



Soul Matters

Awakening Curiosity



In the Middle
May 2026

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Reminders 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 approach and packet design:

Our Building Block Approach: We designed these packets as a “toolbox,” not a curriculum. In other words, we don’t give you a rigid flow to follow. Instead, we offer you a bunch of activities and options (i.e., “building blocks”) for you to create a lesson plan that best fits your youth and your setting.

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*.

Note about Session Sections: The sections of each session are designed with a whole-body approach in mind. In other words, each section engages a different aspect of the spiritual experience and multiple intelligences. Here are those sections, as well as the symbols that identify them:

Spirit - Light It

Chalice Lighting



Mind - Introduce It

Theme Connection and First Thought Sharing



Body - Explore It

Creative Activities, Fun Games, and Spiritual Practice



Heart -Discuss It

Storytelling & Personal Sharing



Take It Into The World

Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives



Welcome to Awakening Curiosity!

Welcome to the May “In the Middle” *Soul Matters* Packet for middle school youth on **Awakening Curiosity**.

It is easy to be curious in the month of May. The nice weather brings us outside more and everything is in bloom. It seems like everything is a new possibility, inviting our curiosity to come out and play. Additionally, for the folks in the northern hemisphere who have endured months of cold, spring can feel like a new world. With this in mind, our sessions this month invite youth to think about how curiosity can be a bridge to new worlds. Here’s an overview:

Session One: A Bridge to a More Just World

Session Two: A Bridge to a More Diverse World

Session Three: A Bridge to a More Exciting World

Session Four: A Bridge to A World with Wiser People

Session Five: A Bridge to The World of Our Future Self

As always, I’m especially drawn to activities that work well intergenerationally, and if that’s something your community and youth enjoy, you’ll find several suggestions this month to invite families or multiple age groups to participate in together.

One of the activities in this packet stemmed from a curiosity in my own life. Years ago, when my family was on vacation on Prince Edward Island, Canada, my children were playing a game of Duck, Duck, Goose with a group of local kids. When my child was selected as the Goose, they chased after the child who tapped them and tagged them before they got back to the open seat. All of the other children were stunned and curious about why my child thought Duck, Duck, Goose had tagging. Apparently, they all played a different way, and this packet features a game of trying out different versions of Duck, Duck, Goose while highlighting our **Shared UU Value of Pluralism**. That same session focuses on building a world of diversity with activities around **UU director and writer Greta Gerwig** and the *Barbie* movie.

Another curiosity of my own experience that made it into the packet involved the book *More New Games* from 1981. This month, I found this used game book and wondered if it would have any good ideas for *Soul Matters*. Then the first game I turned to was about *Star Wars*, which fits perfectly with Session 1 which focused on *Star Wars* Day (May 4) as well as our **UU Value of Justice**.

Another fun activity that appears this month is a Tarot Card Storytelling. I originally did this activity with a high school literature class I was teaching, and it was a big hit. Hopefully your youth will also enjoy it and use it as a way to expand their creativity.

Stay Curious,

Liv Radue,
on behalf of the entire [Soul Matters Team](#)

Session One:

A Bridge to a More Just World

Theme Angle

This month's theme is Awakening Curiosity. And we will be exploring how awakening our curiosity is a bridge to "other worlds." This week, we are exploring how curiosity is a bridge to a more **just** world. As we do that, we will have a little fun tying it to *Star Wars* Day (May 4) as well as our **UU Value of Justice**.

Light It!

Centering or Chalice Lighting Quotes



Chalice Lighting

Leader Note: Invite youth to volunteer to read and light the chalice each week.

As we light our chalice today with words from Princess Leia in *The Last Jedi*, "Hope is like the sun. If you only believe it when you see it, you'll never make it through the night," let us hope for a more just world.

Introduce It

Theme Connection and First Thoughts Sharing



Guardians of Peace and Justice

Suggested Introductory Words

Justice often begins with a question. Someone notices something unfair and asks: *Why is this happening? Who benefits? Who is being harmed? What could be different?*

Many stories about heroes begin with curiosity. In *Star Wars*, characters question the systems around them. They wonder whether the Empire's power is fair, whether rules should always be followed, and what responsibility they have when something is wrong.

Optional for more of a connection to Star Wars: Show this clip from [Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope \(2m37\)](#).

In *Star Wars*, Luke asks Obi-Wan questions about the Jedi and the Force. Obi-Wan explains that Jedi once served as “guardians of peace and justice.” Luke’s curiosity opens the door to learning about injustice under the Empire and eventually joining the fight against it. When people stay curious about injustice instead of ignoring it, they begin to imagine a better world.

So, with that in mind, let’s begin with our first question of the day.

Why would an unjust empire not want someone to ask questions or be curious?

(Pause and allow time for the youth to answer.)

Explore It

Creative Activities, Fun Games, and Spiritual Practice for Experiential Learning



Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 1 or 2 of these activities that you feel best suit the needs and interests of your group.

Creative Activities

Pool Noodle Light Sabers (15 minutes) (Taken from [Bright Color Mom](#))

Leader Note: These will be used in the games Star Wars: Rebels vs. Empire and the Light Saber Relay.

This can be done with any number of youth.



Prep It

Gather skinny pool noodles with hollow centers for each youth (you can substitute pipe insulation or cardboard wrapping paper tubes), silver duct tape, black electrical tape, red electrical tape, other washi tape colors or vinyl shapes (optional), baby wipes or Goo-Gone, paper towels, tape measure or yardstick (optional), black permanent marker, cutting board, serrated knife, and scissors.

Set It Up

Star Wars Day is May 4, as in “May the Fourth be with you.” Today we’re going to do something fun to honor that. In Star Wars, the Jedi use their lightsabers to protect others and bring justice to the galaxy, and as a rite of passage, they make their own.

Today we are going to create our own lightsabers, not as a weapon, but as a symbol for our curiosity, creativity, and courage to stand up for what is right. Once we’ve made them, we’ll see if we can use our Jedi focus and teamwork to complete a challenge.

Do It

- Using the serrated knife over a cutting board, cut a pool noodle to your desired length. *(You may want to do this ahead of your class.)*
- Wrap a piece of duct tape around the cut end of the noodle, leaving just over half its width hanging off of the end.
- Cut snips about a quarter-inch apart around the excess tape all the way up to the foam.
- Fold the new tabs of duct tape over the end of the noodle one at a time. Once finished, you should have a nice spiral design and a fully covered end.
- Wrap a few more pieces of duct tape around the pool noodle to create the hilt to your desired length.
- Use electrical tape, washi tape, and/or markers to decorate your hilt any way you like.

Games

Star Wars Rebels vs. Empire (10-15 minutes) *(Taken from the book [More New Games by the New Games Foundation](#))*

This activity works best with 6+ players.

Prep It

Gather several foam balls or other balls that will not hurt when thrown. The more balls, the better. Also gather two pieces of paper or other markers to indicate where the two bases are for the game. Two players will need their lightsabers from the activity **Pool Noodle Light Sabers**.

Set It Up

Now that you've built your lightsabers, it's time to step into a galaxy far, far away.

In the *Star Wars* universe, there are many different groups struggling over what the galaxy should look like. The Rebels are trying to create freedom and justice. The Empire believes it should control everything. And in the middle of it all are the Jedi, who try to use their skills to protect others and keep balance in the galaxy.

Today we're going to play a game where those forces come to life. You'll become Rebel fighters or members of the Imperial Army. The foam balls in the middle are Death Stars flying through space, and your job will be to protect your team while trying to stop the other side. This game has "Jedi knights, the Imperial Army, the Rebel forces, Death Stars, and lightsabers. What more could we need to fulfill our outer space fantasies?"

