answering what it means to be a pluralistic faith. One of the ways we UUs answer this question is by working to **celebrate** differences not just tolerate them.

For instance, if we like balloon and hot dogs, but someone brings hamburgers and party hats to our party, it's not enough just to tolerate them and not get mad or disappointed. Instead, we should celebrate it and genuinely tell them thanks for bringing what they love and making the party richer for everyone!

Call to Action

So, for today's session, we are going to celebrate our differences with a variety of different and diverse party games Does that sound fun? Great! Let's begin!

Tell It and Talk About It!

Book: The Sandwich Swap by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah

Suggested Introductory Words

This story is about two best friends, Salma and Lily. These girls do everything together but can't see eye to eye on their lunch choices. But by the end of the story the girls come together to learn that their friendship matters more than their differences. And Salma and Lily lead their classmates in joining together in a message of tolerance and acceptance. Are you ready to hear it? Great! Here we go.

Book: [Here](#) Read-Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry4AWDz7sGc>

Reflection Prompts

- What did you like the most about the story in this book?
- What lesson do you think the book wants us to remember?
- In this book, the girls not only learned to tolerate each other's different food taste, but they celebrated them by creating a school wide event. What food would you choose to share to celebrate what makes you different and unique?

Book: Different--A Great Thing to Be! Hardcover by Heather Avis

Suggested Introductory Words

This is a story about Macy a girl who's a lot like you and me, but she's also quite different, which is the best way to be! It is a very special book that reminds us to celebrate the differences in all people!

Book: [Here](#) Read-Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6NAsJGH_8M

Reflection Prompts

- What did you like the most about the story in this book?
- What lesson do you think the book wants us to remember?
- In the book Many tells people that being different is a great thing to be, what is something about you that makes you different?
- How do you celebrate your differences?

Explore It!

(Activities & Games for Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 2 that you feel best suits the needs and interests of your group.

Activities

1. Celebrating Different Taste With a Party Snack

<https://www.inspiredtaste.net/15938/easy-and-smooth-hummus-recipe/>

This activity works with any number of kids.

Leader Note: Check in with adults prior to this activity about any food allergy or restrictions.

Set-Up

- Materials: Cut up veggies, crackers, pita chips, apples, pretzels, mini bagels
- A food processor, For 6 servings or 1 ½ cups - 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, 1 large lemon, 1/4 cup well-stirred tahini, 1 small garlic clove, minced, 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving, 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin, Salt to taste, 2 to 3 tablespoons water or aquafaba (the starchy liquid in a can of beans), Dash ground paprika, sumac, or Za'atar for serving

Suggested Introductory Words

One of the ways people celebrate at parties and cookouts is with food and snacks. What are some of your favorite party foods? *(leave space for kids to answer)*

Wow! So many different things. Well with that in mind, today we are going to make our own party snack - homemade hummus *(if you read the sandwich swap you can mention the connection)*. Once we are done making the hummus we will have many different options of things to put it on, and we can see just how many different foods we can enjoy and celebrate topping the hummus with.

Directions

- In the bowl of a food processor, combine the tahini and lemon juice and process for 1 minute. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl, then process for 30 seconds more. This extra time helps “whip” or “cream” the tahini, making the hummus smooth and creamy.
- Add the olive oil, minced garlic, cumin, and a 1/2 teaspoon of salt to the whipped tahini and lemon juice. Process for 30 seconds, scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl, and then process for another 30 seconds or until well blended.
- Add half of the chickpeas to the food processor and process for 1 minute. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl, then add the remaining chickpeas and process them until thick and relatively smooth, 1 to 2 minutes.
- The hummus will likely be too thick and still have tiny bits of chickpea. To fix this, slowly add 2 to 3 tablespoons of cold water or aquafaba with the food processor turned on until you reach the perfect consistency. Taste and adjust as needed.
- Serve hummus with a drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkle of paprika.
 - Store homemade hummus in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to one week. Freeze, covered with a thin layer of olive oil, for up to one month.

2. Celebrating The Different Things That Bring Us Joy

Adapted from <https://www.craftprojectideas.com/peace-and-harmony-quilt/>

This activity works with any number of kids.

