



Soul Matters

Cultivating Compassion

RE Resources
One Room Schoolhouse
October 2025

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Notes About Packet Design & Usage

To get the most out of our RE packets, we encourage users/leaders to periodically review the key components of our design and approach to our elementary age RE packets:

- **2025-26 Enhancements:** Read about all of the enhancements to this year's packets by clicking [here](#).
- **Three Packets to Meet You Where You Are:** This year, 3 different packets come with your elementary RE subscription: One to support lower elementary programming, one to support upper elementary programming, and a third to support one-room schoolhouse RE models.
- **Theme Connection Support:** We are committed to experiential learning, so we don't just suggest stories, games and hands-on activities; we also provide "Set It Up," "Sum It Up," and "Discuss It" components that help group leaders clearly explain how the story, game or activity illustrates or explores the session topic/focus.
- **Bullet Points for Longer Introductions:** Sometimes components of the packet require longer setup wording, such as the Wonderbox wording. When this is the case, we provide bulleted talking points. We do this because subscribers told us this was more user-friendly than a fully written-out suggested script. As the year proceeds, please let us know if this change is serving you well.
- **UU Values and Inspiring UUs in Every Packet:** To support UU identity formation, we weave our UU values and stories about inspiring UUs into each month's packet. We've created two important tools to guide us, which also could be used by you if you want to create your own material: a chart that pairs [our monthly themes with the UU values](#) and a chart that pairs [our monthly themes with inspiring UUs](#).
- **User-Friendly, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale "Story Sheets":** To save you time and support you as storytellers, our packets list the recommended wisdom tales and a bit about them, but then provide a hyperlink that takes you to a ready-to-tell and ready-to-print Google doc version of the story.
- **Leader Notes:** Throughout the packet, we offer tips and reminders to support and guide leaders. We identify these leader notes using *purple font and italics*.

Notes About Our Unique Session Sections

Each of our session sections has been designed with care and intentionality. Below, we explain our approach to each session section with some suggestions about how to engage them.

- **Light It! - Chalice Lighting**

The chalice lightings we include in the packet are centered in our [UU core value of love](#), lift up the monthly themes, and tap into the power and fun of body movements. If you'd like an alternative chalice lighting, [HERE](#) is a document with other options.

- **Tell or Read It! - Stories to Inspire Us**

Stories are a wonderful way to bring our monthly themes to life and help us build our identities and bond with one another. This packet offers both picture books and wisdom stories, allowing you to choose the one that best fits the developmental stage of your one-room schoolhouse group.

Some one-room schoolhouse models place the story in worship and use it as the Time For All Ages. Other models place the story at the beginning of the RE time to introduce the session or in the middle of the RE time to explore that session's theme. To support all three of these approaches, we include story takeaways ("Sum it Up") and discussion questions.

- **Wonder Box - Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity**

The activities in the wonder box sections can be used at the beginning of a session to name and introduce that session's theme, or they can be used later in a session as an "[object lesson](#)" to explore the session theme in more depth. Whether or not you use the Wonderbox activity depends on the ages and developmental stage of your group.

- **Engage It! - Hands On Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning**

Our Engage It section offers a variety of experiential options for exploring each weekly session's theme angle. All of them are offered as "building blocks," meaning we don't intend for you to use them all, but instead we offer them to you as *optional* components to choose from to create your own unique experience/session.

When it comes to implementing a one-room schoolhouse model, the activities in this section can be used *in three different ways*:

- The first way is what might be called a "whole group approach." For this, choose *one or two* of the options that best fit the ages and interests of your particular group (as well as the time you have available). Then have *the entire group of children* do those activities together.
- The second way is a "stations approach." For this, choose two to four of the options and set them up as stations, with each child choosing the station that most interests them. Please know that with this approach, some kids may choose to stay at one station the whole time, whereas others may rotate, so plan for some flexibility. For the station model to be the most successful, we suggest having a leader at each one to explain the activity.
- The third way is a "combination approach." For this, choose one activity for the entire group to do together. Then choose two other activities and set them up as stations that kids can self-select into.

- **Extinguish It!**

In each session, we offer chalice extinguishing words for you to bring your time to an end. We design these chalice-extinguishings to echo the chalice lighting's call to love, as well as reiterate that session's takeaway and invitation to action. Like our suggested chalice lightings, these tap into the power and fun of body movements. If you'd like alternative chalice extinguishing words, [HERE](#) is a document with other options.

Welcome to Cultivating Compassion

Hello Friends!

Welcome to the October Soul Matters **One Room School House RE Packet** for kids in grades K-5, and the theme of Cultivating Compassion.

Fall is my favorite time of year. I love how the season invites us to slow down, reflect, and turn toward each other with warmth. It's truly the perfect backdrop for exploring one of our most deeply held Unitarian Universalist values: compassion.

This packet is designed to help you guide your RE kids into a deeper understanding of compassion, not just as a feeling, but as a practice. Together, we'll explore how compassion is something we cultivate, like a garden we tend with care and intention. We'll consider how it shows up in the ways we treat one another, how we listen, how we act, and how we include everyone in our circle of care.

With that in mind, here are the four sessions included in this month's packet:

Session One: Compassion's Call to Tiny Actions that Mean So Much

Session Two: Compassion's Call to Treat Everyone With Dignity

Session Three: Compassion's Call to Move Outside Our Comfort Zone

Session Four: Compassion's Call to Not Single Anyone Out

I'm especially excited about the way this month's materials lift up our faith's long history of courageous, caring action. We'll connect this theme to the UU value of [Equity](#)—the belief that every person should have what they need to thrive—and introduce two inspiring UU ancestors:

- Dorothea Dix, who brought compassion into public life by fighting for the humane treatment of people with mental illness, and
- Clara Barton, who risked her life to bring compassionate medical care to soldiers during wartime, went on to found the American Red Cross.

Their stories remind us that compassion isn't just personal—it can also be powerful, public, and world-changing.

Finally, I'm thrilled about the fresh and thoughtful approach this packet takes to Halloween. Rather than blending the holiday with religious observances like Samhain or Día de los Muertos, this year we're focusing on how Halloween can reflect compassion's call to not single anyone out. We'll explore how costumes, parties, and games can be designed with care and intention, so that everyone feels welcome, included, and celebrated just as they are.

Thank you for all the ways you bring your care and intention to offer a compassionate welcome to all of our young UUs! I'm so grateful to be on this journey with you as we help our kids not just understand compassion, but truly live it out in real and meaningful ways.

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

Calendar Connections

October 2025

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

Interfaith

- [Yom Kippur](#) - Jewish Day of Atonement - Oct. 1 & 2, 2025
- [Feast of St Francis of Assisi](#) (Christian) - Oct. 4
- [Sukkot](#): Feast of Tabernacles (Jewish) - Oct. 6 - Oct. 13, 2025
- [Ayudha Puja](#) (Hindu) - Oct. 1, 2025 (more [here](#))
- [Samhain](#) (Pagan/Wiccan) - Oct. 31 - Nov. 1 ([more](#))
- [Diwali: Festival of Lights](#) (Hindu) - Oct 20-21, 2025

Unitarian Universalist

- [Michael Servetus](#) burned at the stake in Geneva - Oct. 27 (1553) (more [here](#))
- [UU Merger Vote](#): Unitarians and Universalists, meeting separately in Syracuse, NY, voted to proceed with consolidation - Oct. 31, 1959. (*The official consolidation, [UUA Founding Day](#), happened in 1961 on May 12. - more [here](#)*)

