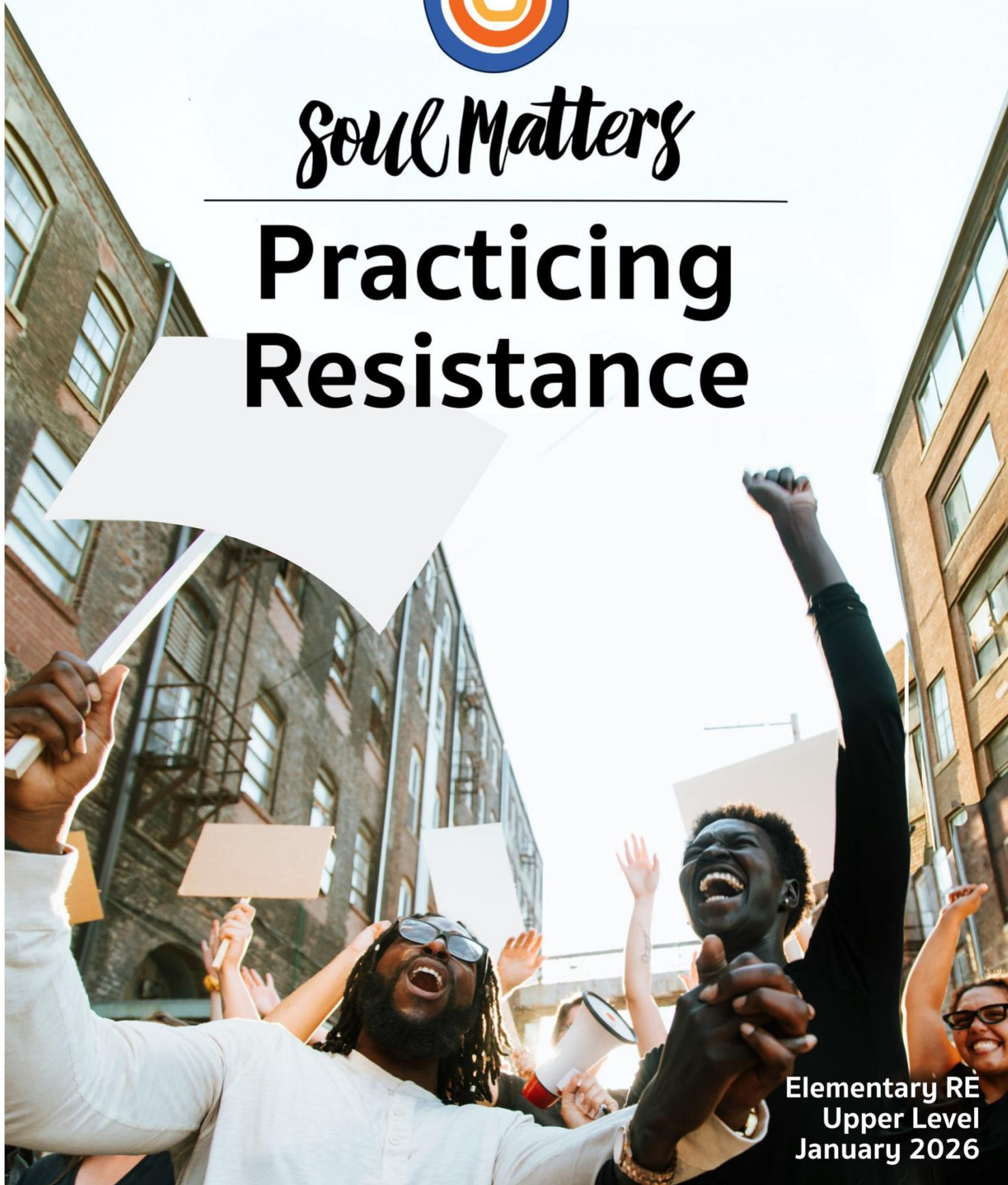




Soul Matters

Practicing Resistance



Elementary RE
Upper Level
January 2026

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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 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 It! - Stories to Inspire Us**

Stories are a wonderful way to make our monthly themes come alive. Knowing that stories have a developmental component, we put picture book stories in our lower elementary packets, wisdom tales in our upper elementary packets, and a strategic selection of both in our one-room schoolhouse packets.

The stories we recommend can be used for Time For All Ages in a worship service to introduce that Sunday's session theme angle to the whole congregation, or they can be used within the RE space to help your children explore the session angle.

As [oral storytelling](#) is how religious traditions have long passed down wisdom and ensured those stories have the greatest impact, we encourage storytellers to memorize the wisdom tales and tell them from memory. Click [HERE](#) for some storytelling guidance.

- **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.

- **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. We suggest you choose **one or two** of these options that best fit the interests of your group and the time you have available.

- **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 Practicing Resistance

Hello Friends!

Welcome to the January Soul Matters RE Packet for Upper Elementary kids and our theme of Practicing Resistance.

This month is all about exploring how we can resist some of the traps that pull us away from our spiritual selves and instead lean into choices that reflect our values, even when it's challenging.

With that in mind, here are the four areas of resistance we will be looking at in our sessions this month:

Session One: Resisting the Pressure to Fit In

Session Two: Resisting the Unhealthy Parts of Social Media.

Session Three: Resisting Racism (MLK Day)

Session Four: Resisting Monkey Mind

My favorite part of this packet is one of the activities found in session two: Planning Your “Unplug & Connect” Event. Not only is this activity a fantastic opportunity for kids to have some leadership in church but it also has the potential to be an amazing all ages community event.

I also really enjoyed the opportunity this packet created to live into our UU practice of finding wisdom in the world's religions. In particular, we lifted up the Buddhist concept of the “monkey mind,” which reminds us to notice when our thoughts are restless, distracted, or full of worry—and to practice resistance by finding calm and focus.

Finally, this theme allowed us to highlight our UU value of [Justice](#), with its call to “dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression.” In doing so, we celebrate and remember inspirational UU leaders like Fannie Barrier Williams, whose courage and advocacy for equity continue to inspire us today.