Set-Up

Materials: Paint Brushes & Washable Paint/Coloring Supplies, Pipe cleaners, Hole Punch, 6x6 squares of Card-stock Paper, Ruler, Scissors, beads

Suggested Introductory Words

For this activity, we are going to create a paper quilt that celebrates all the different things that bring us joy! Maybe it's parties, maybe it's your family, maybe it's ice cream, maybe it's rainbows and unicorns, maybe it's sports. By putting them all side by side on a quilt we can more easily see how wonderful it is to live in a world with so many things that bring us joy. That's certainly something to celebrate!

Directions

- Use a hole puncher and punch (4) holes 1/2 an inch from each side. On each card stock square
- Measure 1/4 an inch from each hole and punch (4) more holes for a total of (8) holes. Tip: Use one square as a template to trace and punch holes in all of your additional square.
- Draw and then paint your square reflecting the theme, "Peace Is..." Tip: allow each child to interpret this theme as they imagine it.
- Cut pipe cleaners to 2 inches each being sure to cut enough so that each square has a total of (4) to attach it to an adjacent square.
- Thread the pipe cleaner pieces through the left and bottom holes of the squares by bending and wrap 1/4 inch around card stock. For a decorative accent add (2) Pony Beads to each pipe cleaner..
- To attach the squares, place (2) squares next to each other and thread the Fuzzy Stick pieces through the holes. Make sure to wind the ends of the Fuzzy Stick around itself to secure the position.
- Continue to attach the quilt squares until you have completed your quilt.
- For the top of the quilt, take a Fuzzy Stick and loop it through the top (2) holes on a square. Pinch the back of the Fuzzy Stick to the back of the loop. Repeat for all top squares to create hangers.



Suggested Ending Words

Our pluralistic faith reminds us how important it is to celebrate differences, not just tolerate them.

Games

3. Celebrating with Party Games

Set-Up

Materials: vary depending on the game you choose

Suggested Introductory Words

As we mentioned this weekend is Memorial Day weekend and many folks are celebrating with cookouts and parties, so we are going to do a similar thing and celebrate with a variety of different games. When we are done, we will talk about what each of us liked about each game. Even if a game is not our favorite, this will allow us to practice celebrating things that aren't our personal favorites, rather than just tolerating them or putting them down.

Directions

Choose a few of the games from the links below that you feel will be most fun and engaging for your group.

- <https://www.southernliving.com/best-party-games-8385409#toc-party-games-for-kids>
- <https://www.splashlearn.com/blog/minute-to-win-it-games-for-kids/>

Option B:

Many Reasons to Honor Memorial Day

Theme Angle

The theme of the month is The Gift of Pluralism. With this being Memorial Day weekend and understanding that many congregations celebrate this holiday differently and that oftentimes there is overall general lower attendance, we are offering two options for your session on Memorial Day weekend Sunday.

In this Option B, we acknowledge that Memorial Day is about war and that while there are many different views on war, we can all agree that honoring those who are no longer with us is a beautiful thing. It's a way of honoring that we can take a pluralistic view of Memorial Day and affirm many different and valid ways to approach it.

Light It!

Leader Note: This year, we have created a [Google Doc](#) to crowdsource our favorite Chalice Lightings! Please [share](#) the words and links to your favorite Chalice Lightings.

Extinguish It!

Signal the end of "Chalice time" with a short ritual for extinguishing the chalice. It might be just after any of the below sections or at the end of the session. Use a [candle snuffer](#) if you use real candles for dramatic effect, or just blow it out. We offer the following words for extinguishing the chalice, but there also are resources for other chalice extinguishing words in this [Google Doc](#):

Katie's Words*

We gather the light of truth, the warmth of love, and the energy of action into our hearts.
Back into the world of do and say,
Carry it forward into the dawning day.
Go Now in Peace, Amen.

** (Move your arms to express the actions: gather using a cupping motion from the flame of the chalice to your heart, spread that outward again.)*

Introduce It!

The Gift Box!

(Formally Known as The Wonder Box)

Leader Note: We suggest [buying](#) or [creating](#) a gift box as your wonder box for this section, as a visual representation of this year's overarching theme: "The Gifts of our Faith." The Gift Box and the item inside can be used to help kids make the connection that the values of our faith are gifts we are called to both give and receive, just as we do with a gift or present. The Gift Box and the item(s) inside can also be used as an object lesson during a Time for All Ages or as the opening to your RE group.

Many Reasons to Honor Memorial Day

(Leader notes in the suggested script will be noted with purple font and italics.)

Reflection Object: Stickers

Introduction

This weekend is Memorial Day Weekend, a time when lots of people have cookouts and parties, and we get a 3-day weekend.