Do It

- Divide your youth into two armies.
- Set up your galactic boundaries to create two large areas, each occupied by an army.
- In the middle of the space, set all of your foam balls in a line. These balls are Death Stars, which will soon be hurled through space.
- One person in each army is designated a Jedi knight: Luke of the Rebels and Darth of the Empire.
- Each knight is armed with their newly created lightsaber from the activity **Pool Noodle Light Sabers**.
- Mark a star base in each army's territory. The Jedi knight for each team will stand on that star base.
- When you say "go," both armies rush to the dividing line to gather as many Death Stars as they can to throw at the opposing army.
- If one hits a player, the player is frozen immediately, imprisoned in a time warp.
- Only the player's Jedi knight can rescue them.
- The Jedi knight must leave their star base, hopping on one foot, and touch the frozen player with the lightsaber in order to bring them out of the time warp and back into the game.

- If a thrown ball is caught by the intended target, the thrower is frozen and must wait for help from their Jedi.
- As long as the Jedi knights are at their star bases, they are safe. However, should one be hit by a Death Star while traveling to free a fellow teammate, they are frozen for good.
- Protection of the Jedi knights is therefore imperative.
 - Variation: A frozen knight can pass their lightsaber to another player, thus creating a new Luke or Darth.
 - Advanced Variations: The youth can create their own special roles and rules for other characters in the *Star Wars* universe.

Lightsaber Relay (10 minutes)

This activity works best with 4+ youth.

Prep It

You will need a balloon for each team and perhaps extra in case of breakage.

Set It Up

Jedi are known for their lightsabers, but their real strength is in their focus and curiosity. In the stories, Jedi are always learning by practicing and experimenting. Eventually, their curiosity helps them become stronger and wiser.

In this game, the lightsabers you made will help you with a challenge. Each team will need to keep a balloon floating through the air as you move through the galaxy, using only their lightsabers. Some teams might tap the balloon gently. Some may want to move it down as quickly and as far as possible. The Force may help, but your curiosity to try new ideas to see what works best and teamwork will help even more.

Do It

- Divide your youth into two armies.
- Set up your galactic boundaries to create two large areas, each occupied by an army.
- In the middle of the space, set all of your foam balls in a line. These balls are Death Stars, which will soon be hurled through space.
- Divide the youth into teams and designate a starting line and midpoint.
- Each team gets a balloon.
- The first player uses their lightsaber to keep the balloon in the air while moving to the midpoint and then back to the next teammate.
- Only lightsabers can touch the balloon.
- The first team to have every player go wins.
- If the balloon drops, they must start over from the last checkpoint.
- The first time to have every player go wins.
 - Variation 1: Using team coordination, two balloons per team must be kept aloft.
 - Variation 2: The whole team must successfully move the balloon from one end to another, not just one player.
 - Variation 3: Team members must hold the balloon steady between their lightsabers and walk the balloon back and forth.

Free Han Solo (15 minutes) (Inspired by [Rhubarb and Wren](#))

This activity works best with any number of youth.

Prep It

Gather two small action figures (Han Solo or a substitute), and freeze them in two large blocks of ice. Gather an assortment of tools: plastic spoons, chisels, cups of warm water, salt, vinegar, baking soda, etc., plus towels for cleaning up.

Set It Up

One of the ways we can build a more just world is by listening to others and hearing all ideas. A just world is a collaborative world. In this *Star Wars*-themed game, your team must solve a challenge by trying different methods and being curious about what might work best. While our Han Solo isn't stuck in carbonite, he is waiting for you to free him.

Do It

- Divide the youth into teams. If your class is small, they can work as a single team.
- Each team is challenged to rescue their frozen Han Solo.
- They can use any creative method with the tools provided.
 - They can pour warm water, scrape with spoons, sprinkle salt, try to combine elements, etc.
 - For safety, consider not allowing them to use hammers.
- So that the team works together and shares ideas, each team member can only work on the block for 30 seconds at a time, though multiple teammates can work at the same time.
- The fastest rescue wins.

Discuss It

- How did curiosity help your team figure out how to free Han Solo?
- What creative strategies worked best?
- Did observing details (like cracks forming in the ice) or the other team change your approach?
- How did your team work together and respect each other's ideas?
- If you had unlimited tools, what would you have tried next?

Spiritual Practice

Jedi Council Moral Dilemmas (15 minutes)

This activity works with any number of youth.

Set It Up

In the *Star Wars* stories, when the Jedi face a difficult question or an important decision, they often gather together as the Jedi Council. The council isn't about one person having all the answers. Instead, the Jedi listen to each other, think carefully, and reflect before deciding what the wisest path might be.

Many spiritual traditions have practices like this or times when people slow down, reflect, and listen deeply to themselves and to others. In Unitarian Universalism, we sometimes do this through circle conversations, when we draft our covenants, when we hold annual meetings in our congregations, during committee meetings, and just in our own quiet reflection. These practices help us grow together, which can help us work toward a world filled with justice.

Do It

- Have the youth sit in a circle.
- They are going to act as a council and take time to think about some questions. They might share an idea, listen to someone else's perspective, or simply reflect quietly.
- Tell them that their goal isn't to find the one perfect answer, but to practice being curious, listening to one another, and sharing thoughtful reflection.
- You may present all of the following scenarios or pick and choose based on your time. For each, the youth should discuss and decide what the council will do.
 - Scenario 1: A planet is ruled by a government that treats one group unfairly. If you intervene, it might cause a war. Do you act or stay neutral?
 - Scenario 2: You discover your friend is secretly working for the Empire but says they're doing it to protect their family. Do you tell anyone or take any action?
 - Scenario 3: The law says something is allowed, but it harms vulnerable people. Should you follow the law or challenge it?

Discuss It

- What questions helped you decide what was just?
- Is justice always clear? Why or why not?
- When might curiosity change your opinion about what is fair?
- Was it harder or easier to make a decision as a group?
- Did any of these situations or your decisions remind you of your UU Values? Which ones and why?

Curiosity vs. Obedience Debate (15-20 minutes)

This activity works with any number of youth.

Set It Up

Two of our **Six UU Sources** are the “wisdom from the world’s religions” and “Jewish and Christian teachings.” Different religions have wrestled with the question of rules, curiosity, and how they relate to faith and justice in different ways. In Jewish traditions, asking questions is considered an important part of learning. In Christianity, Jesus sometimes challenged rules when they hurt people. In Buddhism, the Buddha encouraged people to test ideas rather than accepting them blindly. And in Islam, seeking knowledge is seen as an important spiritual responsibility.

Rules can help keep people safe and help communities work together. But sometimes, progress happens because someone was curious enough to ask, “What if things could be different?”

Throughout history, people who helped create a more just world often had to balance these two things. They respected community rules, but they were also curious enough to question them when something seemed unfair or harmful.

In Unitarian Universalism, we value both responsibility to one another and the freedom to search for truth. That means we practice thinking carefully, listening to different perspectives, and asking thoughtful questions.

Do It

- Divide the youth into two teams for a debate.
 - Team 1 will explore the idea: “Rules and obedience are important for a healthy community.”
 - Team 2 will explore the idea: “Curiosity and questioning rules are important for progress and justice.”
- Give teams a few minutes to prepare, asking them to come up with:
 - 2–3 reasons their idea is important
 - Examples from real life, school, history, stories, etc.
- Float between each team while they are discussing to see if they are stuck and need any inspiration.
- After they have considered their points, each team will get to present their argument in a certain amount of time.
 - Remind them that this activity is about ideas, and they should be respectfully listening to the other team.
- Flip a coin to see who will get to go first to present their thoughts.
- Then, the other team will get to respond with their thoughts.
 - Optional: Allow the teams to ask each other questions before continuing.
- If needed, allow another round of arguments.
- Then switch the teams to the other side, allowing them to further practice their curiosity.
- Give them a few more minutes to think about any points they would like to make for this new position.
- Allow each team a round of arguments.

Discuss It

- Was it easier to argue for curiosity or for obedience? Why?
- How did it feel to switch sides?
- Can you think of times in history when questioning rules helped make the world more just?
- Can you think of times when following rules helped keep people safe?
- Have you ever questioned a rule? What was it?

Discuss It

Storytelling & Personal Sharing



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

Leader Note: We suggest that you read through these questions and pick 2-3 questions that will best engage your group.