National & Cultural Holidays

- [LGBTQ History Month](#)
- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15)
- [Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Month](#)
- [ADHD Awareness Month](#)
- Birthday of Mohandas Gandhi - Oct. 2 (1869)
- Thurgood Marshall was sworn in as the 1st African American justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. - Oct. 2, 1967
- Ruth Bader Ginsburg joins the U.S. Supreme Court as its second woman Justice - Oct. 4, 1993
- [Sisters in Spirit Vigils](#) (Canada) - October 4, 2018: Honoring the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)
- NASA launches first peopled mission, Apollo 7 - Oct. 11 (1968)
- [Indigenous Peoples Day](#) / Columbus Day (U.S.) - Oct. 13, 2025 (second Monday of October) - more [here](#)
- [National Coming Out Day](#) - Oct. 11 (more [here](#))
- Thanksgiving Day (Canada) - Oct. 13, 2025 (second Monday in October)
- [United Nations Day](#) - Oct. 24
- [Intersex Awareness Day](#) - Oct. 26
- Halloween, All Soul's Eve - Oct. 31

For Fun and On the Fringe

- Country Music Month (designated Oct. 1970 [by Richard Nixon](#)) more [here](#) and [here](#)
- World Vegetarian Day - Oct. 1
- [Banned Books Week](#) - Oct. 5 - 11, 2025 (more [here](#))
- [World Smile Day](#) - Oct. 6
- [Clergy Appreciation Day](#) - Oct. 12, 2024 (second Sunday of October)

Session One:

Compassion's Call to Tiny Actions that Mean So Much

Session Angle

All month long, we are exploring how compassion takes many forms. This week, we are exploring how compassion calls us to notice how “tiny” acts of care and connection can make a powerful impact. As we do that, we will explore World Smile Day.

Light It!

Chalice Lighting

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives. (hands on heart)

As we light this chalice today, (cup your hands like a chalice)

May the flames (wiggle your fingers like flickering flames)

Remind us (tap the side of your head)

That we can show compassion in small ways, like a smile, a kind word, or a helping hand. (make a compassionate gesture: smile, hug, or wave)

May we notice the tiny moments that can make a big difference.
(hold hands together in unity)

Tell or Read It!

Stories to Inspire Us

Wisdom Tale 1: The Lion and The Mouse (An Aesop Fable)

Theme Connection

This story reminds us that compassion doesn't have to be big or loud to make a difference. Sometimes, the tiniest acts of kindness are the ones that matter most and can grow into life-changing care. It opens space for us to remember that, as Unitarian Universalists, we believe that compassion is something we practice in everyday moments.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yeESo2x-G8TgLu_hydmndRaVYQ3cP-WTErhA6aeBwbs/edit?usp=sharing

Leader Note: As [oral storytelling](#) has long been a means for religious traditions to pass down wisdom, we encourage storytellers to memorize the wisdom tales and tell them from memory. Click [HERE](#) for some storytelling guidance.

Picture Book: When I Smile: A Book of Kindness by Jo Witek

Leader Note: This story is recommended for ages 4-9

Set It Up

This story reminds us that smiling is a superpower we all have. And when used in a compassionate way, we have the power to change someone's day. It opens space for us to remember that, as Unitarian Universalists, we believe that compassion is something we practice in everyday moments."

Video Preview - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxLf98D1iAk>

Discuss it: Reflection Questions to "[Build and Bond](#)"

- What do you think makes a smile powerful?
- Has someone ever smiled at you and made you feel better? What happened?
- Have you ever smiled at someone who was having a hard time? What do you think that smile meant to them?
- The book shows smiles in many situations—when the child is brave, when she's giving, when she's calm. What kind of smile do you think is your strongest one?
- What's another tiny thing, like a smile, that can make a big difference?
- Our UU faith teaches us that we are all connected. How do smiles help us feel that connection?

Wonder Box

Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time

A set of standing dominoes or blocks



Introduction & Reveal

If using the Wonderbox to introduce the session and the session theme:

- Remind the children that each month we explore a different theme, and each week we explore the monthly theme in a unique way.
- Explain that the Wonderbox will provide us with a clue about today's unique exploration of the monthly theme.
- Reveal what is in the box.

If using the Wonderbox to help the children explore the session angle in more depth:

- Introduce the Wonderbox with something like, "And now let's explore today's topic some more by finding out what is in our Wonderbox."
- Reveal what is in the box.

Wondering & Takeaway

- Ask the group what they think the dominoes have to do with our monthly theme of **cultivating compassion, or in other words, growing kindness**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
 - Ask the group if they have ever heard of the domino effect. Then, explaining that the domino effect is when one small action sets off a chain reaction. One domino falls and knocks over the next, and the next, and the next.
 - Set up a few dominoes and then knock them down, showing the domino effect.
 - Explain that Friday (Oct. 3) was World Smile Day! A day when people all around the world are encouraged to spread smiles and kindness, especially through small actions.
 - Highlight that smiling is actually a kind of compassion that one might call "tiny compassion." It might not seem like a big deal, but it can make a big difference.
 - Lift up the idea that a smile is a great example of how tiny acts of compassion and kindness can have a domino effect.
 - End by saying something like: Just like how that one tiny push set all the dominoes in motion, that's what happens when we do something kind or show compassion. Even if it seems small—like a smile or a helping hand—it can set off a chain reaction that reaches far beyond what we can see. Just like the dominoes, our small acts of compassion can travel through our families, our classrooms, our congregations, and even the world!"

Engage It!

Hands On Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning

Hands-On Activity: Smile Science

This activity should take 20-30 minutes and can be done with any number of people

Activity Prep

Gather and set out paper plates and markers

Make a smile = science!" poster that list these: Dopamine = the "feel-good" helper, Serotonin = the "calm and steady" friend, Endorphins = the "ouch feel better" fixers, Neuropeptides = the "bye-bye stress" messengers

Set It Up

"Today, we are exploring how compassion calls us to notice how "tiny" acts of care and connection can make a powerful impact. To help us do that, we are going to learn some "smile science" and do an art project."

Directions

Part 1: Smile Science Demo

- Begin by asking the group if they knew that our bodies have little chemicals that come out when we smile.
- Explain that they're like tiny happiness messengers! They help our heart slow down, our brain calm down, and they even help us talk and play better with others.
- Hold up the "smile = science!" poster and list these out together:
 - Dopamine = the "feel-good" helper
 - Serotonin = the "calm and steady" friend
 - Endorphins = the "ouch, feel better" fixers
 - Neuropeptides = the "bye-bye stress" messengers
- Let kids help you act these out—jumping for joy for dopamine, hugging themselves for serotonin, pretending to fall and feel better with endorphins, etc.

Part 2: The Laughing Experiment

- Say something like: Let's do an experiment like real scientists. We're going to fake laugh and fake smile... ready?"
- Set a timer for 1 minute and invite kids to make their biggest fake smile and or laugh out loud—even if it's pretend (though most of the time it turns into real laughter and smiles!)
- After a minute, ask the group:
 - How do you feel now?
 - Was it hard to stop laughing?
 - Did your body feel different than before?

Part 3: The Smile Chain Reaction

- Give each child a paper plate and markers.
- Invite them to draw a smiling face and write (or have an adult help write) one thing that makes them smile or a way they can make someone else smile (e.g., “give a hug,” “tell a joke,” “share a toy”).
- As they work, ask the group:
 - What’s something small that makes you smile?
 - How do you feel when someone smiles at you?
 - Can you think of a time when your smile helped someone else?
- Tape the plates edge to edge in a long smile chain along a wall or around the chalice table to show how smiles spread and connect us all.

Sum It Up

“Smiling isn’t just something we do when we’re happy—it actually helps us *become* happy, and it helps others feel better too! Our UU values remind us that we are all connected, and when we share smiles, we make our whole community stronger.”

Hands-On Activity: Compassion in Action Interactive Bulletin Board

This activity should take 45-60 minutes and can be done with any number of people

Activity Prep

Leader Note: Begin by picking a Visual Theme for your Bulletin Board :

- *Growing Compassion: A large tree, garden, or vine with acts written on leaves or flowers*
- *Pieces of Compassion: Puzzle pieces fit together as people add more*
- *Path of Compassion: Footprints or stones create a winding path of care*

Gather and Set Out

- A large, inviting bulletin board in a visible location
- Title letters: “Compassion in Action”
- Blank cutouts: leaves, puzzle pieces, stones, or footprints - depending on the theme you picked (in a basket or pinned nearby)
- Printed prompt cards: “Today I showed compassion by...”, “I saw someone show kindness when...”, “Someone helped me by...”
- Markers or pens
- A pocket folder or tray labeled “Add Your Act of Compassion Here!”
- (Optional) Chalice symbol, UU principles in kid-friendly wording, quote cards

Set It Up

“Today, we are exploring how “tiny” acts of compassion and kindness can make a powerful impact. To help us do that, we’re going to make a very special bulletin board for our whole UU church. It will show how compassion lives in our community. People of all ages will get to add to it.”