But does anyone know why we have Memorial Day?

Memorial Day is a day set aside to remember the soldiers who have been killed in a war.

And that makes sense because a memorial is something created to remind people of a person or event.

Reveal

So, with that in mind, let's find out what is the gift in today's Gift Box? *(open the box and pull out the net and the toy person)*

Stickers!

Question

What gift could these stickers be giving us a clue about? What could they have to do with Memorial Day? *(Pause to allow time for the children to answer.)*

To find out I want to tell you a story....

Theme Connection

The day is May 5, 1865, and we find ourselves in Charleston, South Carolina. The Civil War has just ended, and today is the birthday of Memorial Day.

Now it is important to know that memorial day did not start out looking like Memorial Day today. There were no parades, no 3-day weekends, no super sales at the stores, no cookouts or folks getting excited at the unofficial start of summer.

May 5, 1865, was a day with no name other than Friday, and on this particular Friday, the story goes that a group of a group of teachers, ministers, newly freed slaves, and abolitionists felt called to show their gratitude to the Union soldiers who had perished in an open-air Confederate prison.

So this group of newly freed slaves began gathering things like flowers, made wreaths and flags, and set out to decorate the graves of the fallen soldiers.

The following year they did the same, but with a larger group, and by year three, it had become a tradition.

It was, in fact, on that third year May 5, 1868, that General John A. Logan, the leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, decided it should be more than just a tradition of remembering and honoring Union soldiers, instead, he called for a nationwide day of remembrance, a day to commemorate all soldiers who died—Union or Confederate.

In a speech he made he said: From now on, the 30th of May (a date chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle) would be set aside for the purpose of placing flowers and decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land,"

As a way of honoring the original tradition that had begun 3 years earlier, General Logan named the day Decoration Day.

Following the First World War, the holiday was expanded to acknowledge the ultimate sacrifice of soldiers in all wars.

And by the end of World War II, the name "Decoration Day" had been unofficially replaced with "Memorial Day".

The name was officially adopted in 1967 and made an official national holiday in 1968 with an official date of the last Monday in May. - [based on information from From Decoration Day to Memorial Day: An American Tradition for Nearly 150 Years](#)

Call to Action

So, for today's session, we are going to explore how there are many different ways to honor Memorial Day. For some it is about honoring the bravery it takes to go to war and die for your country, while for others it is about honoring how people have lost ones they love.

Tell It and Talk About It!

Leader Note: Our Tell It section offers two choices: a Picture Book and a “Tellable Tale” (often also called a wisdom tale or sacred story). We suggest you pick the one that fits your storytelling style best. **Picture books** are great for those who are more comfortable reading a story and have the ability to project slides of the pictures. **Tellable Tales** are great for those who like to incorporate the tradition of oral storytelling and are best done when they are memorized.

Our Tell It and Talk About It section can be used during your Time for All Ages or as the opening to your RE groups. If you use this section as your Time for All Ages, we suggest holding the group questions (the Talk About It portion) until you are in your RE space.

Oral Storying Telling Tips:

- <https://twowritingteachers.org/2014/04/06/a-mini-crash-course-on-oral-storytelling/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsLTvVn-Hlk>

Option 1 - Tellable Tale: The Brave Little Parrot

Suggested Introductory Words

Here is a story about how by sharing and giving of ourselves. It is a story that reminds us that doing the very best that we can to help and to give is something that should be honored and celebrated. This story will help us explore how others have shared of themselves and give us inspiration on how we may do the same.

The Story: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session15/123724.shtml>

Reflection Prompts

- What did you like most about the story?
- What lesson do you think the story wants us to remember?
- Why do you think the little parrot acted so bravely?
- Have you ever stepped up to help or bravely shared yourself the way the parrot did?

Option 2 - Book: Memorial Day for Kids by J.P Anthony Williams

Suggested Introductory Words

This story is about honoring and remember the brave heroes who fought for our country and is a wonderful way for us as to celebrate and honor the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

Book: [Here](#) **Read-Aloud:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RJbi98778A>

Reflection Prompts

- What did you like most about this book?
- What lesson do you think the book wants us to remember?
- In this book, we hear lots of examples about how people celebrate and honor those who have served in our military. Have you ever celebrated by going to a parade, fireworks, a cookout? What was it like?

Explore It!

(Activities & Games for Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 2 that you feel best suits the needs and interests of your group.

Memorial Day Activities

1. Memorial Day Crafts

This activity works with any number of kids.