Suggested Script

Consider showing [this short clip](#) (23s) from Rogue One: A Star Wars Story, in which Jyn Erso steps into a situation where the Rebel leaders are hesitant and cautious, but she wants to lead them toward justice.

Using Star Wars as a frame, today we looked at how curiosity can be a “Force” to help us work toward justice and how doing that is a key part of our Unitarian Universalist faith. That curiosity helps us notice unfairness, understand people better, and imagine a better world.

- What is one way kids can help make the world more just?
- What kind of curiosity makes the world better?
- Why is it difficult to create a perfectly just society?
- Why is curiosity sometimes uncomfortable or even risky?
- What is one question you want to keep asking about fairness?
- Do you have a story about a time that your curiosity—or the curiosity of a family member or friend—led to more justice or fairness?

Take It into The World

Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives



Check Out: Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives

We suggest ending the lesson with this “choose-your-question” checkout. Invite each youth to choose one of the 3 questions below as a way of articulating what they got out of the lesson today and how they might bring that learning/gift/insight/challenge into their everyday lives. These questions are the same for every session, so we suggest making a poster to hang in your youth space so it becomes part of your closing ritual.

Questions

- What is one thing that *surprised* you about today’s lesson?
- How did today’s lesson *challenge* you?
- What learning or *insight* from today’s lesson do you want to carry with you into days and weeks to come?

Session Two:

A Bridge to a More Diverse World

Theme Angle

This month's theme is Awakening Curiosity. And all month long we are exploring how awakening our curiosity is a bridge to "other worlds." This week, we are exploring how curiosity is a bridge to a more **diverse** world. And as we do this, we will have a chance to lift up our **UU Value Pluralism** and how we embrace our differences and commonalities with love, curiosity, and respect. We will also highlight Mother's Day and the inspiring UU director and screenwriter Greta Gerwig, especially through her work with the film *Barbie*.

Light It!

Centering or Chalice Lighting Quotes



Chalice Lighting

Leader Note: Invite youth to volunteer to read and light the chalice each week.

Famous UU film director, writer, and actress Greta Gerwig said, "You only get one life, so you might as well feel all of the feelings." As we light our chalice today, may we always lean into our feelings of curiosity.

Introduce It

Theme Connection and First Thoughts Sharing



Someone Else's Story

Suggested Introductory Words

This month we're exploring how curiosity can be a bridge to other worlds. Today, we're thinking about how curiosity helps us understand people whose experiences are different from our own. That's part of the **UU Value of Pluralism**, when we embrace differences and commonalities with love, curiosity, and respect.

Sometimes we assume we understand someone's life, but when we really listen, we discover there's much more to their story, even if that person is our own mother or someone who holds a similar role in our lives.

We are going to start with a scene from the movie *Barbie*, co-written and directed by UU Greta Gerwig. This scene features actress America Ferrera talking honestly about the many contradictory expectations placed on women and mothers.

Leader Note: Show this clip from [Barbie](#) (2m32) with America Ferrera's monologue. Or, read aloud the text of it [here](#).

Why do you think listening to someone's story can change how we understand them?

(Pause and allow time for the youth to answer. Older youth may also want to discuss the content of the clip as well.)

Explore It

Creative Activities, Fun Games, and Spiritual Practice for Experiential Learning



Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 1 or 2 of these activities that you feel best suit the needs and interests of your group.

Creative Activities

Caregiver Curiosity Quiz (15 minutes)

This activity can be done with any number of youth

Prep It

Have paper and writing utensils for the youth. You will want a flip pad, white board, or chalkboard to write on for yourself as well.

Set It Up

This week we're exploring how curiosity can be a bridge to a more diverse world. Curiosity helps us notice differences, ask questions, and learn about people's experiences.

This week also includes Mother's Day, which celebrates mothers and the care they give. But families come in many forms. Some people are raised by mothers, some by fathers, grandparents, step-parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, older siblings, or other caring adults. In Unitarian Universalism, we talk about our **Value of Pluralism**, part of that means recognizing that people and families can look many different ways. What matters is the love and care people share.

Today we're going to practice curiosity about the people who care for us. Instead of a typical quiz where someone already knows the answers, we're going to create a curiosity quiz with questions you can ask a parent, caregiver, or another important adult in your life to learn something new about them.

Do It

- Ask the group: "If you wanted to understand someone in your family better, what kinds of questions could you ask them?"
- Invite youth to call out ideas and write them where everyone can see them.
- Encourage questions that go beyond basic facts and invite stories, memories, and opinions.
 - Examples if they get stuck:
 - What was your favorite hobby when you were my age?
 - What is something you were curious about as a kid?
 - What was your favorite music when you were growing up?
 - What is something that made you really proud in your life?
 - What is something you wish kids today understood about when you were young?

- Invite each youth to write on their own papers some questions they would like to ask a parent, caregiver, or another adult who plays an important role in their life. They can use questions that were created by the group, or they can use their own.
 - Encourage them to think about questions that:
 - Help them learn something new
 - Invite stories or memories
 - Show curiosity about the person's life
- Explain that later they can ask these questions at home. They can ask their questions one-on-one with a caregiver or turn it into a family conversation at dinner.
- The goal is simply to learn something new about someone who cares for them.

Discuss It

- Why do you think asking questions can help us understand people better?
- Did anyone think of a question that might lead to an interesting story?
- What kinds of things might surprise you about the adults in your life?
- Why is it important to recognize that families and caregivers can look different for different people?
- How does curiosity help us appreciate the diversity of people and families around us?

Perspective Swap (15 minutes)

This activity can be done with any number of youth

Prep It

Print out [these perspective sheets](#) and cut them out to give to the different groups.

Set It Up

One way we build a more diverse and understanding community is by becoming curious about how other people see the world. Every person's experiences, culture, family, and life story shape how they think and feel about things. Our **UU Value of Pluralism** encourages us to try to understand viewpoints that might be different from our own.

In this activity, we're going to practice something called a perspective swap. You'll imagine what a situation might look like from someone else's point of view. It might feel a little challenging, but it's a way to grow empathy and curiosity.

Do It

- Split the youth into pairs or groups, giving each group one of the perspective slips.
 - You can hand them out or let them choose which one they would like.
 - You could also give each pair or group the same scenario for better sharing and comparison at the end.
 - Small classes could do the whole exercise as a single group.
- Each perspective slip will have a situation and the different viewpoints the pair or group should consider.
- Example:
 - The Group Project: Your group project partner isn't doing their part, and the deadline is tomorrow.
 - Perspectives to consider:
 - The frustrated group member
 - The student who didn't do the work
 - The teacher assigning the project
 - Another group member trying to keep the peace
- Ask them to discuss how each person in the situation might feel or think.

Discuss It

- What was your situation, and which perspective was the hardest to imagine?
- Was there something that eventually made it easier?
- Did anyone's viewpoint surprise you?
- What was a situation you were in that you wish someone had considered your perspective?
- How can understanding different perspectives help build a more caring community?

Diversity Collage (15-20 minutes)

Leader Note: If you are going to the activity Diversity Bingo, do that activity first.

This activity can be done with any number of youth

Prep It

Gather different types of magazines and print media, glue, scissors, and construction paper or poster board.

Set It Up

Today we are practicing curiosity, and we are going to look closely at the images and stories that show up in magazines and media. We know the world is full of many different kinds of people, families, cultures, and experiences. Sometimes the media shows that diversity well, and sometimes it doesn't. But curiosity helps us ask questions like: Who do we see? Who might be missing? What stories are being told?

We are going to create a collage together using the images you find. We are going to try to create a visual community that represents the diverse world we should be seeing.

Do It

- Give the youth their own paper or use a poster board for the whole group.
- Ask them to cut out images that show different kinds of people, families, cultures, abilities, ages, or experiences.
- Encourage them to include:
 - Different kinds of families
 - Different jobs or roles
 - People of different ages
 - Different cultural expressions
 - Different abilities or ways of living
- Optional: Youth can add words or captions describing what they notice about the diversity in their collage.

Discuss It

- What kinds of differences did you notice when you were choosing images?
- What types of people showed up often in the magazines?
- Which diversities were harder to find?
- What does your collage say about the world we live in?
- How does having many different kinds of people make a community stronger or more interesting?