Directions

- Briefly talk about what compassion means: helping, noticing feelings, being kind, caring for others, and the domino effect: “One act of kindness leads to another.”
- Let kids decorate or color pre-cut title letters (Compassion in Action). Then have them glue or tape the title to the top of the board.
- Lay out the big elements like the tree trunk, garden base, puzzle pieces, or path.
- Tape or staple them to the board with adult help.
- Add the chalice symbol and/or UU values on one corner.
- Create a participation station by putting a basket of blank shapes nearby with a sign that says: “Add your act of compassion here!” Include a few prompt cards like: “I helped someone when...”, “Someone showed me kindness by...”, “This week, I smiled at...”
- Give each child 1–2 shapes. Invite kids to create the first batch of "compassion acts" by drawing or writing a kind thing they did, saw, or want to do this week.
- Kids can then tape or pin them to the branches, garden, rainbow, or path.
- Finally, have the children make invitation signs or posters: “Help us grow our Kindness Tree!” or “What’s one kind thing you did today?”
- Optional: Assign a few kids to help explain the board after service (with adult help) or hand out shapes during coffee hour.

Game: Compassion Dominoes

Leader Note: For this game, you will need a large table or open floor space for the domino setup

This activity should take 10-20 minutes and can be done with any number of people

Activity Prep

Gather and set out many dominoes, Pre-cut domino-sized slips of paper (about 2" x 1"), Markers or crayons, clear tape, and a sign that says “Kindness Starts Here.”

Set It Up

“Today, we are exploring how even the smallest acts of kindness and compassion can create a big impact. To help us do that, we are going to make a compassion domino chain. This compassion chain reminds us that, as Unitarian Universalists, we believe that one small act can lead to another, and another, and that that is how we can help build a more compassionate world.”

Directions

- Invite kids to brainstorm some small acts of compassion they could do during the upcoming week.
- Examples: Say hi to someone, Help a sibling, Let someone go first, Give a hug to someone who’s sad.
- Next, give each child 1–3 domino-sized slips of paper and invite them to draw or write a tiny act of kindness they want to try.
- Have kids tape their slips of paper to the face of a domino Don’t cover the bottom so they can stand up!)
- Then have kids work together to set up all the dominoes (including the ones without slips of paper) in a line or spiral on the table or floor, reminding them how each domino is a kind act, and together they make something bigger than one person.
- Invite one child to start the chain by tipping the first domino.

Sum It Up

“Let’s remember this game and its message that one small act can lead to another, and another, until it spreads across a classroom, a family, a whole church—even the world”

Game: Pin the Smile on the Face

This activity should take 5-10 minutes and can be done with any number of children

Activity Prep

Gather and set out a blindfold (bandana or scarf)

On a large poster, draw a cheerful face with big eyes but no smile

Cut out several smiles (laminated paper or cardstock is ideal)

Set It Up

“Even small acts—like offering a smile—can help someone feel seen, included, and loved. This silly and fun game reminds us how powerful compassion can be, even when it’s simple.”

Directions

- Tape the large face on the wall at kid-height.
- Have each child choose or decorate their own smile cut-out and add some rolled tape to the back
- One at a time, blindfold a child, gently spin them around once or twice, and guide them toward the poster.
- They try to "pin the smile" where they think it belongs on the face.
- After each child goes, stand back and admire all the silly, loving, misplaced (and sometimes perfectly placed!) smiles.
- Everyone cheers for each smile, because all smiles bring joy, even if they’re not in the “right” place.

Discuss It

- Even though the smiles were in different places, did they still make the face look happy?
- What does that teach us about real life and compassion? (Help them understand that all smiles work even if not “perfectly placed.”)

Sum It Up

“Let’s remember this game and its message that our smiles don’t have to be perfect. What matters is that we offer kindness. A small smile can change someone’s whole day!”

Extinguish It!

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives (hands on heart)

As we extinguish our chalice (cup your hands like a chalice)

And as we go out into the world, (use finger to make a walking motion)

Let us remember (Tap the side of your head)

That we can show compassion in small ways, like a smile, a kind word, or a helping hand. (make a compassionate gesture: smile, hug, or wave)

May we notice the tiny moments that can make a big difference. (hold hands together in unity)

Session Two:

Compassion's Call to Treat Everyone With Dignity

Theme Angle

All month long, we are exploring how compassion takes many forms. This week, we are exploring how compassion takes the form of treating everyone with dignity. As we do that, we will have the chance to learn about one of our inspiring UU ancestors, Dorothy Dix, to explore how the celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day is a form of compassion, and to lift up [our UU Value of Equity](#) and its call to recognize that everyone has inherent worth and dignity.

Light It!

Chalice Lighting

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives. (hands on heart)

As we light this chalice today, (cup your hands like a chalice)

May the flames (wiggle your fingers like flickering flames)

Remind us (tap the side of your head)

That we honor the worth of every person (bow your head gently or place hands together)

Show kindness even when it's hard (extend hands outward)

And that we shine our light by treating all people with dignity. (reach arms up like rays of light)

Tell or Read It!

Stories to Inspire Us

Wisdom Tale 1: Dorothea's Big Heart: A True Story About Compassion and Dignity (A UU Wisdom Tale)

Theme Connection

This story lifts up one of our inspiring UU ancestors, Dorothea Dix, and explores how compassion involves seeing the full humanity in others, even when the world doesn't. Dorothea Dix's actions remind us that treating everyone with dignity means caring for those who are overlooked, misunderstood, or mistreated.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bBqpTXaclSrxN4HBzFeuq-N9H_egYV0Tr6J9VG7Fcek/edit?usp=sharing

Leader Note: As [oral storytelling](#) has long been a means for religious traditions to pass down wisdom, we encourage storytellers to memorize the wisdom tales and tell them from memory. Click [HERE](#) for some storytelling guidance.

Picture Book: Horton Hears a Who! by Dr. Seuss

Leader Note: This story is recommended for ages 5-10

Set It Up

This story reminds us that compassion isn't always easy. Sometimes it means doing something hard, different, or brave—especially when someone needs help, even if no one else sees or believes it.

"A person's a person, no matter how small." is a line for this story that echoes our Unitarian Universalist belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Horton doesn't just say the right thing—he acts on it, even when it's uncomfortable, unpopular, and hard.

Video Preview - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxLf98D1iAk>

Discuss it: Reflection Questions to "[Build and Bond](#)"

- Why did Horton help the Whos even though no one else believed him?
- How do you think Horton felt when the other animals laughed at him?
- Have you ever helped someone even when it was hard or uncomfortable?
- What does it mean to listen to someone's voice when others ignore it?
- How can we be like Horton when we see someone who needs help?
- Are there people in the world today who aren't always heard or seen? How can we show them compassion?

Wonder Box

Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time:

A map of North America (use a traditional map) and a map showing Native lands (like those from [Native Land Digital](#) or a simplified one showing tribal regions)



Introduction & Reveal

If using the Wonderbox to introduce the session and the session theme:

- Remind the children that each month we explore a different theme, and each week we explore the monthly theme in a unique way.
- Explain that the Wonderbox will provide us with a clue about today's unique exploration of the monthly theme.
- Reveal what is in the box.

If using the Wonderbox to help the children explore the session angle in more depth:

- Introduce the Wonderbox with something like, "And now let's explore today's topic some more by finding out what is in our Wonderbox."
- Reveal **ONLY** the traditional map of North America.