We hope these sessions spark curiosity, courage, and creativity in your Upper Elementary kids and give them tools for practicing resistance in ways both big and small.

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

Calendar Connections

January 2026

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

Interfaith

- [Twelfth Night](#) (Christian) - Jan. 5
- [Epiphany](#) (Christian) - Jan. 6
- [World Religion Day](#) (Baha'i) - Jan. 18, 2026
- Birthday of [Thomas Merton](#) - Jan. 31 (1915) (more [here](#) and [here](#))

Unitarian Universalist

- [Thirty Days of Love](#) - Side with Love Campaign - Jan.15 - Feb.14
- [Millard Fillmore](#)'s Birthday - Jan. 7, 1800 (Unitarian President; on his contradictions [here](#))
- [The Edict of Torda](#) is issued - Jan 13 (1568) (More [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#))
- [Joseph Tuckerman's](#) Birthday - Jan. 18 (1778) (more [here](#))

National & Cultural

- [New Year's Day](#) - Jan. 1
- The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln - Jan. 1 (1863)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Jan. 19, 2026, third Monday of January (connections [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Rowe vs. Wade](#) Anniversary - Jan. 22 (more [here](#))
- International Holocaust ([Shoah](#)) [Remembrance Day](#) - Jan. 27

For Fun and On the Fringe

- [National Hug Day](#) - Jan.21
- [I'm Not Going To Take it Anymore](#) Day - Jan. 7th
- [Belly Laugh Day](#) - Jan. 24 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

Session One:

Resisting the Pressure to Fit In

Theme Angle

All month long, we are exploring how kids can practice resisting some of the main pressures that pull them away from being their best selves. This week, we are exploring the challenge of resisting the pressure to fit in. In particular, we recognize how January is a time when some kids come back to school with their holiday “spoils,” which can be used to one-up each other and reinforce the harmful division between “the haves and the have-nots.” This session also gives us the opportunity to lift our UU Value of [Love](#) and its call to choose compassion and inclusion over division and status.

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 follow our own light and resist the pressure to fit in (place hands on hips as if you are standing up strong and ready to resist what comes)

Tell It!

Stories to Inspire Us

Wisdom Tale 1: The Peacock & the Crane

(An Aesop Fable)

Theme Connection

This story introduces what it feels like to stand firm in your values when others try to pull you toward status or showing off. It also centers the UU value of Love as an act of resistance to those pressures.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CLpFnOvzN02iYBhCPWbaMvmYQ7cg4Aj7SDBTkn7Uwb4/edit?usp=sharing>

Wisdom Tale 2: The Emperor's New Clothes

(A [Hans Christian Anderson Fairy Tale](#) - adapted for easier storytelling)

Theme Connection

This story explores what it feels like to resist the pressure to fit in when everyone around you is going along with something untrue. It invites us to be courageous, choosing truth over approval or status.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RS33a8Rqlw3l16pmHKvAn9BWnC5djV7faOKH_KYEzfk/edit?usp=sharing

Wonder Box

Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time:

- One pair of branded Nike socks (or similar recognizable “status” item) and one pair of plain socks



Introduction & Reveal

If using the wonderbox to introduce the session and 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 the socks**

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 socks**

Wondering & Takeaway

- Ask the group what they think the two pair of socks have to do with our monthly theme of **Practicing Resistance**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
- Hold up the **Nike socks**. - Explain that these socks are just socks but when people see the logo, they might think something about the person wearing them.
- Point out that some people might think, “They must be popular,” or “They have money,” or “They fit in.” But others might feel left out if they don’t have them.
- Hold up the **plain socks**. Explain that these socks do the same job: they keep your feet warm. But they don’t give you any “status.”
- Ask:
 - Which ones do you think some kids might want more? Why?
 - Have you ever seen people get treated differently because of what they wear, have, or don’t have?
 - How does that feel for the people being admired? For the people being left out?
- Lay both pairs side by side. Highlight that the socks look different, but the feet inside are the same.
- Explain that all month long, we are exploring how kids can practice resisting some of the main pressures that pull them away from being their best selves. This week, we are exploring the challenge of resisting status and the pressure to fit in.

Leader Note: Be sure to point out that there is nothing wrong with having Nike socks (it is very, very possible that many of the kids in your group do). Resisting status doesn’t just mean saying no to materialism. It means saying yes to compassion and inclusion.

Engage It!

Hands-On Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning

Hands-On Activity: True Colors Bracelets

This activity should take 15-30 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Gather and set out beads in various colors (no “special” beads required), string or elastic cord

Set It Up

“All month long, we are exploring how kids can practice resisting some of the main pressures that pull them away from being their best selves. Today, we are exploring the challenge of resisting the pressure to fit in. This is really important after the holidays, because some kids come back to school with new things that might make others feel left out.

But our UU belief in inherent worth reminds us that who we are on the inside is what really matters. So to help us remember this, we’re going to make true colors bracelets. These are bracelets that show the things that make us special, the qualities that really define us. When we value these qualities and know those close to us value them it gives us the strength to try to fit in by being someone we’re not.

Each bead you choose represents a part of your true colors, such as kindness, courage, creativity, or friendship. When you wear your bracelet, it will remind you — and anyone who sees it — that the best way to belong is to be your authentic self, and to include others along the way.”

Directions

- Invite kids to make a bracelet for themselves or a friend.
- Each bead represents a quality that matters more than possessions or status — like kindness, courage, empathy, humor, or honesty.
- As they string beads, encourage discussion:
 - “Which qualities make someone a good friend?”
 - “What qualities make someone valuable, no matter what they have?”
- When finished, they can wear the bracelet as a reminder that being our best selves is about who we are, not what we own.

Sum It Up

“Your bracelet shows your true colors, all the good things about you that make you special. When you wear it, remember this activity and its message: It’s not what you have or wear that matters, but how kind and loving you are.”