Set-Up

Materials: Choose a craft or two and gather the materials for each activity.

Suggested Introductory Words

A memorial is something created to remind people of a person or event, and Memorial Day is a holiday set aside to remember the soldiers who have been killed in a war.

As we heard about during our Gift Box, Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day.

- So today, as a way of celebrating and honoring the sacrifices made, we are going to make some decorations.

Craft Options

1. Make U.S. Flags

- Color the U.S. flag. Tape on a dowel, optional. Take your flags outside and fly them!
<http://www.coloring.ws/t.asp?t=http://www.coloring.ws/usa/map.gif>
- Popsicle Stick Flags
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Vco2QZYeNI>

Leader Note: Invite the children to take their flags home to place in their window or on the grave of a fallen soldier

2. Make Tissue Paper Poppies: <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Tissue-Paper-Poppies>

3. Paint Fireworks: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UT5CSgn_iTw

Theme Exploration Questions

- Do you think it is just those who make big sacrifices that deserve to be remembered? Why or why not?
- Do you think all people want to be remembered, not just soldiers?
- Why do you think it is important to remember people?
- What are some of the things you want people to remember about you? *(let each kiddo name a few things they want people to remember about them)*

2. Memorial Day Games

Suggested Introductory Words

Our next activity is to play some Memorial Day inspired games

Game Options

1. **Patriotic musical chairs**—It's the same as musical chairs but you play patriotic music!
2. **Red, white, and blue scavenger hunt**—Set a time limit and have the kids find as many red, white, and blue things as they can. The child with the most objects wins!
3. **Red light/blue light**—Same as red light/green light except with patriotic colors!
4. **Name it**—Sit in a circle, the first person names something red, the second, something blue, the third, something white, the fourth, something red again and so on. Each person gets 5 seconds to come up with something. If they can't think of something new they are out of the game. Keep going until there is only one person left.

3. Creating Memory Boxes

Leader Note: This 10-minute clip was created to help children who have lost someone, but it can also help all kids better understand and respond to loss amongst their friends and wider community.

Set-Up

- Materials: Small boxes, paint/coloring supplies, stickers, etc.
- Device to watch the Cosmic Kids Yoga Zen Den Episode

How To Deal With Bereavement | Cosmic Kids Zen Den:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUzTV9a4IJg>

Suggested Introductory Words

Many people kids and adults experience loss when someone passes away, and when that happens we often have lots of feelings we might not know what to do with. We might also not be sure we can remember and celebrate those who are gone.

So for this next activity, we are going to begin by watching a short Zen Den episode that helps us explore how hard it can be when someone we know dies and how all our feelings get jumbled up. And then, just like in the episode, we are going to create a memory box.

Directions

- Begin by playing the **How To Deal With Bereavement | Cosmic Kids Zen Den Shot**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUzTV9a4IJg>
- Pass out boxes and craft supplies and invite kids to make their own memory boxes to take home.

Children's Chapel & Family Ministry Suggestions

Below are picture books, tellable tales, and a Soul Work Table section to support your efforts beyond RE age groups into multigenerational times for all ages.

Stories from This RE Packet

Knowing that some congregations will want to ensure continuity between worship and RE classes, we list this packet's stories to make them all available in one glance.

Tellable Tale: The Four Seasons of a Tree/The Pear Tree Story

<https://www.godsotherways.com/stories/2020/3/25/do-the-next-thing-4baw5-8faz4-8858t-9sdzk-7e82s-8b4j4-98wg5>

Picture Book: Book: A Tale of Two Beasts by Fiona Robertson

Book: [Here](#) Read-Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyrmC_L2ZtU

Tellable Tale: Spirit Play UU Source Story

See Session 2

Tellable Tale: Mullah Nasruddin Feeds His Coat

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/123344.shtml>

Picture Book: Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson

Book: [Here](#) Read-Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWI12AdVmKM>

Picture Book: The Sandwich Swap by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah

Book: [Here](#) Read-Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry4AWDz7sGc>

Picture Book: Different--A Great Thing to Be! Hardcover by Heather Avis

Book: [Here](#) Read-Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6NAsJGH_8M

Tellable Tale: The Brave Little Parrot

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session15/123724.shtml>

Picture Book: Memorial Day for Kids by J.P Anthony Williams

Book: [Here](#) Read-Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RJbi98778A>