Games

Mother Tags (10 minutes) *(This can be used as an intergenerational activity.)*

This game works with any number of players.

Prep It

Write the names of various mothers you think your class will know on a series of nametags, one for each child. Ideas for mothers include: Mother Gothel, Mother Goose, Michele Obama, Chilli from *Bluey*, Marge Simpson, Mrs. Weasley from *Harry Potter*, Morticia Addams from *The Addams Family*, Mrs. Incredible/Elastigirl from *The Incredibles*, Abigail Adams, Beyoncé, etc.

Set It Up

This activity raises up the many different backgrounds, roles, and experiences mothers can have. It also asks us to lean into our curiosity, as the whole game is centered around asking questions.

Do It

- Give each youth a name tag on their back or forehead without letting them see the name.
- Players circulate, asking only yes/no questions to figure out who they are.
- Example questions:
 - “Am I from a cartoon?”
 - “Do I have children who are very famous?”
 - “Do I wear glasses?”
- Players cannot give hints; they can only answer yes/no/I don’t know.
- Once a player thinks they know their character, they can guess.
 - Optional: If a player is particularly stuck, they can ask for a clue.

Duck, Duck, Goose International (10 minutes) (*Huevo Quemado* taken from [Compassion Explorer](#))

This game works with 5+ youth.

Prep It

Gather a ball or another handheld object.

Set It Up

Duck, Duck, Goose is a game that everyone thinks they are going to know how to play, but it is actually played differently in other places. Trying these different variations reminds us of our shared Value of Pluralism, as not everyone has the same experiences or beliefs. See which of these versions you like the best.

Do It

American Duck, Duck, Goose:

- Players sit in a circle.
- One person, the Walker, walks around tapping heads, saying “Duck... Duck...” until they choose someone as Goose.
- The Goose jumps up and chases the Walker around the circle.
- If the Goose tags the Walker before they sit in their empty spot, the Walker goes again. Otherwise, the Goose becomes the new Walker.

Prince Edward Island Version

- This follows the same set up, except in this version, the Goose does not attempt to tag the Walker.
- After the Goose is tagged, both the Goose and the Walker run the circle in opposite directions, racing to get back to the Goose’s seat.
- The first person to sit in the seat is safe, and the other is the Walker for the next round.

Huevo Quemado (Burned Egg) Version from Bolivia

- The players sit in their circle with their eyes closed.
- The Walker holds the object (ball, etc.) and walks around the circle and quietly leaves the object behind one of the sitting players.
- This player has to sense that the object was placed behind them.
- Once they do, they grab the object and run around the circle to tag the Walker before the Walker reaches the empty spot and sits down.
- The tagged player has to sit in the middle of the circle and is the “burned egg” until another player gets tagged and replaces them.

Diversity Bingo (15-20 minutes) *(This can be used as an intergenerational activity.)*

This game works best with any number of youth.

Prep It

Print out [blank Bingo cards](#) for your youth, [this image](#) of diverse Barbies from *Forbes*, and [this image](#) of the *Barbie* cast. Also gather a variety of magazines and writing utensils for each youth. Have a white board, chalkboard, or flip pad you can write on.

Set It Up

This month we've been talking about how curiosity can be a bridge to other worlds. One way we build that bridge is by becoming curious about who we see represented in stories, media, and the world around us.

Movies, magazines, and advertisements show us pictures of what people think the world looks like. But sometimes those pictures are incomplete. Sometimes certain people show up a lot, and other people are missing or harder to find.

Today we'll look through magazines and images and see what kinds of diversity we can spot. We'll also look at a picture from the movie *Barbie*, directed and written by UU Greta Gerwig, which purposefully had a diverse cast.

Do It

- Show the pictures of both the *Barbie* cast and the diverse *Barbie* dolls.
- Explain that both the doll company Mattel and Greta Gerwig purposefully wanted contemporary Barbie to be diverse.
- Ask the students to name what kind of diversities are represented in these images and make a list.
- Then ask what kind of diversities are missing from these images or would you not be able to tell just by looking at them. Add those to the list.
- Some ideas of diversities your youth may have written on the total list are:
 - Someone with a visible disability
 - Different skin tones or races
 - Different body shapes or sizes
 - Different ages
 - Different religions
 - Someone who is trans or non-binary
 - Someone who identifies as queer
 - Someone with natural hair or different hairstyles
 - Families of different configurations
 - A job held by someone you might not expect
 - Someone using a wheelchair or accessibility device
 - Someone speaking or showing another language
 - Someone who is neurodivergent
- Once your group has a good list of different types of diversities, have them fill out their Bingo cards with the list.
- Then, have the youth look through the provided magazines, seeing how many of the squares they can find examples of.
 - They can do this individually or in a group.
- Have them share how successful they were in filling up their cards.

Discuss It

- What kinds of diversity were easiest to find? What was hardest to find?
- Did any magazines show more diversity than others?
- Did seeing or not seeing different kinds of people change how you thought about the magazines?
- Why do you think representation in media matters?
- How might someone feel if they never see people like themselves in magazines or movies?

Discuss It

Storytelling & Personal Sharing



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

Leader Note: We suggest that you read through these questions and pick 2-3 questions that will best engage your group.

Suggested Script

In an interview with [UU World](#), Greta Gerwig said “There is a gentleness and equanimity that expresses itself through the [UU] church that I think is incredibly rare and should be the cornerstone of any spiritual or religious practice. I love how open the church is, but that it also provides the structure and community of religion. I think I keep returning to a UU church again and again because it resonates with something deep inside of me that feels that all I really know is that I don’t know. Unitarian Universalism is the best place for me to experience the fullness of that sentiment of not knowing.”

Our Unitarian Universalist faith encourages us to be both content with wonder and not having all of the answers on our own, and it encourages us to be ever curious and learning.

- Why do you think it’s so hard for people to be comfortable with not knowing?
- How can curiosity help us build a more diverse and welcoming world?
- What are some of the most diverse media representations you can think of?
- How does having diverse representations serve us all better?
- How does curiosity help you act in ways that are fair and respectful?

Take It into The World

Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives



Check Out: Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives

We suggest ending the lesson with this “choose-your-question” checkout. Invite each youth to choose one of the 3 questions below as a way of articulating what they got out of the lesson today and how they might bring that learning/gift/insight/challenge into their everyday lives. These questions are the same for every session, so we suggest making a poster to hang in your youth space so it becomes part of your closing ritual.

Questions

- What is one thing that *surprised* you about today’s lesson?
- How did today’s lesson *challenge* you?
- What learning or *insight* from today’s lesson do you want to carry with you into days and weeks to come?

Session Three:

A Bridge to a More Exciting World

Theme Angle

This month's theme is Awakening Curiosity. And all month long, we are exploring how awakening our curiosity is a bridge to "other worlds." This week, we are exploring how curiosity is a bridge to a more **exciting** future world through exploring a part of our **Six UU Sources** that counsels us to "heed the guidance of reason and the results of science." And as we do this, we will explore some aspects of science fiction.

Light It!

Centering or Chalice Lighting Quotes



Chalice Lighting

Leader Note: Invite youth to volunteer to read and light the chalice each week.

Our chalice lighting words are from science fiction author and futurist Arthur C. Clarke. "The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them into the impossible." May we always be curious about the exciting future that could be.

Introduce It

Theme Connection and First Thoughts Sharing



Science + Faith

Suggested Introductory Words

“Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is a profound source of spirituality.”

This quote is from Carl Sagan, a scientist who studied the universe. He also believed that learning about the universe can make us feel a sense of awe and wonder, the same kind of feeling people sometimes experience in spiritual traditions.

In Unitarian Universalism, one of our sources of wisdom is science and the discoveries of the natural world. We believe that curiosity about the universe can be both scientific and spiritual.

Question: Have you ever learned something about space, nature, or science that made you feel amazed or curious about the world?

(Pause and allow time for the youth to answer.)