Wondering & Takeaway

- Ask the group what they think it has to do with our monthly theme of **cultivating or growing compassion**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
 - Begin by asking the kids to look at the traditional map and explaining that it is a map like the ones they might see at school. It shows countries and borders.
 - Be sure to highlight the fact that the map doesn't tell the full story.
 - Ask the group who they think made the map? And whose story do they think it tells?
 - Reveal the Indigenous map.
 - Explain that this is a different kind of map. One of the same land, but one that tells a different story. Lift up that this one shows Native lands — the homelands of Indigenous peoples who lived here long before the borders and cities we know today.
 - Ask if anyone has ever seen a map like this, and highlight that these maps have been missing from most schools and history books for a long time.
 - Explain that today is about exploring our UU value of Equity and how compassion takes the form of treating everyone with dignity. One of the ways we live this out and practice compassion is by celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day. When we are practicing compassion, not just with our feelings, but with our actions, we are saying: Everyone deserves to have their story told. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity.
 - Remind the group that our UU value of Equity calls to recognize that everyone has inherent worth and dignity.

Engage It!

Hands On Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning

Hands-On Activity: Compassion Catchers

*Leader Note: This activity is best paired with the story *Horton Hears a Who!* by Dr. Seuss. If you did not read it during a time for all ages, consider reading it while the kids work.*

This activity should take 10-20 minutes and can be done with any number of people

Activity Prep

Print out a Compassion Cather Template 1 per child

Set It Up

"In the story *Horton Hears a Who!*, Horton hears a tiny voice that no one else hears. He could have ignored it, but instead, he listened, believed, and went out of his comfort zone to act with courage and compassion. That's what real compassion looks like: noticing someone's need and doing something about it—even if it's hard or uncomfortable. Today we're going to make something called a Compassion Catcher—it will help us think about how we can listen for the small voices around us, and how we can respond with brave, loving action."

Directions

- Pass out a template to each child
- Invite kids to carefully cut along the edges to make it a perfect square.
- Fold the square in half diagonally from corner to corner.
- Crease the fold well, then unfold.
- Now fold it diagonally the other way and crease again.
- Unfold—your paper will have an "X" crease pattern.
- With the printed side facing up, fold each corner of the square into the center where the diagonal creases meet. *(When done, you'll have a smaller square.)*
- Turn your folded square over so the flaps are facing down.
- Again, fold all four corners into the center point.
- Now you'll have an even smaller square with numbered flaps.
- Fold the square in half horizontally and crease, then unfold.
- Fold it in half vertically and crease again.
- Slide your fingers under the four squares on the back and gently push together to puff up the center into a fortune-teller shape.
- Once the catchers are made, invite kids to pair up and play with their Compassion Catchers.

Sum It Up

This craft helps us remember that our faith calls us to listen for those who are overlooked, and to stand up and act—even when it's not easy. Compassion means moving beyond what's comfortable to meet someone's real need, just like Horton.

Hands On Activity: “Truth Glasses” – Seeing with Courage & Compassion

This activity should take 20-30 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Gather and set out 2 large posters or sheets labeled: “The Story We Used to Hear” and “What We’re Learning Now”, markers or sticky notes, paper “truth glasses” templates ([printable frames](#) or pre-cut cardboard glasses), scissors, glue sticks or tape, markers, crayons, stickers, feathers, sequins, etc. for decorating.

Set It Up

“Today, we are exploring our UU Value of Equity and how compassion takes the form of treating everyone with dignity. To help us do that, we are going to talk about something that takes a special kind of compassion — the kind that helps us face hard truths. One of those hard truths is why we no longer celebrate Columbus Day. Instead, we now recognize Indigenous Peoples Day, which honors Native peoples who were already living here when Columbus arrived. To face this truth, we need compassion and courage, and today we’re going to make and wear special Truth Glasses to help us do that.”

Directions & Discussion Questions

- Invite kids to decorate their own paper “Truth Glasses” as you talk together. As they work, prompt them with these discussion questions to keep them engaged in the theme:
 - What makes it hard to learn the truth sometimes?
 - Why do you think some people didn’t want to talk about the harm Columbus caused?
 - How is it an act of compassion to listen to stories that were ignored before?
 - How can we use our “Truth Glasses” to look at the world differently?
- Encourage them to decorate their glasses with symbols of:
 - Compassion (hearts, smiley faces, helping hands)
 - Courage (lightning bolts, shields, suns)
 - Truth (eyes, stars, open books, Indigenous symbols if appropriate)
- Add a bit of silliness to a heavy topic by telling kids that making and wearing these Truth Glasses means they are ready to look bravely and kindly at the truth — even when it’s uncomfortable — because that’s how we show compassion and fairness.
- As kids work on their glasses, have a discussion and fill in the posters using the questions below to get the conversation going. Write their answers on sticky notes or directly on the posters.
 - The Story We Used to Hear:
 - “What do you remember hearing about Columbus?”
 - “What were people taught about him in the past?”
 - What We’re Learning Now:
 - “What do we know now that we didn’t learn before?”
 - “How do you think Native people felt when Columbus came here?”
 - “What does it feel like to have your story ignored?”
- You can add age-appropriate truths like:
 - Columbus didn’t discover an empty place — people already lived here.
 - Native people had rich cultures and lives long before Columbus arrived.
 - Some of the things Columbus did were unfair and harmful.
 - Learning the truth helps us show respect and treat people with dignity.

Leader Note: If you have time, take a silly picture with everyone in their Truth Glasses

Sum It Up

“Let’s remember that, even though we won’t always wear our fun Truth Glasses, we can still always remember to view the world with our compassion and courage so that we can see - and help others see - the truth even when it is hard.”

Game: Balloon Balance Challenge – Compassion Edition

This activity should take 15-20 minutes and is best with 4+ children.

Activity Prep

Gather and set out one balloon per person (plus a few extras just in case)

Set It Up

“Compassion is more than just being nice — it’s about noticing when someone is struggling and stepping up to help. And our UU value of Equity reminds us that everyone has worth and dignity, but not everyone always has the same resources, support, or ease. Sometimes compassion is slow and steady, like helping lift someone up when they’re struggling, and sometimes, it’s quick and energetic, like jumping in to catch someone who’s falling behind. Today, we’re going to play a game that highlights both.”

Directions

Version 1: Partner Balloon Balance

- Begin by having kids form pairs and give each pair one balloon
- Have them hold it between their two bodies without using their hands (e.g., between their backs, shoulders, or hips).
- Explain that on go, they will have to navigate a mini obstacle course (walking across the room, going around a chair, and then stepping over a block), all while keeping the balloon balanced between them.
- If the Balloon Drops: No one is “out.” Instead, partners pause, reset the balloon, and cheer each other on.
- Be sure to encourage pairs to talk compassionately to each other, help each other adjust, and notice what their partner needs to succeed.

Version 2: Balloon Bop Compassion Relay

- Begin by explaining that the goal of this game is for the whole group to work together to keep several balloons in the air at once — no balloon can touch the ground.
- Explain the Rules:
 - Use only hands (or elbows or knees if you want a challenge).
 - You can’t bop the same balloon twice in a row.
 - If someone looks like they’re about to miss a balloon, jump in to help!
 - If a balloon drops, no one is “out” — just pause and reset together.
- Start with one balloon and slowly add more until you have at least the same number of balloons as kids, if not more.
- Optional twist: Add “Compassion Words” written on some of the balloons (like “Help,” “Listen,” “Include,” “Kindness”), and challenge the group to call out what each word means as they bop it!
- Be sure to remind the group from time to time that paying attention to who might need help, moving together as a team, and jumping in when someone’s struggling — all while having fun.

Sum It Up

“Every version of this game reminded us that compassion isn’t just something we feel — it’s something we do. We supported each other, noticed when someone was struggling, and did our best to help them succeed, without judgment. That’s what our UU value of Equity is all about: recognizing the dignity and worth of every person and making sure no one is left behind. When we play like this — and live like this — we’re cultivating hearts full of compassion.”