Hands-On Activity: Wings of True Beauty

Leader Note: This activity goes best with *The Peacock and the Crane Story*

This activity should take 15-30 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Gather and set out beads in various colors (no “special” beads required), String or elastic cord

Set It Up

“All month long, we are practicing resisting some of the main pressures that pull us away from being our best selves. This week, we are exploring the challenge of resisting the pressure to fit in. To help us do that, we are going to create feathers and then wings of beauty that celebrate our inner strengths and true beauty, which gives us the strength and courage to resist the pressure to pretend to be someone we’re not, just so we can fit in.”

Directions

- Give each child a paper feather
- Invite them to write or draw one inner quality that they are proud of — something that makes them beautiful inside, such as kindness, courage, imagination, fairness, or loyalty.
- When everyone is done, collect the feathers and assemble them into a large mural of the Crane’s Wings.
- Add the words: “True beauty is about being who you are.”

Sum It Up

“Let us use the feathers and our wisdom tale as a reminder that while the Peacock tried to find worth through how he looked, the Crane showed that true beauty comes from what’s inside and loving what makes you unique.”

Game: The Values Scavenger Hunt

This activity should take 25-35 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Hide symbols around your space

- Heart labeled Compassion. (Location: First-aid kit, snack area, or water station)
- Card labeled Popularity (Location: Mirror, doorway, or stage area)
- Flame labeled Courage. (Location: Doorway, stairs, or hallway)
- Card labeled Status (Location: near a trophy, decorative object, or sign)
- Circle labeled Inclusion. (Location: circle rug, table, or group space)
- Sun labeled Honesty (Location: mirror or window)
- Card labeled Greed (Location: drawer, treasure chest, or cubby)

Set It Up

"Today, we are exploring what it takes to resist the pressure to fit in.. A big part of that is knowing the difference between "true values" and "false values." This game will help us think about the difference between the two."

Directions

- Explain that you've hidden values all around the space. Some will be true values - values and qualities that enable us to help people and bring people together - , and some will be false values - values and qualities that are used to make us feel better than other people or make others feel less than others.
- Explain that you will read a clue, and the kids will have to find the value connected to that clue.
- Once they find it as a group, they will talk about what each one means, and decide whether it's a True Value or a False Value
- **True Value: Compassion (Love in Action)**
 - Clue: Find the place where we take care of others' needs. (Location: First-aid kit, snack area, or water station)
 - Scenario: Your friends start making fun of someone's clothes. They say you'll be "cool" if you laugh along.
 - Discussion: What's the loving thing to do?
- **False Value: Popularity**
 - Clue: Look where people might be seen. (Location: Mirror, doorway, or stage area)
 - Scenario: Someone tells you that if you stop hanging out with your best friend, you'll be more popular.
 - Discussion: Does choosing popularity over kindness feel like a loving choice? Why or why not?
- **True Value: Courage**
 - Clue: Look where we take steps forward. (Location: Doorway, stairs, or hallway)
 - Scenario: A classmate asks you to do something you know is wrong.
 - Discussion: Practice saying "No" kindly but firmly.

- **False Value: Status**
 - Clue: Find where something shiny might catch your eye.” (Location: near a trophy, decorative object, or sign)
 - Scenario: A friend brags about how their stuff makes them ‘better’ than others.
 - Discussion: Does having fancy things make someone more worthy or loving?
- **True Value: Inclusion**
 - Clue: Search where everyone can come together. (Location: circle rug, table, or group space)
 - Scenario: A new kid joins the group, and others don’t want to include them.
 - Discussion: What can you say or do to help everyone feel welcome?
- **True Value: Honesty**
 - Clue: “Find where truth is reflected.” (Location: mirror or window)
 - Scenario: You made a mistake and feel embarrassed.
 - Discussion: Why is it brave to tell the truth even when it’s hard?
- **False Value: Greed**
 - Clue: Look where something is stored away or hidden. (Location: drawer, treasure chest, or cubby)
 - Scenario: Someone refuses to share supplies, saying, “I want it all for me.”
 - Discussion: Does greed come from love or fear? What could love do instead?

Sum It Up

“Let’s remember this activity and its message that true values enable us to help people and bring people together and false values make us feel better than other people or make people feel less than others.”

Game: The Status Shuffle

This activity should take 5-10 minutes and works best with 4+ kids

Activity Prep

- Gather and set out 3*5 cards with all different numbers on them and tape (to tape the cards to kids backs)
- Be ready to explain what “status” means.

Set It Up

“This game helps us explore what happens when people are treated differently because of status — when some are seen as more important, or more special, than others. In January, some kids come back to school with lots of new things from the holidays. Sometimes that can make people start comparing or showing off, and it can hurt. Let’s see what happens in this game, and then we’ll talk about it together.”

Directions

- Begin by taping a number card to each child's back (without them seeing what number their card has on it)
- Tell them that higher numbers are considered “important” or “special.”
- Without talking about them mentioning or giving away the numbers, invite kids to move around and greet each other based on the numbers that are on the back of those they are greeting, being very friendly to high numbers, and less so to those with low numbers.
- After a minute or two, stop and ask everyone to guess what number they have.
- Reveal the truth — and then debrief together:
 - How did it feel to be treated differently?
 - Did anyone feel left out or uncomfortable?
 - How do we act when this happens in real life?

Sum It Up

“Let’s remember this game and how it felt when people treated you a certain way because of your number. And how, in real life, we sometimes see people acting like that — trying to one-up others or leaving people out because they’ve been “labeled” as being of less value. Let’s remember this game's message that our UU faith calls us to resist the pressure to treat people based on status, and instead, choose love, kindness, and inclusion.”

Game: Go Your Own Way

This activity should take 5-10 minutes and works best with 4+ kids

Activity Prep

Gather and set a device to play music on.

Set It Up

“Sometimes the world tells us that to belong, we have to blend in - wear the right clothes, like the right things, post the right stuff, have the “right” kind of friends. January can make that even more intense when people come back from winter break talking about what they got for holiday gifts or did during holiday break. It can feel like a competition.

But our UU values of Love and inherent worth call us to resist that kind of pressure — to stay true to ourselves and include others just as they are. In this game, we’ll see what it feels like to follow the crowd and what it feels like to go our own way.”