Explore It

Creative Activities, Fun Games, & Spiritual Practice for Experiential Learning



Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 1 or 2 of these activities that you feel best suit the needs and interests of your group.

Creative Activities

Our Future in Comics (15-20 minutes)

This activity can be done with any number of youth.

Prep It

Print these [comic strip templates](#) for your youth. Gather drawing and coloring materials. Also, you will need a way to show the video of *The Jetsons* theme song.

Leader Note: We obviously know The Jetsons reinforces some stereotypes we have moved away from, so we are not suggesting you show the show, just the opening theme song.

Set It Up

Sometimes curiosity helps us learn about people who are different from us, and sometimes it helps us imagine what the future might look like.

In 1962, there was a cartoon called *The Jetsons*. It showed a futuristic world in 2062 with flying cars, robot helpers, video calls, and all kinds of high-tech inventions. When people watched it decades ago, many of those things seemed impossible, but today we have video calls, smart homes, and robots that can help people with different tasks.

When people ask questions like “What if?” and “Could this exist someday?” it can inspire a whole world of advances.

Do It

- Show [this clip](#) (58s) of *The Jetsons* theme song.
- Have the youth discuss the following:
 - What futuristic things did you notice in the show?
 - Which of those things actually exist today?
 - Which ones don’t exist yet?
 - Which inventions do you think might still happen someday?
- Explain that now it is their turn to imagine the future and what world may exist, whether it be 50 years from now, 100 years, or farther in the future.
- Using their curiosity and imagination, the youth should create short comic strips that show something about that future world.

- Encourage them to think about things like:
 - New inventions or technology
 - How people travel or communicate
 - What homes, schools, or cities might look like
 - New ways people might solve problems
- When they are done, have them share their strips.

Curiosity Gadgets (15-20 minutes)

This activity can be done with any number of youth.

Prep It

You could gather just paper and drawing utensils if you want the youth to sketch their inventions. You could use Playdoh for them to sculpt their inventions. Or you can provide a series of objects (tape, craft sticks, spools, straws, nuts/bolts, etc.).

Set It Up

If you look back at old science fiction shows like *The Jetsons*, people imagined all kinds of gadgets that didn't exist yet. We see this in our science fiction today as well. To get any sort of technology, inventors, scientists, and engineers have to start with curiosity about what could exist. Today, that is going to be you imagining a gadget that could exist in the future.

Do It

- Using whatever materials you selected, have the youth make a model of their future invention.
- When they are done, have them show them to one another.

Discuss It

- What is your gadget's name?
- What problem does your gadget solve?
- What questions did you have to ask to design it?
- How did imagining the future influence your choices?
- When in time do you think this gadget may exist?

Is the Future Scary or Awesome? (15 minutes)

This activity can be done with any number of youth.

Set It Up

When we think curiously about the future, people don't always agree about what it should look like. Some people feel excited about new technology and change. Others wonder about possible problems or challenges that could come with it. The world of science fiction features depictions of both types of scenarios.

Today we're going to have a friendly debate about the future that asks you to think creatively. This activity isn't about proving someone else wrong, but about using thoughtful discussion to explore different possibilities.

Do It

- Divide the youth into two teams for a debate.
 - Team 1 will explore the idea: "The future will be exciting."
 - Team 2 will explore the idea: "The future will be scary or challenging."
- Give teams a few minutes to prepare, asking them to come up with:
 - 2–3 reasons their idea is important
 - Examples from technology, society, or imagination
- Float between each team while they are discussing to see if they are stuck and need any inspiration.
- After they have considered their points, each team will get to present their argument in a certain amount of time.
 - Remind them that this activity is about ideas, and they should be respectfully listening to the other team.
- Flip a coin to see who will get to go first and present their thoughts.
- Then, the other team will get to respond with their thoughts.
 - Optional: Allow the teams to ask each other questions before continuing.
- If needed, allow another round of arguments.
- If time allows: Have the youth switch to the other side, allowing them to further practice their curiosity.
- Give them a few more minutes to think about any points they would like to make for this new position.
- Allow each team a round of arguments.

Discuss It

- How does curiosity affect whether people feel hopeful or afraid of the future?
- Can imagining problems help us prevent them?
- What is the role of ethics when imagining new technology?
- What about our present times make you think the future will be exciting or scary?
- Can it be both?

Games

What If? Improv (10-15 minutes)

This activity works with any number of youth.

Prep It

Write out a series of “What If” cards with prompts, like: “What if humans could breathe underwater?” “What if cars could fly?” “What if pets could talk?”

Set It Up

Thinking about the exciting possibilities of the future often starts with asking “What if?” What if people lived in space? What if robots helped us with everyday life? What if cities looked completely different from today? When we allow ourselves to play with ideas and possibilities, we can come up with surprising and creative visions of the future.

In this activity, we’re going to try a little bit of improv, which means making up a scene or story in the moment. You’ll work together to imagine a situation in the future and act out what might happen.

Do It

- Have one of the pairs come up and take a scenario card at random.
- Have them act out a short scene inspired by the card.
- When they are done, have another pair go.

There Once Was a City (10 minutes) (Adapted from [Fun-Attic](#))

This activity can be done with any number of youth.

Set It Up

Stories are a great way to practice curiosity. When people tell stories together, no one knows exactly where the story will go. Each person adds something new, and the story grows in ways that no one could have predicted at the beginning.

In this storytelling game that allows you to be your own writer of science fiction, there’s a twist: every new part of the story will either make things go really well... or suddenly go terribly wrong! The fun part is seeing how the story changes and how creative we can be when we build on each other’s ideas.

Do It

- The first player begins the story with the opening line: “There once was a city...” and finishes the sentence however they like, such as “where cars could fly.”
- They then point to another player, who must begin their sentence with “Fortunately...” and add to the story.
- That player then chooses someone else, who continues the story starting with “Unfortunately...”
- The game continues alternating between “Fortunately...” and “Unfortunately...” statements, with each player adding their twist to the story.

Inventor Relay (10 minutes)

This activity is best with 6+ youth.

Prep It

Gather for each team a random set of materials (paper, tape, straws, string, rubber bands, paper clips, aluminum foil, paper rolls, etc.).

Set It Up

Every day around the world, tons of things are thrown away that either aren't actually trash or could be recycled. Too many of these items wind up in landfills or in our oceans. Sometimes these items are thrown away, because people aren't sure how to recycle or where and when to do it. Recycling works best when people pay attention and help one another. Today we are going to turn that into a relay game where both speed and attention will matter.

Do It

- Have the youth pick a future problem to solve with their inventions, such as delivering groceries with robots, cleaning oceans, flying safely in a city, etc.
- Divide the youth into teams.
- Designate a starting line and across the room, set up the supplies available to each team.
- Each team must build an invention to solve their future problem.
- In the relay, each member can only add one thing to their invention.
- They must have at least 5 parts to their invention.
- Once the teams are each done, they explain their inventions to the group.
- The group decides which invention best solves the future problem.

Discuss It

- How did working as a team make this challenge easier?
- How did it make it harder?
- What is something the other team thought about that you didn't?
- If you had to combine both inventions, what qualities would you take from each?

Discuss It

Storytelling & Personal Sharing



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

Leader Note: We suggest that you read through these questions and pick 2-3 questions that will best engage your group.

Suggested Script

This week we explored how curiosity can open the door to exciting possibilities and new ways of thinking about the future. Scientist Carl Sagan said, “Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.” When we allow ourselves to imagine, question, and experiment, we discover worlds that might not exist yet.

- The technology during your lifetime has already advanced so much. What current technology do you think someone from 100 years ago would find the most exciting? What about from 50 years ago?
- What questions about the future do you want to keep exploring?
- Sometimes when someone is curious to solve one problem with technology, they actually solve a different one, coming up with an exciting and unexpected new invention. Do you know any examples of this?
- What is one thing you hope is true in the future?
- What is an example of a science fiction book or movie that depicts what you hope the world will be like?

Take It into The World

Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives



Check Out: Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives

We suggest ending the lesson with this “choose-your-question” checkout. Invite each youth to choose one of the 3 questions below as a way of articulating what they got out of the lesson today and how they might bring that learning/gift/insight/challenge into their everyday lives.