Game: Dignity Dash Board Game

This activity should take 10-20 minutes and needs at least 2 kids

Activity Prep

Gather and set out a [printable game board](#) with blue, orange, green, red, and gold spaces (you can draw a colorful path of 30 spaces in a circle or winding path), Player tokens (buttons, coins, or little toys), A die or spinner, Person Cards (see examples below), Dignity Challenge Cards, Act It Out Cards (optional)

Person Cards Examples:

(Each card names a person you might meet.)

- A kid who just moved to your school
- Someone who uses a wheelchair
- Someone who is feeling sad
- Someone with a different religion
- Someone who doesn't like what you like
- Someone who's acting really silly
- Someone wearing something new or different

Dignity Challenge Cards Examples:

- What would you say to help them feel welcome?
- What would dignity look like here?
- How could you include them in your game?
- How might you listen carefully to them?

Act It Out Cards Examples:

- Show how you'd welcome this person using only gestures!
- Make a face that shows compassion.
- Walk like someone who's nervous, and show how you'd help.
- Use your body to act out being a great friend.

Set It Up

"Today, we are exploring being compassionate people by treating everyone with dignity and respect. But sometimes, showing dignity and kindness means thinking fast, trying something new, or really putting ourselves in someone else's shoes. To help us practice that, we're going to play a game that's full of chances to show how we can care for people in all kinds of situations."

Directions

- Everyone puts their token at the "Start" space.
- The first player rolls the die or spins the spinner and moves that many spaces.
- Depending on the space they land on:
 - Blue space: Draw a Person Card and a Dignity Challenge Card. Answer the challenge.
 - Orange space: Draw an Act It Out Card and do the movement challenge in the center of the board.
 - Green space: "Share Zone" — Tell a real-life story of a time someone treated you with dignity.
 - Red space: "Think Fast!" The group gives you a 10-second dignity challenge.
 - Gold Star space: "Compassion Boost" — Move ahead 1 extra space for a kind bonus.
- Players keep taking turns. First one to the "You Matter!" finish space wins — but everyone wins when we practice compassion and dignity.

Discuss It

- What did you learn about treating others with dignity?
- Was it harder or easier when you had to think fast?
- Did anything surprise you?
- What could you try in real life this wee...k?

Sum It Up

“This game reminded us that compassion isn’t just something we feel — it’s something we do. Whether you’re acting something out, answering a tricky kindness question, or thinking about someone different from you, this game is all about growing or cultivating our compassion muscles.”

Extinguish It!

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives (hands on heart)

As we extinguish our chalice (cup your hands like a chalice)

And as we go out into the world, (use finger to make a walking motion)

Let us remember to honor the worth of every person (bow your head gently or place hands together)

Show kindness even when it’s hard (extend hands outward)

And that we shine our light by treating all people with dignity. (reach arms up like rays of light)

Session Three:

Compassion's Call to Move Outside Our Comfort Zone

Theme Angle

All month long, we are exploring how compassion takes many forms. This week, we explore how compassion takes the form of moving outside our comfort zone and responding to the needs of others when they arise before us. As we do that, we will tell the story of one of our inspiring UU ancestors, Clara Barton, and lift up our UU Value of Generosity and its call to compassionately share our faith, presence, and resources.

Light It!

Chalice Lighting

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives. (hands on heart)

As we light this chalice today, (cup your hands like a chalice)

May the flames (wiggle your fingers like flickering flames)

Remind us (tap the side of your head)

That we can be brave enough to act with compassion (make a strong-arm pose)

Even when it calls us to step outside our comfort zones (have everyone take one big step backward)

Tell or Read It!

Stories to Inspire Us

Wisdom Tale 1: Clara's Big Brave Heart

(A Unitarian Universalist Wisdom Tale)

Theme Connection

"This story explores the life of one of our inspiring UU ancestors, Clara Barton, and how she lived the value of compassion in one of the most daring and generous ways possible: She put her life at risk to help others who were suffering. It's all about stepping outside our comfort zones and remembering that compassion isn't just about sharing what we have—it's also about sharing who we are."

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oTD15k9MTR0hxxhZJO7lhPGcER_Mx5l4SY0rFI_V5jl/edit?usp=sharing

Leader Note: As [oral storytelling](#) has long been a means for religious traditions to pass down wisdom, we encourage storytellers to memorize the wisdom tales and tell them from memory. Click [HERE](#) for some storytelling guidance.

Picture Book: Clara Barton, Angel of the Battlefield by Tamara Hollingsworth

Leader Note: This story is recommended for ages 5-10

Set It Up

"This story explores the life of one of our inspiring UU ancestors, Clara Barton, and how she lived the value of compassion in one of the most daring and generous ways possible: She put her life at risk to help others who were suffering. It's all about stepping outside our comfort zones and remembering that compassion isn't just about sharing what we have—it's also about sharing who we are."

Video Preview - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAFlqycHtw4>

Discuss it: Reflection Questions to "[Build and Bond](#)"

- What do you think helped Clara be brave, even though she was shy?
- Have you ever seen someone do something kind or generous that took courage?
- Can you think of a time when you shared your time, help, or presence—even if it wasn't easy?
- What's one small, brave, and generous thing we could do this week to care for someone else?
- What do you think is the moral of the story, or the wisdom we can take from it?

Wonder Box

Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time:

- Items representing comfort or safety (e.g., a blanket, stuffed animal, headphones, snack, book, sunglasses)
- Small items representing someone else's needs (e.g., a bandage, small water bottle, notepad labeled "Help," toy figure, tissue packet)



If using the Wonderbox to introduce the session and the session theme:

- Remind the children that each month we explore a different theme, and each week we explore the monthly theme in a unique way.
- Explain that the Wonderbox will provide us with a clue about today's unique exploration of the monthly theme.
- Reveal what is in the box.

If using the Wonderbox to help the children explore the session angle in more depth:

- Introduce the Wonderbox with something like, "And now let's explore today's topic some more by finding out what is in our Wonderbox."
- Reveal what is in the box.

Wondering & Takeaway

- Ask the group what they think all the items have to do with our monthly theme of **cultivating compassion**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
 - Explain that today is about exploring what it means to step outside our comfort zones to show compassion.
 - Explain that the Wonderbox is full of things that make you feel safe, happy, and comfortable—wrap the blanket around your shoulders, pretend to munch on the snacks, put the headphones in your ears, and pretend to jam out, etc.
 - Show the toy figure or "Help" note and ask the kids to then imagine you were walking by someone who's cold, scared, or hurt. Someone who doesn't have what they need.
 - Explain that you have two choices: you could stay in my comfort zone... or you could reach into my backpack and offer something they really need—even if it means I'll be a little less comfortable.
 - (Start swapping comfort items for "need" items—e.g., taking out the blanket to offer to the toy figure, or replacing the snack with a water bottle.)
 - Lift up that every time you share, you're not just giving away a thing, you're giving away a part of yourself. That's what real compassion looks like. It's caring deeply enough to act, even when it's not easy.

Engage It!

Hands On Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning

Hands On Activity: Compassion in Action – Blessing Bags

This activity should take 30-40 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Leader Note: Ask the congregation to donate supplies in advance!

For each bag (feel free to adapt based on budget/community needs), gather and set out:

- 1 large Ziplock bag or reusable drawstring bag
- Travel-size toiletries: toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, soap, shampoo, comb
- Socks (new, clean, warm)
- Granola bars or non-perishable snacks
- Water bottle or juice box
- Hand wipes or tissues
- Bandages
- A small card or folded paper for kids to write/draw a note/blessing
- Markers or pens for note-writing
- Optional: a slip of paper with local shelter or resource info

Set It Up

“Today, we are exploring how compassion takes the form of moving outside our comfort zone and responding to the needs of others. To help us do that, we are going to practice a kind of generosity that asks something of us, not just things we can spare, but care we can share.”