Directions

Round One:

- Start the music. Invite one volunteer to begin moving to the beat — dancing, walking, or moving however they choose.
- The rest of the group should follow the leader’s movement as closely as they can.
- After 30–60 seconds, switch leaders.
- Let several people lead while everyone else copies.

Round Two:

- This time, when the music starts, everyone can move however they want.
- Encourage them to stay aware of each other — not to bump, but also not to copy.
- After a minute, pause and notice the energy in the room.

Round Three (optional deeper layer):

- Ask half the group to intentionally try to fit in with what others are doing, and the other half to intentionally resist — to express themselves freely.
- After a bit, switch roles.

Discuss It

- What did it feel like to follow? What did it feel like to go your own way?
- When was it hardest to resist the pressure to fit in?
- In day-to-day life, what kinds of “status pressures” do you notice — at school, online, in your friend groups?
- What might we say to ourselves to help us resist that pressure — both for ourselves and for others?

Sum It Up

“Let’s remember this game and its message that resisting status isn’t just about refusing to follow trends; it’s about choosing to be ourselves and having the courage to go our own way.”

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 you head)

To follow our own light and resist the pressure to fit in

(place hands on hips as if you are standing up strong and ready to resist what comes both hands over your heart)

Session Two:

Resisting the Unhealthy Parts of Social Media

Theme Angle

All month long, we are exploring how kids can practice resisting some of the main pressures that pull them away from being their best selves. This week, we are exploring the challenge of resisting the unhealthy parts of social media. In addition to discussing the dangers of social media, we will address them concretely by planning a whole church event in which kids, youth, and adults put down their phones and connect with one another.

Leader Note: to honor the theme-based ministry and do this in the month of Practicing Resistance, you will need to plan this right away. You could also plan this now and offer the event next month as an all-church Valentine's event.

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 real connection shines brighter (make a star burst motion with your hands)

Than any screen. (pretend to scroll on a screen)

Tell It!

Stories to Inspire Us

Wisdom Tale: The Fox and The Crow

(An Aesop Fable)

Theme Connection

This story is an excellent metaphor for being cautious about online attention and the ways people seek validation.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PFGQ7owJhl4WJqkPNgiVIBZvhiSt9QFnry6jPOvjw-k/edit?usp=sharing>

Wisdom Tale: The Dog and His Bone

(An Aesop Fable)

Theme Connection

This story is about a dog who loses his real bone while chasing the reflection of a “better” one, a powerful parallel to losing joy when we compare our lives to others online.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1H-EfecGlekA-ym1ZUyGdbG8AO7k8nXgwzSqLDCXN3Y/edit?usp=sharing>

Wonder Box

Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time:

A tangle of earbuds or charging cords and a smartphone



Introduction & Reveal

If using the wonderbox to introduce the session and 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 **this [tangle of earbuds or charging cords and a smartphone]** has to do with our monthly theme of **practicing resistance**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
 - Start by acknowledging that those phones and screens can be wonderful! They let us talk to family, learn new things, and share our ideas.
 - (Pause, then hold up the tangled cords.)
 - Lift up that there is another side to them, though, sometimes, all the messages, pictures, and posts can start to tangle us up
 - **Ask:** Have you ever felt caught in a tangle online? Maybe comparing yourself to others, or losing track of time, or feeling left out?
 - All month long, we are exploring how kids can practice resisting some of the main pressures that pull them away from being their best selves. This week, we are exploring the challenge of resisting the unhealthy parts of social media.
 - When we resist social media, we are reminded that real connection doesn't need a screen; it needs kindness, listening, laughter, and care.

Engage It!

Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning

Game: Social Media Healthy or Unhealthy?

This activity should take 10 -20 minutes and is best done with at least 2+ kids

Activity Prep

Create two large signs: “Healthy” and “Unhealthy,” and hang or place them on opposite sides of the room.

Set It Up

“This game is a fun way to help us think critically about healthy and unhealthy online habits, while practicing how to 'resist' the pull of distraction.”

Directions

- Explain that you’ll read situations about using phones, games, or social media.
- If the situation shows healthy social media use, they move to the “HEALTHY” side.
- If it shows distraction or unhealthy pressure/use, they move to “UNHEALTHY.”
- Sometimes it’s tricky — and that’s okay! You’ll talk about it.
 - You send a kind message to a friend who’s feeling sad.
 - You scroll for an hour and forget to do your homework.
 - You spend 6 hours playing video games, but you are playing with friends the whole time.
 - You watch videos about how to bake bread for two hours straight instead of actually baking.
 - You share a funny video to make someone smile.
 - You feel bad because someone’s photo looks “perfect.”
 - You FaceTime your grandma, who lives far away.
 - You check your phone at dinner instead of talking.
 - You post something honest and positive about your day.
 - You take your phone out to take a photo at a fun event
 - You get good news, and your first thought is, “I can’t wait to post this!”
 - You see someone being teased online and decide to speak up.
 - You try to get more “likes” by posting something untrue.
 - You watch a friend’s livestream instead of calling or visiting them in person.
 - You follow a celebrity who inspires you — but also makes you feel like you’ll never measure up.
 - You take a break from screens to go outside.
 - You post a selfie because you’re proud of your new haircut — but then keep checking for likes.
 - You join an online group about saving the environment — but the chat sometimes turns mean.
 - You share a funny meme that gets lots of laughs — but it might make fun of someone else.
 - You spend time editing a picture before posting because you want it to look “just right.”
 - You comment “Congrats!” on a friend’s big news
 - You share a post about kindness
 - You stay up late chatting with friends online — and you’re super tired the next day.

Discuss It

- Can something that feels like a “connection” sometimes become a “distraction”?
- What could help you tell the difference?

Activity: Planning Your “Unplug & Connect” Event

This activity should take 35-50 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Gather and set out newsprint and markers

Leader note: As this activity is all brainstorming and planning, it may be helpful to have hands-on materials available as well, such as coloring sheets, Legos, Play-Doh, etc.