Questions

- What is one thing that *surprised* you about today’s lesson?
- How did today’s lesson *challenge* you?
- What learning or *insight* from today’s lesson do you want to carry with you into days and weeks to come?

Session Four:

A Bridge to A World with Wiser People

Theme Angle

This month's theme is Awakening Curiosity. This month has been all about exploring how awakening our curiosity is a bridge to "other worlds." This week, we are exploring how curiosity is a bridge to a world with **wiser** people. And as we do this, we will have a chance to lift the language in our **UU Value Purpose Statement** that calls us to "to foster a life of curiosity," our traditional UU belief that no one has the whole truth, and the fact that we grow in wisdom when we share with one another.

Light It!

Centering or Chalice Lighting Quotes



Chalice Lighting

Leader Note: Invite youth to volunteer to read and light the chalice each week.

Most people believe it was Socrates who said, "Wonder is the beginning of wisdom." As we light our chalice today, may we always keep that wonder and curiosity burning bright, so as to grow our own knowledge and wisdom.

Introduce It

Theme Connection and First Thoughts Sharing



What is Wisdom?

Suggested Introductory Words

This week we explore how curiosity can help us become wiser. Being wise doesn't just mean being smart. It requires you to be more thoughtful, empathetic, and open-minded.

Wisdom often begins with curiosity. We see this in asking questions, listening carefully, and reflecting before acting. One important part about being wise is realizing that no one has the whole truth, and that every new perspective teaches us something.

So, to begin, let's ask our first question.

What do you have the most wisdom about?

(Pause and allow time for the youth to answer.)

Explore It

Creative Activities, Fun Games, and Spiritual Practice for Experiential Learning



Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 1 or 2 of these activities that you feel best suit the needs and interests of your group.

Creative Activities

Tarot Stories (15 minutes) *(This can be used as an intergenerational activity.)*

This activity can be done with any number of youth.

Prep It

Have a Tarot deck, Lenormand deck, an Oracle deck, or something similar. You could also use a virtual deck, such as [this one](#). You may want to sort out the suit cards from the Tarot deck (cups, wands, swords, and pentacles).

Set It Up

For hundreds of years, out of curiosity, people have used symbolic cards like Tarot to spark reflection and imagination. Some people use them for spiritual insight, while others use them as tools for creativity and storytelling.

Today we're going to use the images and symbols on the cards as story prompts. The pictures can inspire ideas about a character, a challenge they face, or something they might learn along the way. You don't have to know what each card traditionally means in a Tarot deck. You should just let your own wisdom and interpretation guide you in your storytelling.

Do It

- Have each youth draw three cards from the deck.
- Place them face up so everyone can see.
- Each youth should look at their cards and imagine a person or character.
- Then they should tell a short story about their character, incorporating the three cards.
 - If they are stuck, you could prompt that one card could represent personality, one card a challenge, and one card a goal or secret.
- After one youth has gone, continue until everyone has shared their story.
 - Variation: You could tell a story as a group, where each person has to add one or more of their cards to a running story.

Question Tree (15 minutes)

This activity can be done with any number of youth.

Prep It

Gather writing utensils. Draw a large tree with roots and lots of branches on paper or on a white board or chalkboard. Label each of the roots of the tree with one of the following questions:

- What is a mistake you learned from?
- Who do you go to when you need advice?
- What is something you are curious about right now?
- How could our class be wiser?
- Has someone ever surprised you with their viewpoint?

Set It Up

This Question Tree activity helps us to see that there are multiple levels to curiosity, and the further we go with our inquiry, the more wisdom we can develop. In our tree, the roots start with broad questions, and as we travel up the branches, the questions get much finer and more defined.

Do It

- Divide the youth into small groups.
- Each group will start with one “root question.” You can assign them a question or let them pick. This will be the starting point for their curiosity.
- One person reads the question aloud and shares their answer.
- Then another group member asks a follow up question, and the first person answers.
 - If they get stuck on thinking of questions, encourage them to think about:
 - Why...
 - How...
 - What helped you...
 - What did you learn from...
 - What might happen if...
- They continue asking questions and keeping the conversation growing, just like the branches on a tree.
- When they are done, they can select a new “root question” and start with a different youth to do the process again.
 - Optional: They can write their questions down on sticky notes and put them where they would go on the tree like leaves.
- After several minutes, bring the whole group back together and invite each group to share one interesting question or insight that came from their tree.

Games

Mystery Line Up (10-15 minutes) *(This can be used as an intergenerational activity.)*

This game works with any number of youth.

Do It

- Choose a “Line-Up Leader.” This leader will secretly select a characteristic for the line-up.
 - Examples:
 - Distance from home to church (closest → farthest)
 - Number of colorful items they’re wearing
 - Alphabetical by last name
 - Number of syllables in their full name
 - Height, age, or other visible characteristics like by hair length or number of buttons on their shirt.
- The leader arranges the group in order without revealing the characteristic.
- Remind the youth to categorize with kindness and choose patterns that are respectful and comfortable for everyone.
- First, see if the group knows right away how they are arranged.
- If no one immediately knows, they must figure out the characteristic by asking curiosity-driven questions:
 - “Are we arranged by something we can see or measure?”
 - “Does it have to do with letters, numbers, or colors?”
 - “Is it about something on our clothes or our bodies?”
- When they then guess what the order is, the leader confirms if the guess is correct or gives hints.
- Once they have figured it out, select a new leader.

Discuss It

- What was the hardest order to figure out?
- What was the easiest?
- What kinds of questions helped you figure out the order the quickest?
- Did curiosity help you notice details you might otherwise ignore?
- Can you think of a real-life situation where careful observation and curiosity lead to wiser decisions?

Dragon Tag (10 minutes) (Taken from the [UU Church of Palo Alto](#))

This game works best with 5+ youth.

Set It Up

In this game, we are going to be curious about how you can work together. You are going to work together as a dragon. Each person in the dragon plays an important part, and the dragon can only move well if everyone works together.

The head of the dragon will be trying to catch the tail, but the rest of the dragon has an important job too. You'll need to stay connected, move carefully, and figure out how to work as a team.

Do It

- Divide the youth into two teams.
- Have the youth form a dragon by lining up, and holding on to one another's waists.
- The person at the front is the dragon's head. The person at the back is the dragon's tail. When you say, "Go!" the dragon's head tries to catch the dragon's tail.
- Remind the youth that they can't let go of waists and that they need to make sure no one gets hurt.
- Once they catch the dragon's tail, have them rotate their order and try again.
 - Optional double dragon version for large groups:
 - Divide the group into two teams.
 - Each team forms a dragon by lining up and holding onto one another's waists.
 - Each dragon's head must try to catch the other dragon's tail without letting the body break apart.

Wisdom Walk Hullabaloo (10 minutes) (Inspired by the Cranium game [Hullabaloo](#))

(This can be used as an intergenerational activity.)

This game works best with 5+ players.

Prep It

Using 4 colors of construction paper, cut some into circles, triangles, and squares, leaving some as rectangles. Make sure that each color has one of each shape. On each piece of construction paper, write a question.

Examples:

- What's something you learned this year that surprised you?
- What makes someone a good friend?
- What is a mistake you learned from?
- What is a question you wish you knew the answer to?
- What is something you want to learn how to do?
- What did you want to be when you were younger?
- Where is your favorite place to be?

Do It

- Have the youth spread out the papers on the floor in a large room, taking care to leave plenty of room for movement between them and to not clump like sheets together.
- Call out commands like: Everyone hop to a blue, Everyone dance to a circle, Everyone walk like an elephant to a triangle, Everyone spin to a yellow.
- Players can share the same spot.
- After several commands, yell, "Freeze."

- Wherever the youth are, they have to answer the question on the paper.
 - If they are alone, they can think about it silently.
 - If they are sharing a spot with someone else, they share their answers aloud.
- Once everyone has answered their prompt, start with new commands.
 - Optional: Allow the youth to rotate out being the caller.
- Play as many rounds as interest and time allow.