Directions

- Begin by explaining that you are making blessing bags—small gifts of comfort, care, and compassion for people who may be experiencing homelessness or not have a safe place to sleep. These bags remind someone they are seen, they matter, and they are not forgotten.
- Set up stations for kids to collect one of each item and fill their bags
- As they work, ask the group a few questions like
 - “What are things you use every day that help you feel clean, warm, or safe?”
 - “What would you want if you had to sleep outside?”
 - “How do you think it might feel to get one of these bags?”
- Have kids write a small note to go in each bag (‘You matter’ or ‘I’m wishing you strength today’) or draw a picture that shows love, hope, or joy.
- Finally, gather in a circle with the finished bags. Light a chalice and bless the bags with words like these: *“Spirit of love and generosity, may these bags carry more than supplies—may they carry our care. May they reach someone in need and remind them that they are worthy of kindness, comfort, and peace.”*
- Invite kids to take a few bags home with adult permission and distribute them with care and dignity, or place them in a congregational “care pantry” or a community partner organization.

Hands-On Activity: Clara Barton-Inspired Car First Aid Kits

This activity should take 20-40 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Leader Note: Ask the congregation to donate supplies in advance, and feel free to adapt based on the budget

- Kits (small plastic box, pencil case, or zippered pouch)
- Sets of Band Aids (variety of sizes)
- Alcohol wipes or antiseptic wipes
- Optional: Stickers to decorate the kit and labels that say “Car First Aid Kit – This kit was made with compassion by a Unitarian Universalist kid. May it bring you comfort.”
- Small bottle of hand sanitizer
- Disposable gloves
- Antibiotic ointment
- Cold pack

Set It Up

Leader Note: If kids did not hear the UU wisdom tale about Clara Barton, here is a shortened & age-appropriate version of it to help set up this activity.

To help us learn more about that, I want to tell you a story about one of our inspirational UU ancestors, a girl who was really good at compassion.

A long time ago, there was a little girl named Clara. She was kind and smart, but very shy. One day, her big brother got really hurt. Clara was scared, but she wanted to help. So she learned how to care for him — feeding him, cleaning him, and helping him feel better. That was her first big act of compassion. When Clara grew up, she became a teacher and made sure everyone felt included, even the kids who had a hard time. She was kind and fair, even when others didn’t agree. Then came a war, and many soldiers were hurt and alone. Clara packed a wagon full of bandages, food, and blankets and went to help, even though it was dangerous. She helped so many people that she became known as the “Angel of the Battlefield.” Later, she helped create the American Red Cross, a group that gives out supplies and care when people are hurt or in danger. Clara showed us that real compassion means showing up, being brave, and sharing what we have — even when it’s a little scary or uncomfortable.

You remember how Clara Barton didn’t wait for someone to tell her to help—she looked for what was needed and found a way to offer care, even when it meant leaving safety or comfort behind. That’s what compassion looks like: seeing a need and preparing to meet it, without waiting for a more convenient or comfortable time.

Today we’re going to build simple Car First Aid Kits—just like mini emergency kits—to keep in your family’s car. Why? Because we never know when someone—even a stranger—might need help, and it feels good to be ready to offer care and kindness, just like Clara Barton.

Directions

- Invite kids to decorate their kits while you set up stations for kids to collect one of each item
- When they are done decorating, invite them to take one of each item and add it to their kit. As they pack, ask:
 - What do you think made Clara brave?”
 - How did Clara show compassion in action?
 - How can we be like Clara, even if we’re not in a war?
 - How do you think Clara Barton would feel about this project of ours?
 - When else have you seen someone go out of their way to help?
 - How might this kit make someone feel if they really needed it?

Game: Step Out & Help

This activity should take about 10 minutes and can be done with any number of people

Activity Prep

Gather and set out Hula hoops or tape to mark circles on the floor

Set It Up

“Today, we are exploring how sometimes we need to be brave and move out of our comfort zone to show compassion. To help us do that, we are going to play a game that helps us practice thinking about others’ needs and physically experience what it’s like to “step out” of their comfort zone.”

Directions

- Set up a bunch of hula hoops (“comfort zones”) around the room — one per child.
- Each child stands in a hoop.
- Call out made-up scenarios (e.g., “Someone dropped their lunch tray!” or “A new kid is standing alone at recess.”).
- Ask: Would you step out of your comfort zone to help?
- If yes, the child steps out of the hoop and runs to a designated “helping zone” or does a silly move (like jumping jacks, a dance spin, etc.).
- Then return to their hoop for the next scenario.
- Add in silly or brave actions to keep energy up!

Sum It Up

“Let’s all remember that we all have different comfort zones, and that’s okay. What matters is how we treat each other and how we try to do what’s kind, even when it feels hard. That’s one way we live our UU values—by showing compassion, courage, and respect.”

Game: First Aid Relay

This activity should take 5-10 minutes and needs at least 2 kids

Activity Prep

Gather and set out Scenario cards (see below), Safety cones or tape to mark start and finish lines and a “First Aid Kit” bucket or tote for each team (This can include toy or pictures of supplies such as: Bandages, Gauze or tissues, Ice pack or Ziplock bag, Blanket or towel, Water bottle or cup, Flashlight, Gloves, etc.)

Sample Scenario Cards: You can write or print these on index cards. Mix realistic with silly for fun!

- Someone scraped their knee falling off their bike.
- A friend is cold and shivering.
- Someone has a headache and needs a quiet rest space.
- A person is very thirsty after playing in the sun.
- A camper is scared during a thunderstorm.
- A kid tripped and twisted their ankle during a game.
- A pet got lost and needs help getting found.
- Someone is lonely and crying at lunch.
- A friend got stung by a bee.
- Someone forgot their lunch and is hungry.

Set It Up

Leader Note: *If kids did not hear the UU wisdom tale about Clara Barton, here is a shortened & age-appropriate version of it to help set up this activity.*

To help us learn more about that, I want to tell you a story about one of our inspirational UU ancestors, a girl who was really good at compassion.

A long time ago, there was a little girl named Clara. She was kind and smart, but very shy. One day, her big brother got really hurt. Clara was scared, but she wanted to help. So she learned how to care for him — feeding him, cleaning him, and helping him feel better. That was her first big act of compassion. When Clara grew up, she became a teacher and made sure everyone felt included, even the kids who had a hard time. She was kind and fair, even when others didn't agree. Then came a war, and many soldiers were hurt and alone. Clara packed a wagon full of bandages, food, and blankets and went to help, even though it was dangerous. She helped so many people that she became known as the "Angel of the Battlefield." Later, she helped create the American Red Cross, a group that gives out supplies and care when people are hurt or in danger. Clara showed us that real compassion means showing up, being brave, and sharing what we have — even when it's a little scary or uncomfortable.

Today, we are exploring how we can act with compassion by moving outside our comfort zone and responding to the needs of others. We also talked about Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, and how she didn't wait for someone to give her permission to help. She saw that people were hurting and stepped up, even when it was hard or scary. That's what compassion looks like—it's active, and it sometimes takes us out of our comfort zones. Today, we are going to play a game to help us practice being helpers.

Directions

- Divide into teams (no more than 6 players per team).
- Give each team a First Aid Kit bucket and have them stand behind a start line.
- Across the room, place one scenario card per round at the finish line.
- When the game leader shouts "GO!", one player from each team runs to grab a scenario card, returns to their team, and reads it aloud.
- The whole team decides together which items from the kit would help in that situation. They pick 1–3 items and run them to a "care station" (a designated table or blanket).
- Once they've delivered their aid, the next player runs for the next scenario. Repeat until all scenarios have been used.
- Celebrate when everyone finishes!

Sum It Up

"Let's all remember that, while Clara Barton didn't always know exactly what to do, she tried, and she learned. That's what compassion looks like: noticing the need and doing what we can even when it is hard or scary or means we need to move outside our comfort zone."

Game: Compassion Matching Game

This activity should take 10-20 minutes and needs at least 2+ kids

Activity Prep

Print out [a set of cards](#) with 10 “Need” cards and 10 matching “Compassionate Gift” cards.