Set It Up

“All month long, we are exploring how we can practice resisting some of the main pressures that pull them away from being their best selves. Today, we are talking about how we can resist the distractions of social media and screens that can sometimes pull us away from being our best, most connected selves. Because something special happens when we look up, reach out, and connect with each other.

So with that in mind, we’re going to help our whole church practice that kind of connection. We’ll plan a special event where everyone — kids, youth, and adults — puts down their phones and connects in real life.”

Directions:

Step 1 - Begin by brainstorming.

- Ask:
 - What kinds of things help people connect and feel love?
 - What are fun activities that don’t need screens?
 - What could people of all ages enjoy doing together?
 - Examples: board games, group art, nature walks, singing, storytelling, drumming, cooperative games, service projects, potluck dinners, etc.

Step 2 - Choose a Theme and Name

- Explain that every great event needs a great name. Your event needs a name that reminds people what it’s about — unplugging, connecting, and being present.
- Brainstorm possible titles together:
 - Examples: Unplug & Connect, Offline Together, The Great Screen-Free Gathering
- Take a quick vote or combine ideas. Then, decide on a slogan or motto for the event — something simple and meaningful, like: “Real connection happens when we look up.”, “Love is stronger than Wi-Fi.”, “Put down your phone — pick up your heart.”

Step 3 - Plan the Details

Once the group has chosen a few favorite activities, turn the brainstorming into action!

This helps kids see how community ideas become real events.

- On a large piece of paper, make 3 columns: Detail, Questions to Discuss, Notes / Assignments and fill in the following:
 - Choose activities
 - Time & Date - When would people most likely come? After worship? On a Sunday afternoon?
 - Location - Where in the church or outdoors could it happen? What spaces fit which activities?
 - Set-Up - What needs to be prepared (tables, art supplies, snacks, signs)?

- Supplies - What do we need to gather or ask people to bring? (Games, instruments, food, art materials, etc.)
- Who's Involved - Which adults or youth leaders should we invite to help? Who could lead each part?
- How to Invite Others- How can we spread the word? (Announcements, newsletter, posters, during worship, etc.)

Leader note: You can do this all together, or if you have a large group, you can divide the class into small “planning teams” — one group focuses on activities, another on setup and supplies, another on promotion and invitations — then share back with the group.

Step 4 - Create Posters and Invitations (10 minutes)

- Provide art materials and invite kids to work in small groups or pairs.
- Each group can make either:
 - Event Posters — colorful, creative designs to display at church
 - Invitations — handouts or flyers to give to friends and adults
- Encourage them to include:
 - The event name and date (you can leave space for adults to fill this in later)
 - The theme or slogan
 - A few examples of activities that help people connect
- Decorations that show connection — hearts, chalices, circles, holding hands, etc.

Sum It

“Let’s remember this activity and its message that one of the ways we can practice resisting social media is by creating spaces of love and connection in a world that can sometimes feel distracted or divided. By creating and hosting this event, we are helping our whole community live our values.”

Card Games for Connection

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

Activity Prep

Gather and set out cards. and directions cards around the room

Set It Up

This week, we’re exploring how to resist the pull of screens and rediscover the joy of connecting face-to-face. Social media can make it easy to scroll past real moments, but when we play games together, we share laughter, eye contact, and teamwork that strengthen our sense of community.

So today we are going to have fun playing some simple, screen-free card games that lift up and help us choose presence, kindness, and connection over distraction and status. Whether we’re working together, cheering for each other, or just laughing at the chaos of “Spoons,” these games remind us what real friendship feels like.

Directions

Let kids choose what games they want to play

1. Spoons (or “Pig”)

- What You Need: A deck of cards + spoons (one fewer than the number of players).
- How to Play: Players pass cards quickly, trying to collect 4 of a kind. Once someone gets 4, they quietly grab a spoon — everyone else scrambles for the remaining ones!
- Why It’s Great: Fast, silly, full of energy and laughter, no one checks their phone during Spoons!

2. Trash (a.k.a. Garbage)

- What You Need: One deck of cards.
- How to Play: Players race to line up cards in order (Ace through 10). It’s luck and a little strategy — great for mixed ages.
- Why It’s Great: Simple to learn, addictive to play, and encourages focus and turn-taking.

3. Uno

- What You Need: Uno deck (or Skip-Bo / Phase 10 for longer play).
- How to Play: Match colors or numbers, play action cards, and shout “UNO!”
- Why It’s Great: Everyone already knows it, so no learning curve — easy connection through laughter and shared fun.

4. Skip-Bo

- How to Play: Players build piles in numerical order using skill and luck.
- Why It’s Great: Longer game for calm connection — great mix of strategy and patience.

5. Monopoly Deal

- How to Play: Fast-paced card version of Monopoly — collect sets, charge rent, use action cards.
- Why It’s Great: Social, interactive, and only 15–20 minutes long.

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 real connection shines brighter (make a star burst motion with your hands)

Than any screen. (pretend to scroll on a screen)

Session Three:

Resisting Racism

Theme Angle

All month long, we are exploring how kids can practice resisting some of the main pressures that pull them away from being their best selves. This week, we are exploring the challenge of resisting racism. We know that racism is just one of the many oppressions that kids and adults face. However, since this session is near Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we are focusing on racism, to honor the way racism was central to his work. This also gives us the opportunity to celebrate the inspirational UU, Fannie Barrier Williams, and lift up our UU Value of Justice and its call to “dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression.”

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 our UU Value of Justice (make your hands into U shapes)

Call us to resist racism (Make an X with your arms)

Tell It!

Stories to Inspire Us

Wisdom Tale 1: Fannie Barrier Williams

(A UU Wisdom Tale)

Theme Connection

This story introduces and explores the life of inspirational UU Fannie Barrier Williams and lifts up our UU Value of Justice and its call to “dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression.”