Soul Work Table Activities

We've heard from many that you are using a multi-sensory table right in the sanctuary to support a multigenerational community for worship. Some of our Christian cousins call it a "Prayground." Read about some examples [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). In UU circles, the tables are often for all ages, meaning adults are invited to use it, too. Thanks to April Rosario, Soul Matters Director of Young Youth Resources and DRE in Taunton, MA, for permission to use the same name as their congregational sanctuary table. We love calling it the "Soul Work Table!" Here are possible activities for the table from our packet this month:

Finish the Drawing

Set-Up

- Print doodle sheets (see Session 1) and set out coloring supplies
- Print Directions for this activity so kids can do this project on their own

Go Source Card Game

Set-Up

- Materials: Print Card Game found here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dUajkqXYSTxgNg9nq3C88OFIcf7Dq5UVefDyEt_N8Lg/edit?usp=sharing

Welcome Mat Posters

Set-Up

- Materials: Poster Board, Stickers, Coloring Supplies, Stencils, and other art supplies
- Print Directions for this activity so kids can do this project on their own

Celebrating The Different Things That Bring Us Joy

Set-Up

- Materials: Paint Brushes & Washable Paint/Coloring Supplies, Pipe cleaners, Hole Punch, 6x6 squares of Card-stock Paper, Ruler, Scissors, beads
- Print Directions for this activity so kids can do this project on their own

Memorial Day Crafts

Set-Up

- Choose from any of the memorial day crafts in session 4 Option B

Opportunities for Leader Support

Katie's overview of the monthly packets

Katie Covey, our Director of RE, gives an overview of the packet for the next month's theme. These 15-minute overviews are recorded and posted on the [Soul Matters YouTube Channel](#). *Posting on or around the Second Wednesday of the month and announced on the RE Leaders Facebook Page. Subscribe to the channel to get instant notification of videos posted.*

Other Resources and Sources of Support

RE Leader Facebook Page

Don't forget about our RE Leader Support Facebook page. Here is where our colleagues post bulletin board pictures, share books, and ideas. It's a great ongoing source of support. Your colleagues are available to support you at the click of a button and with the ease of a post: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/545202255591601/>

Inspiration Facebook Page

Offer your teachers and parents spiritual nourishment and inspiration by encouraging them to join the Soul Matters Inspiration Facebook Page. Use the memes for your congregational FB page, as well: <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Soul Matters Music Playlists

We create two different playlists on the monthly theme each month: one in Spotify and another in YouTube. Music connects us to the themes in a way like nothing else. Click [here](#) for links to the [Spotify playlists](#) for each month. Click [here](#) to check out the [YouTube playlists](#).

On the Road Together - Soul Matters Senior High Youth Packet

A monthly packet for High School Youth Groups! Here's the link to the [Soul Matters Youth Packet](#) page on our website. Sessions with resources for Check In, Spiritual Practice, Discussion Starters, Expressing Yourself with the Arts, Fun and Games, and Off-Road Excursions.

In the Middle - Monthly Middle School Curriculum

Wholistically designed, focused on building trust and community and reinforcing the truth that none of us can navigate life's journey alone. 4 weeks of theme-based sessions every month. Learn more [here](#).

Becoming - A Soul Matters Coming of Age Program

Our take on the classic curriculum that supports youth as they explore, develop and articulate their personal values and faith identity. Learn more [here](#)

Crossing Paths - A Soul Matters "Neighboring Faiths" Curriculum

Helping youth deepen their own faith by deepening their understanding of other faiths. Learn more [here](#).

Soulful Home Family Guides

Invite your parents to explore the themes at home with their family by subscribing to our monthly parent guides, **Soulful Home**. Here's the link to the Soulful Home page on our website: <https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/soulful-home.html>.

Soul Matters RE Packet Author & Support Team

Packet Author:

April Rosario, Soul Matters Director of Young Youth Resources

Thanks to all the Soul Matters Religious Educators who send in suggestions for our monthly packets and participate in our monthly packet brainstorming calls. Special thanks to the Brainstorming Lab Crew - Samantha Dickerson, DRE at Chalice UU Fellowship of the Conejo Valley, CA, Jenni Papp, DRE at the UU Fellowship of Wayne County, OH and a few of you!! for their great suggestions each month.

Thanks also to the other [Soul Matters Team](#) members who contribute to the content and shape of these packets:

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Rev. Michelle Collins, Soul Matters Small Group & Special Projects Researcher

Rev. Scott Tayler, Soul Matters Team Lead



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