Discuss It

- What was something interesting you learned from others while playing this game?
- Did you find that your answers were usually the same, or did you mostly have different perspectives?
- What was your favorite question to answer? Why?
- What was your least favorite question to answer? Why?
- What would have been another good question to include?

Collective Wisdom (10 minutes) *(This can be used as an intergenerational activity.)*

This activity can be done with any number of youth.

Prep It

Have a way to show [this slideshow video](#). Optional: Have pens and paper available.

Set It Up

One of our key UU beliefs is that no one person has the entire truth. We believe that we all possess our own pieces of the truth and that both curiosity and learning from one another can lead to us having more. This wisdom extends beyond just looking at philosophical truths. All of us in a group come with our own skills, experiences, and knowledge, and we are stronger together. This is particularly true in a congregation that is diverse and multigenerational.

We are going to watch a slide show that has some things you will recognize and some that will be mysteries. It features objects from different eras, some that may make you curious.

Do It

- Explain to the youth that when they watch the slideshow, they should raise their hand if they know what an object is.
- They should keep track of how many objects they were personally able to identify. If needed, they can write down tally marks.
- You should keep track of how many objects at least one person in the group knows.
- Play the slideshow for your youth.
- Ask the youth how many objects they personally could identify.
- Compare those numbers to the number of the group as a collective.
 - This is even more powerful in an intergenerational group, as the images in the slides are from different eras.
- Remind them that they have more collective wisdom as a group than they do alone.
 - Optional: Replay the slideshow and pause through each slide, having the youth identify what each object is as a collective. If they don't know, they can guess what something is used for. If you need it, here is an [answer key](#) to the slides.

Discuss It

Storytelling & Personal Sharing



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

Leader Note: We suggest that you read through these questions and pick 2-3 questions that will best engage your group.

Suggested Script

This month we've been exploring how curiosity can be a bridge to other worlds. We've talked about how curiosity can help us imagine the future, understand people who are different from us, and even build a more just world. Today we focused on how curiosity can help create a world with wiser people, especially by sharing our wisdom collectively.

- What do you think makes someone a wise person?
- Who is the wisest person you know?
- When was a time when asking a question helped you understand something better?
- How can listening to other people's experiences help us grow wiser as a community?
- What is one way you could practice curiosity in your life this week?

Take It into The World

Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives



Check Out: Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives

We suggest ending the lesson with this "choose-your-question" checkout. Invite each youth to choose one of the 3 questions below as a way of articulating what they got out of the lesson today and how they might bring that learning/gift/insight/challenge into their everyday lives. These questions are the same for every session, so we suggest making a poster to hang in your youth space so it becomes part of your closing ritual.

Questions

- What is one thing that *surprised* you about today's lesson?
- How did today's lesson *challenge* you?
- What learning or *insight* from today's lesson do you want to carry with you into days and weeks to come?

Session Five:

A Bridge to the World of Our Future Self

Theme Angle

This month's theme is Awakening Curiosity. And all month long, we have explored how awakening our curiosity is a bridge to "other worlds." This week, we're exploring how curiosity is a bridge to the world of our future self. As we do this, we will dive into the idea of how what we are curious about as a child almost always shapes what we are as we grow up and especially what we are passionate about as we get older.

Light It!

Centering or Chalice Lighting Quotes



Chalice Lighting

Leader Note: Invite youth to volunteer to read and light the chalice each week.

As we light our chalice today with words from Fred Rogers of *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood*, "Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else," may we stay curious about who we are becoming, trusting that what we wonder about today can shape who we are tomorrow.

Introduce It

Theme Connection and First Thoughts Sharing



Tomorrow's Passions Begin Today

Suggested Introductory Words

The things we are curious about when we are young often shape what we care about later. A lot of times adults find that a passion they have, whether it be a hobby or a career, was planted as a seed when they were younger. It could have been from an interest they picked up from a parent or other relative, something they learned about in school, or a skill they learned in Scouting or another youth activity or extracurricular. It could have also started with a question. “How do people predict if a volcano is going to erupt?” “How long does it take to climb a mountain?” “How can someone think up a story long enough to write a book?” Some of these questions may come back again and again, shaping who we are in the future.

So, with that in mind, let’s begin with our first question of the day.

What is something you are really curious about right now, and why do you think it interests you?

(Pause and allow time for the youth to answer.)

Explore It

Creative Activities, Fun Games, and Spiritual Practice for Experiential Learning



Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. We suggest that you pick 1 or 2 of these activities that you feel best suit the needs and interests of your group.

Creative Activities

Curiosity Crystal Ball (15 minutes)

This can be done with any number of youth.

Prep It

Gather writing utensils and slips of paper.

Set It Up

When we imagine our future selves, it is important to remember there isn't just one path or one future for any of us. Our curiosity can take us in many different directions, and it can change over time.

In this activity, we're going to explore that idea in a fun and imaginative way by making predictions for one another.

Do It

- Give each student a slip of paper.
- Have them write down 5-7 things they are curious about, have an interest in, or enjoy doing/learning about. Encourage them to think about different areas of their life: hobbies, school, causes they care about, etc.
- Collect all of the papers and mix them up so that they are anonymous.
- Give someone else's paper to each student. You may have to make sure someone doesn't get their own.
- Have them read this list and then think about what may be this person's future based on their passions today. They can think about a future career, their future hobbies, or a "day in the life" of this person.
- When everyone is done thinking or writing down notes, if they would like, have them share what was on the list and the future they predicted.
- Allow each person to then say which list was theirs and allow them to respond to what they thought and how this might compare to the future they have imagined for themselves.

MASH It Up (15 minutes)

This activity works best with any number of youth.

Prep It

Gather paper and writing utensils.

Set It Up

Fortune-telling games like MASH (which stands for Mansion, Apartment, Shack, House) have been around for a long time. They let people imagine different futures in a fun way. But today we are going to put a layer of our hopes and values underneath the silliness.

Do It

- Give each youth a piece of paper and a writing utensil.
- Have them divide it into 4 quadrants.
- In one quadrant, have them list 4-5 options for a type of home they might have in the future. They don't need to follow the traditional MASH listing. They could get creative: a house boat, a log cabin, a chateau, an eco-friendly smart home, etc.
- In the rest of the quadrants, have them list 4-5 options for each of the following categories:
 - Place/location
 - Career/passion
 - Meaning making (an impactful practice or skill they may have: listening deeply, loving parent, native plant gardener, marcher for social justice)
- If your youth have more categories they would like to list, let them be creative.
- Have them choose a number or roll 1-2 dice to determine their number.
- Have them count through until they get to that number and cross off that option from the list.
- They will continue to count and cross off until they have one remaining item in each category.

Discuss It

- What is your MASH prediction?
- What do you think of that future?
- Was there a combination you were hoping for?
- Did you give yourself only desirable future paths, or did you add in some challenges? Why?
- How do your current interests show up in this future prediction?

Personal Timelines (15 minutes)

This activity works best with any number of youth.

Prep It

Gather paper and writing utensils.

Set It Up

Sometimes, people see a lot of continuity over the course of their lives. Someone always loved music and went on to be a professional musician, or someone else always loved music and has been in the church choir for over twenty years. Or, someone always liked speaking in public, and they grew up to be a high school teacher. Sometimes these interests stay in similar categories, but sometimes we do the opposite and find completely new hobbies and interests that are a surprise. For this activity, we are going to look at where our interests have been and where they might continue to go.

Do It

- Give each youth a piece of paper and a writing utensil.
- Have them draw a timeline of their life, both the years prior and those to come.
- Have them start on the timeline with where they are now. What are their interests and passions? How do they like to spend their time?
- Then have them look at their younger years. What were their interests just a couple of years ago? What about at age 7? Age 5?
- Then have them imagine their future. Where might their interests be in high school? What about in college? As an adult? As an older adult?

Discuss It

- Was it easier to think about your future passions or your previous ones?
- Is there a throughline from your younger childhood interests to now?
- What passions did you keep as something you might have your whole life?
- What new predictions did you make?
- How were your future predictions influenced by the adults you know and the passions they have?