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

https://docs.google.com/document/d/18HR6Z95yc6_09OEZWmHf0qXGqWwlsvu4X3aWDq5MTYY/edit?usp=sharing

Wisdom Tale 2: The Parable of the River

(A Modern Wisdom Tale - Adapted from [The Parable of the River Video Story](#))

Theme Connection

This story explores and reminds us that we can practice resistance by speaking up, organizing people, and changing the way things work.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xKz0zZYijJxHMDryP8NM6fmkmQUExiNXzM2Bgx1M-5s/edit?usp=sharing>

Wonder Box

Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time:

Two signs - one says “Colored”, one says “White”



Introduction & Reveal

If using the wonderbox to introduce the session and 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 where or why people might have seen signs like these, and what they think **they have** to do with the monthly theme of **Practicing Resistance**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
 - Explain that not all that long ago, in many parts of our country, these signs were used to separate people by skin color.
 - Point out that they hung above water fountains, restrooms, bus seats, and schools. And that they were used to let people of color know they couldn’t go to the same places as white people.
 - Lift up that this is called segregation (when things, or in this case people, were separated) and it was part of racism.
 - Highlight that although this was happening and was legal, many brave people resisted these unfair laws. They marched, spoke up, sat down where they weren’t supposed to, and refused to be silent. Their resistance helped change laws and hearts.
 - Note that Martin Luther King Jr.’s was one of those brave resisters and that by honoring him during this time of year, we challenge ourselves to resist as well.
 - Explain that practicing resistance means noticing when something is unfair — and choosing to do something about it. Sometimes it can mean doing big things, participating in marches or speeches. But sometimes it means learning, listening, and trying again when we make a mistake.
 - End by saying we’re going to celebrate all those ways to resist today!

Engage It!

Activities & Crafts for Experiential Learning

Creative Activity: Building the World Fannie Dreamed Of

Leader Note: This activity is best paired with the [Fannie Barrier Williams story](#)

This activity should take 10-30 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Gather and set out paper and crayons or markers

Set It Up

"Fannie Barrier Williams worked hard to resist racism by making spaces where everyone could belong — no matter the color of their skin, what they believed, or who they were. She practiced resistance by creating a fairer, kinder world.

Now it's our turn to imagine that world.

For this activity, we are all going to draw a picture of a world where everyone belongs. You might show people helping each other, learning together, or welcoming someone new. Maybe you'll draw a classroom, a playground, a church, or a whole community where no one is left out."

Directions

- Play some resistance music (if you have a playlist of the hymns/music used in church this month, this is a great time to play them) and invite kids to draw.
- When everyone is done, invite them to share their drawings, asking:
 - "What's happening in your picture that shows fairness or belonging?"
 - "What can we learn from Fannie about helping make this real in our world?"

Sum It Up

"Let us remember this activity and its message that we too can practice resistance by imagining and then creating a fairer, kinder world."

Activity: Erase and Resist!

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

Activity Prep

Gather and set whiteboards, dry-erase markers, erasers, or tissues

Set It Up

“This activity is called Erase and Resist! It’s a way to practice noticing when something isn’t fair — and changing it. That’s what people who resist racism and injustice do — they notice, they speak up, and they try again.”

Directions

Round 1: Draw What You’re Told

- Explain that you’re going to give the kids some directions, and it is their job is to follow them and draw when, what, and how you say.
- Tell them they have to draw a sun, a rainbow, trees, and flowers
- A few seconds after they start, give them some unfair rules
 - Only people wearing blue can draw today.
 - Everyone has to draw with their non-dominant hand.
 - You can only squiggle lines. No straight lines allowed!
 - If you have on red, it erases your picture
 - If you have blue eyes draw with a marker in your mouth
- Let them react — they’ll likely laugh, question, or protest.
- After a moment, pause and ask: “How did that feel? Did that rule seem fair?” What would you change to make it fair
- Explain that sometimes unfair rules exist in real life, too, and people practice resistance by noticing what’s wrong and working to change it.

Game - River Crossing Game: Going Upstream for Justice

Leader Note: This game goes best when paired with The Parable of the River

This activity should take 10-20 minutes and works best with groups of 5+

Activity Prep

Gather paper and tape to

- Create three islands by taping together four 8.5 x 11 sheets of paper for each island.
- Create a pebble for each person by cutting sheets of paper in half lengthwise to form 4.25 x 11 sheets.
- Create one rock (an 8.5 x 11 sheet) for every six participants.

Tape off an open area at least 15 medium strides (30-35 feet) long and six strides wide.

Tape down the islands.

Set It Up

“Today we’re going to play a game that shows us what it’s like to resist unfairness and injustice. Imagine that you are at the end of a dangerous river filled with pollution and obstacles. The river represents systems of unfairness and racism that keep people from moving freely and safely. Your goal is to make it upstream to the other side — but you can’t touch the river, and you have to work together.

You’ll use islands, rocks, and pebbles to help each other cross. Remember, just like resisting oppression in the world, teamwork, listening, and including everyone matters more than rushing ahead on your own. Are you ready? Let’s go upstream!”

Directions

Begin by explaining the rules:

- Have all kids start at one end of the “river.” with one pebble
- No part of a person’s skin, clothing, or personal items may touch the river.
- Islands are safe spots and may not be moved.
- Rocks are safe and may only be moved once placed.
- Everyone has one pebble, which can be moved and shared to help teammates cross.
- Kids must work together to help everyone reach the upstream side safely.

Leader Note: Be sure to encourage kids to: Discuss strategy before crossing. Listen to each teammate’s ideas.

Decide together who goes first, how to place pebbles and rocks, and when to help others.

Discuss It:

After everyone has crossed, gather the group and ask:

- Did everyone get a chance to speak or suggest ideas or did some people get ignored? What could you have done differently to make sure all voices were heard equally?
- How did your team decide on a plan?
- Who took leadership roles, and how were leaders chosen?
- Did people follow the leadership willingly, or was there disagreement?
- How did you rely on each other?
- How is this like resisting racism or other unfair systems?
- How is teamwork important when we work to change unfair rules or practices?
- What strategies helped you succeed? Could those strategies be used in real life when standing up for fairness and inclusion?
- Were you able to get everyone across safely?
- What might have worked better?
- How does this game remind us of the UU call to dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression?