Set It Up

“Today, we’re going to play a game that helps us practice compassion. In this game, you’ll see cards that show people who are in need, like being cold or feeling lonely. And there are other cards that show ways we can help, like sharing a blanket or giving a hug. Your job is to find the cards that match a need, and a kind way to help.”

Directions

- All children stand in a circle
- Mix up all the cards and place them face down in a grid.
- Invite kids to take turns flipping two cards.
- If they find a Need and the matching Gift, they keep the pair.
- If not, flip them back and let the next player go.
- When a match is made, ask: "Why would this gift help with this need?" or "Have you ever shared something like this?"

Discuss It

- Have you ever helped someone who was sad or scared?
- Which gift do you think is the most important? Why?

Sum It Up

“Let’s all remember that, even though it is sometimes hard to find ways to help, if we keep looking and trying, we will eventually find ways to help people who are in need.”

Extinguish It!

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives (hands on heart)

As we extinguish our chalice (cup your hands like a chalice)

And as we go out into the world, (use finger to make a walking motion)

Let us remember that we can be brave enough to act with compassion (make a strong-arm pose)

Even when it calls us to step outside our comfort zones (have everyone take one big step backward)

Session Four:

Compassion's Call to Not Single Anyone Out

Session Angle

All month long, we are exploring how compassion takes many forms. This week, as we close the month, we are exploring how compassion takes the form of not singling people out and making room for everyone. As we do that, we will have the chance to explore our UU value of equity some more by looking at its call to build inclusive communities. And to get at that, we will have some fun celebrating Halloween.

Light It!

Chalice Lighting

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives. (hands on heart)

As we light this chalice today, (cup your hands like a chalice)

May the flames (wiggle your fingers like flickering flames)

Remind us (tap the side of your head)

To notice who's missing, (look side to side)

And to remember that compassion

means making space for all to belong. (Have kids wave a hand towards their body as if signaling "[Come in.](#)")

Tell or Read It!

Stories to Inspire Us

Wisdom Tale: The Tale of Stingy Jack... Reimagined Through the Light of Compassion

Theme Connection

This story explores how we practice compassion by making sure no one is left out and everyone is welcomed home.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EXDUMJOHkEkMbCiNKXaH81Z5LA3aOmKVyPo0vZSJIFA/edit?usp=sharing>

Leader Note: As [oral storytelling](#) has long been a means for religious traditions to pass down wisdom, we encourage storytellers to memorize the wisdom tales and tell them from memory. Click [HERE](#) for some storytelling guidance.

Picture Book 1: Bonaparte Falls Apart by Margery Cuyler

Leader Note: This story is recommended for ages 5-7

Set It Up

“This story reminds us that as UUs we believe in welcoming everyone, just as they are. Like Bonaparte's friends, we practice compassion by including others, helping them feel safe, and working together to make sure no one is left out.”

Video Preview - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF4civGferE>

Discuss it: Reflection Questions to “[Build and Bond](#)”

- How do Bonaparte’s friends show they care about him?
- Unitarian Universalists believe everyone deserves to feel welcome and included. How did Bonaparte’s friends include him?
- What would you want your friends to do if you were feeling nervous, like Bonaparte?

Picture Book 2: The Legend of Spookley the Square Pumpkin by Joe Troiano

Set It Up

“Most pumpkins are round, right? Well, this story is about a pumpkin named Spookley, who is shaped like a square, and the other pumpkins didn’t know what to think about that at first. Sometimes when someone looks or acts differently, they get left out — even if they have something amazing to offer. But this story reminds us of something Unitarian Universalists believe everyone is important, and everyone belongs.”

Video Preview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krm96hGsvGo>

Discuss it: Reflection Questions to “[Build and Bond](#)”

- Did you notice how the other pumpkins treated Spookley at the beginning of the story? Why do you think they did this?
- How did Spookley feel when he was left out or made fun of?
- Has there ever been a time you felt left out? What helped you feel better?
- What can we do when we see someone being left out?
- Spookley helped save the day. What do you think the other pumpkins learned at the end of the story?

End with: “Reading this story is a great example of how we can build belonging by widening our circles! So, let’s explore that some more with some fun activities and games.”

Wonder Box

Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time:

A large candy bowl (real or symbolic) and a variety of small Halloween pictures (or real allergy-friendly candy or toys like stickers, glow sticks) labeled with different needs or differences. Examples:

- A small pumpkin labeled “New to town”
- A ghost labeled “Shy”
- A bat labeled “Has a food allergy”
- A black cat labeled “Uses a wheelchair”
- A piece of candy labeled “Speaks a different language”
- A spider labeled “Has a different costume”
- An empty bowl or small basket labeled: “Left Out”

Introduction & Reveal

If using the Wonderbox to introduce the session and the session theme:

- Remind the children that each month we explore a different theme, and each week we explore the monthly theme in a unique way.
- Explain that the Wonderbox will provide us with a clue about today’s unique exploration of the monthly theme.
- Reveal what is in the box.

If using the Wonderbox to help the children explore the session angle in more depth:

- Introduce the Wonderbox with something like, “And now let’s explore today’s topic some more by finding out what is in our Wonderbox.”
- Reveal what is in the box.

Wondering & Takeaway

- Ask the group what they think all the items have to do with our monthly theme of **cultivating compassion**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
 - Ask the group to imagine Halloween night. - There’s a big bowl of treats sitting by the door for trick-or-treaters. Everyone’s excited to be included. But what happens when someone comes to the door and there’s nothing in the bowl that works for them? Maybe all the candy has nuts, and someone has an allergy. Or someone shows up in a costume that others make fun of. Or maybe they’re in a wheelchair and can’t get up the steps.
 - Place the candy bowl in the center and begin pulling “candy” (the labeled items with different needs or identities) out. As you pull each item out, say something like
 - “This treat is for someone who’s new to the neighborhood. How do we make space for them?”
 - “This ghost is shy and nervous to knock on the door. Can we help them feel safe?”
 - “This child has allergies—can we include something for them too?”
 - “This friend’s costume is homemade and different. How can we celebrate their creativity?”
 - Someone speaks a different language. “What would compassion look like when we include them?”
 - Our candy bowl is more than just sweets—it’s a symbol of the kind of community we want to build: one where no one is left out, where we look out for each other, and where everyone gets to belong. That’s what compassion looks like—and we can practice it every day, not just on Halloween.

Engage It!

Hands On Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning

Hands-On Activity: Compassion Lanterns

Leader Note: This activity is best done if you have used the Wisdom Tale: The Tale of Stingy Jack... Reimagined through the light of Compassion

This activity should take 20-30 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Gather and set out Small paper bags or jars, battery tea lights or glow sticks, markers, stickers, googly eyes, jack-o-lantern face stencils, orange tissue paper, and glue sticks (optional for jars)

Set It Up

"Today, we're making lanterns as reminders to treat everyone with kindness and to make sure no one feels left out. Just like Jack in the story was left wandering in the dark until someone lit a lantern to guide him, we can help others find their way by lighting the path with our compassion and care. Each of your pumpkins will carry messages or images that say, 'You belong. You are welcome!'"

Directions

- Invite kids to decorate the outside of their bags or jars
- Drop a flameless tealight or glow stick inside to make it glow!
- Optional: Add a pipe cleaner stem and leaf at the top or carry it with a ribbon.

Sum It Up

"Just like your lantern lights up the room, your compassion can light up someone's day. When we show compassion by including others, we make our communities brighter and warmer. Let them remind you to always make room for everyone."

Hands-On Activity: Beaded Square Pumpkins

Leader Note: This activity is best done if you have used Picture Book 2: The Legend of Spookley the Square Pumpkin by Joe Troiano

This activity should take 15-25 minutes and can be done with any number of children

Activity Prep

Gather and set out (per child): 3 orange pipe cleaners, 1 green pipe cleaner, 25–35 Orange pony beads
Optional: Googly eyes or stickers

Set It Up

"In The Legend of Spookley the Square Pumpkin, all the pumpkins were round—except for one square little pumpkin named Spookley. He felt left out, but in the end, his unique shape helped save the day. Today, we're going to make our own special square pumpkins to remind us that as UUs, we believe everyone is important, and everyone belongs."