Game: Rise/Stand Up for Justice

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

Set It Up

"This game is fun and fast, one that will help us recognize the difference between fair and unfair actions, and practice noticing examples of resisting racism and standing up for justice."

Directions

Leader Note: Encourage quick reactions — the fun is in the pace! If you have kids with mobility challenges, you can play this game by having them raise their arms.

- Invite kids to sit in a circle on the floor with plenty of space to pop up and sit back down.
- Explain that for this game, you will call out examples of things in rapid-fire style. If kids hear something that they think shows fairness, justice, or resisting racism, they stand up tall and proud! If it's unfair, unkind, or not resisting — sit down and stay seated."

Round One – Fair or Unfair? (Get them warmed up)

- Helping a new student find their classroom — Stand up!
- Calling someone mean names because of their skin color — Sit down.
- Taking turns at recess — Stand up!
- Saying, "You can't play with us because you look different." — Sit down.
- Listening when someone tells their story — Stand up!
- Ignoring someone who's being teased — Sit down.
- Speaking up when you see someone being left out — Stand up!

Round Two – Resisting Racism (Connects directly to MLK and the UU value of justice)

- Learning about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. — Stand up!
- Saying "That's not fair" when someone is treated differently because of their race — Stand up!
- Laughing at a racist joke — Sit down.
- Joining a march or peaceful protest — Stand up!
- Pretending not to notice when unfair words hurt someone — Sit down.
- Reading books that show all kinds of people as heroes — Stand up!
- Saying, "We don't talk about that here" when someone brings up racism — Sit down.
- Learning to be an ally — Stand up!
- Saying "It's not my problem" — Sit down.

Round Three – Justice in Action (Connects directly to UU values and community)

- Welcoming everyone into your classroom or church — Stand up!
- Changing unfair rules — Stand up!
- Listening to people who are usually not heard — Stand up!
- Leaving all the work for someone else — Sit down.
- Working together to clean up your community — Stand up!
- Only helping people who look like you — Sit down.
- Planting seeds of fairness and love — Stand up!

Sum It Up

"Let us remember this ritual and its message that resisting racism and unfairness takes courage and awareness. Dr. King showed us that standing up for justice doesn't always mean fighting — sometimes it means speaking kindly, listening deeply, or helping someone cross the river of unfairness. Every day we can choose to stand up — for fairness, for inclusion, and for love."

Unjust Monopoly

<https://www.actionteaching.org/award/intergroup-monopoly>

Leader Note: Unjust Monopoly is played in much the same way as classic Monopoly, with two exceptions: (1) the rules differ from player to player, and (2) there are two phases of play rather than one.

This activity should take 25-45 minutes and works best with groups of 4+

Activity Prep

Gather and set out a standard Monopoly game and a set of [rule sheets for](#) the players

Set It Up

"We are exploring resisting racism by lifting our UU value of justice. Today, we are going to play Monopoly in a way that illustrates how fair and unfair rules make equality hard to attain. It's also a way to understand why we need to use equity to help certain folx catch up from unfair rules that have put them behind.

We are going to play a variation of Monopoly called Unjust Monopoly.

There are special rules.

At first, "players begin with unequal amounts of money and are given individualized rules that reflect differing degrees of privilege or disadvantage. For example, a privileged player might receive \$350 rather than the standard \$200 for passing Go, whereas a disadvantaged player might be permitted to move only half the amount rolled on each turn." Notice that the rules are unfair? That is the point.

Be prepared to find out just what it feels like to live in a society that creates and continues inequality.

So today we're going to explore how it feels to live with inequality and what role equity might have in working for fairness. Remember, "equity" means offering help in the ways that folx need it. Are you ready?! Let's begin!"

Directions

- Play Unjust (intergroup) Monopoly: <https://www.actionteaching.org/award/intergroup-monopoly>
- When the game is done, have a conversation about how it felt to play.

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 our UU Value of Justice (make your hands into U shapes)

Call us to resist racism (Make an X with your arms)

Session Four:

Resisting “Monkey Mind”

Theme Angle

All month long, we are exploring how kids can practice resisting some of the main pressures that pull them away from being their best selves. This week we are exploring the challenge of resisting distraction, overwhelm, anger and worries, or what is often called the “monkey mind.” In doing so, we will honor our UU practice of finding wisdom in the world's religions, as the “monkey mind” is a central concept in Buddhism.

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 breathe when things feel out of control (take a deep breath)

Tell It!

Stories to Inspire Us

Wisdom Tale 1: Taming the Monkey Mind (A Buddhist Wisdom Tale)

Theme Connection

This story explores the origin of the Monkey Mind concept.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OqbKEJybIFxn5pbr_wS_H9zMRx0x9sJba4oAQNTuUIE/edit?usp=sharing

Wisdom Tale 2: Anger - A Buddhist Story

Theme Connection

This story explores and reminds us that Buddhism offers deep insight into how to quiet the mind and find stillness even in the middle of chaos.

Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

https://docs.google.com/document/d/15yAEq6AsYbCOLSeZbtjusB9XmLMK_MI5ay_8e7wtrIE/edit?usp=sharing

Wonder Box

Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time:

Balloons



Introduction & Reveal

If using the wonderbox to introduce the session and 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 balloons** to do with our monthly theme of **practicing resistance**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
 - Point out that yes, breathing is something we do involuntarily, meaning we breathe in and out whether we think about it or not, like when we are sleeping. But we can also notice and voluntarily change our breath. We can hold our breath, pant, and take big breaths.
 - For example, when we add our breath to the balloon, we change it (blow up the balloon)
 - Explain that the balloons are a great example of how powerful our breath and breathing can be.
 - Highlight that Buddhists use the breath as a way to meditate and calm themselves.
 - Point out that simply by noticing our breath as it goes in and out, we can see that we can set aside the "monkey mind" of our thoughts that run this way and that.
 - Instead, by breathing and paying attention to our breathing, we become mindful of the present moment. That is a form of resistance. We resist worry and anxiety running away with our thoughts.
 - This is the final way we will explore practicing resistance, our theme this month.

Engage It!

Activities & Crafts for Experiential Learning

Creative Activity: Om Art

This activity should take 15-30 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

Activity Prep

Gather and set out cardstock, watercolor paints and brushes, cups of water, paper towels, black markers or fine-tipped permanent markers printed examples of the [Om symbol](#) for tracing or inspiration

Optional: Quiet background music

Set It Up

“In Buddhism and Hinduism, there is a special symbol called Om (or Aum). It represents peace, connection, and the calm that lives deep inside all of us. This symbol is also often associated with "breathe." When people meditate or pray, they sometimes chant ‘Om’ slowly to help quiet their busy minds. Today, we’ll paint our own version of the Om symbol to help us remember that calm lives inside us too.”

Directions

- Invite everyone to close their eyes and take three deep, slow breaths together. You might ring a chime to start and end this short pause.
- Show the Om symbol on paper or board. Kids can lightly draw or trace it in pencil, or use a black marker to make bold lines.
- Once the outline is drawn, use watercolors to fill the page with peaceful, flowing colors—swirls, washes, or patterns that feel calm or strong. Encourage them to notice how the colors move with the water.
- As everyone paints, keep the space calm with quiet music or silence. Encourage slow, thoughtful movements. And if their thoughts start to jump around—just like a monkey mind!—take a deep breath and return their focus to their brush.
- When paintings dry a bit, they can outline the Om symbol again with a marker to make it stand out.

Sum It Up

“Let us remember this activity and its message that every time we take a deep breath, we quiet our ‘monkey mind’ and come back to peace”

Creative Activity: Breath Boards

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

Activity Prep

Gather and set out hole punches, card board, coloring supplies, pipe cleaners, and beads.

Watch this video to see the final results <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DNjRQHyyOq/>

Set It Up

Today, we are exploring the challenge of resisting distraction, overwhelm, anger and worries, or what is often called the “monkey mind.” One way we can deal with this challenge is by breathing deeply and taking time to focus our thoughts or feelings. So with that in mind we are going to create a tool to help us focus our breath and really breathe deeply.

Directions

- Invite kids first decorate their cardboard
- Next help them use the hole punch to add the 8 holes
- Insert one end of each pipe cleaner into the bottom holes
- Add four beads to each pipe cleaner
- Insert other pipe cleaner end into top holes
- Turn the card board over and tape the pipe cleaners down
- Invite kids to practice using their boards to practice intentional breathing, breathing in as they move the beads up on the first pipe, and down on the second, repeating this on the third and fourth pipe cleaner as well.



Game: Monkey Mind Freeze!

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

Activity Prep

Gather and set out A bell, chime, singing bowl, or music player

Set It Up

“This game is going to help us notice how their minds and bodies feel when they’re active or distracted — and how that changes when they slow down and find stillness.”

Directions

- Remind the group that the “monkey mind” is the part of us that jumps around — just like a monkey swinging from tree to tree. And that sometimes our thoughts do that too! They swing from one idea to the next, and it’s hard to calm down.
- Invite everyone to move like monkeys — jump, dance, swing their arms, make silly sounds. Let the energy build for about 30 seconds.
- When you ring the bell or stop the music, everyone must freeze completely and take one slow breath in and out.
- Repeat a few times, letting them enjoy the contrast between chaos and calm.
- After a few rounds, have everyone sit down and ask
 - “How did it feel when you were jumping around?”
 - “How did it feel when you stopped and breathed?”
 - “Which felt calmer?”

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 breathe when things feel out of control (take a deep breath)

January 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 packet)

- [The Peacock & the Crane](#)
- [The Emperor's New Clothes](#)
- [The Fox and The Crow](#)
- [The Dog and His Bone](#)
- [Fannie Barrier Williams](#)
- [The Parable of the River](#)
- [Taming the Monkey Mind](#)
- [Anger - A Buddhist Story](#)

Story Books (from the lower elementary & one room schoolhouse packet)

- A Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon
- Elmer the Patchwork Elephant by David McKee
- Screens Away, Time to Play by Kailan Carr
- Bye Bye WIFI - by Mari Meyers
- Let Freedom Sing Hardcover by Vanessa Newton
- We Dream a World By Yolanda Renee King
- Breathing is My Superpower by Alicia Ortego
- Anh's Anger by Gail Silver

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.

- [Practicing Resistance 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.

RE Companion Resources

2025 - 2026 Chalice Chapel Songbook

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qgnKOouVChrXydvCBz9laRCizCOkTHLc/view?usp=sharing>

This song book offers kid-friendly hymns that align with each of this year's spiritual theme for each month. This resource was created and generously shared with permission by DRE Dana Lundquist and RE volunteer Chris Wise from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh

- Sept Building Belonging - 1021 Lean on Me
- Oct Cultivating Compassion - #1031 May we be filled with loving kindness
- Nov Nurturing Gratitude - #402 From You I Receive
- Dec Choosing Hope - #1022 Open the Window
- Jan Practicing Resistance - # 1017 Building a New Way
- Feb Embodying Resilience - # 389 Gathered Here
- Mar Paying Attention - #1007 There's a River Flowing My Soul
- Apr Embracing Possibility - #1024 When the Spirit Says Do
- May Awakening Curiosity - #1003 Where Do We Come From?

Feeding Our Spirit: Exploring Our UU Values through Fun in the Kitchen

Unitarian Universalism calls us to live our values with creativity, experimentation, and joy. And what better way to explore those values than through cooking, conversation, and community? This additional companion resource explores and highlights our UU values in a fresh and delicious way: through the joys and creativity of cooking! Each session centers on one of our new UU values and is paired with an introduction, story options, thoughtful discussion prompts, and three hands-on recipes.

To Learn more:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HB0PmKUS7cMLKJi6Zmq8SopiCNLviMAWHxfDi9alavo/edit?usp=sharing>

To purchase:

https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/store/p945/RE_Summer_Feeding_Our_Spirit.html

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

Packet Author: April Rosario, Soul Matters Director of RE Resources

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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