Directions

Leader Note: Watch this [video](#) to see how this craft is done. Just be sure to bend your pipe cleaners into a square, not a circle, like the video

- Take 2 orange pipe cleaners and twist them together to form a square frame (bend at corners, overlap and twist ends to secure).
- Use the 3rd orange pipe cleaner to create inner support: twist it diagonally or across to help hold the shape and later anchor the beads.
- String orange beads onto the sides of the square frame.
- Fill each side with as many beads as fit (leave room at the corners to keep the square shape).
- Take the green pipe cleaner and twist it at the top center of the pumpkin.
- Curl one end around a pencil or finger to make a twirly vine.
- The other end becomes the stem sticking up.
(Optional) Stick on googly eyes

Hands-On Activity: Trick or Treat Bags

Leader Note: This activity is best done if you have used the Wonder Box

This activity should take 15-20 minutes and can be done with any number of children

Activity Prep

Gather and set out paper bags with handles or small canvas tote bags, Halloween stickers, coloring, and or supplies.

Set It Up

“Today, we are exploring how compassion means making room for everyone and being inclusive. For this project, we are going to make trick or treat bags as a fun way to celebrate Halloween. It’s also a way to celebrate and honor our UU call to build inclusive communities.”

Directions

- Invite kids to paint or decorate their bags.
- As they work, have them brainstorm inclusive options that people could hand out on Halloween and ways someone could make their house more inclusive (sit at the curb if they have lots of stairs, non-food treats, or allergy-safe goodies they could give out, etc.)
- Bags can go home to use on Halloween, or be used to collect donations for a non-food treat bowl at church!

Game: Skeleton Scramble

Leader Note: *This activity is best done if you have used the Picture Book: Bonaparte Falls Apart by Margery Cuyler*

This activity should take 10-15 minutes and can be done with any number of people

Activity Prep

Gather and set out, 1 large [cut-out skeleton](#) per team - (laminated or paper) with 10–15 labeled bone pieces (head, arms, legs, ribs, pelvis, feet, etc.) and a basket or box to hold bones for each team

Set It Up

“We’re going to play a fun Halloween game that reminds us how important it is to work together and include everyone. And just like in our Unitarian Universalist community, we’ll only succeed if everyone has a chance to be part of it!”

Directions

- Divide kids into teams of 3–6 (or if you have a small group, work as one team)
- Scatter each team’s skeleton pieces in a designated area (far from where they’ll assemble it).
- Choose a "building station" where the skeleton will be assembled.
- Explain that everyone on the team must have a role at some point, and that working together and including each other is more important than being fast.
- On “GO,” one team member races to collect a bone and brings it back to the building station.
- Tag the next person in line, who then races to retrieve another bone.
- Once all bones are collected, the team must assemble the skeleton correctly.
- BUT — each person must help place at least one piece (younger players can help older ones).

Leader Note: *For an extra challenge, make it an obstacle course and or have one round that involves blindfolding the builder, and teammates must guide them with verbal instructions, encouraging trust and inclusion.*

Discuss It

- What helped your team work well together?
- Was there a moment someone needed help or encouragement?
- How did it feel to make sure everyone had a chance to participate?
- What do you think this game can teach us about how we include others at church, school, or anywhere?

Game: Circus Peanut Toss

This activity should take 5-10 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Gather and set out Plastic trick-or-treat pumpkins (1 per team), a few cups of circus peanuts, and masking tape for throwing and catching lines

Leader Note 1: While circus peanuts candy does not contain peanuts, as always, you should check with parents and caregivers about all food allergies and sensitivities.

Set It Up

"Today, we're going to play a silly Halloween game with one of the most famously disliked candies of all time: Circus Peanuts! They're soft, they're squishy, they're orange and weirdly banana-flavored... and lots of people say they're the worst Halloween candy ever.

But here's the thing — just like circus peanuts get labeled and judged before people even give them a chance, sometimes people get labeled too. Sometimes someone gets called 'weird' or 'different' or 'not cool' — just because of how they look or what they like. That's not fair, and it doesn't feel good.

Our UU value of compassion reminds us that we're all worthy of love and belonging — even circus peanuts! And compassion means not singling people out, but making space for everyone. So today, we're going to play a game where these squishy little candies get to be the star — and we're going to remember to treat each other the same way: with kindness, respect, and inclusion."

Directions

- Divide kids into teams.
- Mark a tossing line and a catching line with masking tape (at least 6 feet apart)
- Place a pumpkin for each team on the catching line
- Give the first player on each team a cup filled with circus peanuts.
- On "Go," the first player tosses one circus peanut toward their team's pumpkin, then passes the cup to the next player and goes to the back of the line.
- Players continue taking turns tossing until the 2-minute timer runs out.
- Count the number of circus peanuts in each team's pumpkin.
- The team with the most circus peanuts in their pumpkin wins!
- Optional Variation:
- A teammate can hold the pumpkin and try to catch the circus peanuts mid-air — just make sure everyone gets a turn!

Discuss It

- How did it feel to play a game where something "unloved" got to be in the spotlight?
- Can you think of a time when someone was left out because others decided they were different?
- How can we make sure everyone gets a chance to be included and appreciated, just like the circus peanuts?

Extinguish It!

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives (hands on heart)

As we extinguish our chalice (cup your hands like a chalice)

And as we go out into the world, (use finger to make a walking motion)

Let us remember to notice who's missing, (look side to side)

And that compassion means making space for all to belong. (Have kids wave a hand towards their body as if signaling "[Come in.](#)")

October Packet Stories At-a-Glance

To support leaders as they assemble a session that best fits their children's developmental needs, this section provides an overview of all the wisdom tales and storybooks in our RE packets each month.

Wisdom Tales (from the upper elementary packets)

- [The Lion and The Mouse](#)
- [The Mustard Seed: A Story About Compassion](#)
- [Dorothea's Big Heart: A True Story About Compassion and Dignity](#)
- [The Monk and the Scorpion](#)
- [The Jobless Umbrella](#)
- [Clara's Big Brave Heart](#)
- [Magic Cauldron Soup: A Halloween Tale](#)
- [The Tale of Stingy Jack... Reimagined with Compassion](#)

Story Books (from the lower elementary packet)

- **Because Amelia Smiled** by David Ezra Stein
- **Miles of Smiles** by Karen Kaufman Orloff
- **Be Kind** by Pat Zietlow Miller
- **Whoever You Are** by Mem Fox
- **Nila's Perfect Coat** by Norene Paulson
- **Sharing Is The New Cool** By Jacqueline Crann
- **The Legend of Spookley the Square Pumpkin** by Joe Troiano
- **Room on the Broom** by Julia Donaldson

Story Books (from the one-room schoolhouse packet)

- **When I Smile: A Book of Kindness** by Jo Witek
- **Horton Hears a Who!** by Dr. Seuss
- **Clara Barton, Angel of the Battlefield** by Tamara Hollingsworth
- **Bonaparte Falls Apart** by Margery Cuyler

Soul Work Table Activities

Many congregations have a multi-sensory table in the sanctuary to support children, youth, and adults who find it easier to focus when their hands are busy. Some of our Christian cousins call it a “Prayground.” Read about how they approach it [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). In UU circles, the tables are often for all ages, meaning adults are invited to use it too. We love calling it “Soul Work Table,” but of course, feel free to give it whatever creative name you want.

- [Cultivating Compassion Coloring Sheet](#)
- We also suggest using some of the creative activities from this packet and any other manipulatives you choose on your soul works table.

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](#).

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 & Contributors

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Thanks to all the Soul Matters Religious Educators who send in suggestions for our monthly packets! Whenever you have stories, games, or activities you’d like to suggest, just email April at soulmattersre@gmail.com



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