Games

Future Relay (10-15 minutes)

This activity works best with 4+ players.

Prep It

Write on three pieces paper/newsprint and post on the wall: Something I'm Curious About, Something I Want to Try, A Skill I Want to Learn. Also, gather writing utensils.

Do It

- Divide your youth into two or more relay teams.
- Their challenge is to run from one posted sheet to another and write their answer on the paper.
 - You can have them do a cycle where they go from one sheet to another, or you can have each player go to Sheet 1, wait for the team to cycle through, and then have them go to Sheet 2.
 - Consider highlighting how UUs value the democratic process and allowing the youth to vote on which method they would prefer.
- The first team to have everyone write their answers on each sheet is the winner.
 - Alternative: You can have them cycle through more than once to write multiple things they are curious about/want to learn, etc.
- When both teams are complete, read aloud what has been written on each sheet.

Discuss It

- Which station was the hardest to answer? Why?
- Now that you have heard what other people have written, is there anything else that makes you think you would like to do?
- What is a skill you have already learned because of your curiosity?
- Why do you think it is important to continually learn new things?
- Do you think most adults do a good job about remaining curious?

Time Tag (10 minutes)

This activity works best with 4+ youth.

Do It

- Choose one player to be "It."
- When that player tags the others, they must freeze.
- In this version of freeze tag, in order to unfreeze, a player must finish the sentence, "In the future, I might . . ."
 - Alternative: Have the challenge increase in difficulty. The first time they are frozen, they must say one thing. The second time they are frozen, they must say two things they might do in the future, etc.
- After a set amount of time, rotate who is "It."

Discuss It

- What kind of future did you imagine for yourself?
- Were your answers always serious, or did they get a bit sillier as the game progressed?
- Which thing from your future do you think is the most obtainable?
- Which thing do you think will be the most difficult to achieve?
- Why is it important to imagine our own futures?

Spiritual Practice

Hope Circle (10 minutes)

This activity works with any number of youth.

Set It Up

We grow into our future selves by both thinking on our own and listening to others. When we hear different perspectives, stories, and ideas, it expands our understanding of the world and of ourselves. In Unitarian Universalism, we believe that no one has the whole truth. Wisdom is something we build together and something we spend our lives seeking as we search for truth and meaning.

Leader Note: Read this reflection on the Fourth Principle from [Rev. Paige Getty](#), or explain it in your own words.

“As responsible religious seekers, we recognize that we are privileged to be free, to have resources to pursue life beyond mere survival, to continually search for truth and meaning, to exist beyond bonds of dogma and oppression, and to wrestle freely with truth and meaning as they evolve.

“This privilege calls us not to be isolated and self-centered, believing that our single perspective trumps all others, but rather to be humble, to be open to the great mysteries of truth and meaning that life offers. And those mysteries may speak to us through our own intuition and experience—but also through tradition, community, conflict, nature, and relationships.

“As a faith tradition, Unitarian Universalism makes sacred the right and responsibility to engage in this free and responsible quest as an act of religious devotion. Institutionally, we have left open the questions of what truth and meaning are, acknowledging that mindful people will, in every age, discover new insights.”

Do It

- Have the youth sit in a circle around your chalice or other lit candle.
- Start by saying, “I hope my future self will be . . .”
- You will go around the circle as each person adds their own statement. Ex: “I hope my future self will always have a sense of wonder.” “I hope my future self will always be curious.” “I hope my future self will always have friends I can count on.”
- Choose if you want each person to only speak once, or if you want to go around more than once.
- Alternative: Go around with one pass of “I hope my future self will . . .” Then, go around with a second pass with each person saying, “I hope your future selves . . .” and making a wish for the group as a whole.

Discuss It

Storytelling & Personal Sharing



Reflection & Discussion Prompts

Leader Note: We suggest that you read through these questions and pick 2-3 questions that will best engage your group.

Suggested Script

We've talked about how the things we're curious about now can shape who we become over time and that there isn't just one path forward. Our future selves grow and change as we keep learning, trying new things, and asking new questions.

In Unitarian Universalism, we believe that life is an ongoing journey of learning and growth. We are always becoming, and our curiosity helps guide that journey.

- Why do you think children and youth are often more curious than adults?
- Who is an adult you know that has kept that curiosity? How does it show up in their life?
- If some of our interests and curiosities will stay with us for our whole life, why is it important to still try new things and hobbies?
- Why is it important to remember that there isn't just one path toward our future?
- Is there something new that you imagined for yourself today?

Take It into The World

Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives



Check Out: Carrying the Gifts of Today into Our Lives

We suggest ending the lesson with this "choose-your-question" checkout. Invite each youth to choose one of the 3 questions below as a way of articulating what they got out of the lesson today and how they might bring that learning/gift/insight/challenge into their everyday lives. These questions are the same for every session, so we suggest making a poster to hang in your youth space so it becomes part of your closing ritual.

Questions

- What is one thing that *surprised* you about today's lesson?
- How did today's lesson *challenge* you?
- What learning or *insight* from today's lesson do you want to carry with you into days and weeks to come?

Movie Night Ideas

Community Building and Bonding



A youth movie event is a great way to encourage young teens to bond as a community, have fun at church, and dive a bit more into the monthly theme. You could also consider making this an all-ages event. Here are a few tips for how to make your movie night a success.

1. Offer dinner and/or snacks (*be sure to check in about allergies/food needs first)
 - Popcorn or chips are movie event staples, but out-of-the-box options are even more fun.
 - For more customized options, consider setting up a candy bar or DIY trail mix bar.
 - Make it a potluck and have everyone bring their own favorite treats to share.
2. Combine it with a lock-in: An evening full of games, tons of pizza, and hanging out with friends is exactly the type of thing teens love. Make an impact on their night by showing a movie that shares the message of the month. Showing the film early in the evening before everyone gets tired gives them something to talk about into the wee hours.
3. Connect it back to the theme: After your movie, invite youth into a follow-up group that ties it back to the theme.

Movie Suggestions for May's theme: *Awakening Curiosity*

Barbie (2023)

Written and directed by UU Greta Gerwig: "To live in Barbie Land is to be a perfect being in a perfect place. Unless you have a full-on existential crisis. Or you're a Ken." –[Source](#)

Theme connection: Greta Gerwig, mothers, learning from one another, promoting a diverse world, growing wisdom, curiosity

Little Women (2019)

Written and directed by UU Greta Gerwig and based on the work by Unitarian Louisa May Alcott: "In the years after the Civil War, Jo March lives in New York and makes her living as a writer, while her sister Amy studies painting in Paris. Amy has a chance encounter with Theodore, a childhood crush who proposed to Jo but was ultimately rejected. Their oldest sibling, Meg, is married to a schoolteacher, while shy sister Beth develops a devastating illness that brings the family back together." –[Source](#)

Theme connection: Greta Gerwig, mothers, growing wisdom, fairness and justice—especially with women's issues

Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope (1977)

"The Imperial Forces -- under orders from cruel Darth Vader -- hold Princess Leia hostage, in their efforts to quell the rebellion against the Galactic Empire. Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, captain of the Millennium Falcon, work together with the companionable droid duo R2-D2 and C-3PO to rescue the beautiful princess, help the Rebel Alliance, and restore freedom and justice to the Galaxy." –[Source](#)

Theme Connection: *Star Wars*, collective wisdom, fighting for justice, curiosity

Tomorrowland (2015)

"Whenever Casey Newton touches a lapel pin with the letter T on it, she finds herself transported to Tomorrowland, a city filled with huge robots and sleek buildings. The gifted young woman recruits the help of scientist Frank Walker, a previous visitor to Tomorrowland, who years ago made a startling discovery about the future. Together, the two adventurers travel to the metropolis to uncover its mysterious secrets." –[Source](#)

Theme Connection: Working together, the future, curiosity about the future

Other Intergenerational/All-ages Activities in this Packet:

From Session 2

- Mother Tags
- Diversity Bingo

From Session 4

- Tarot Stories
- Mystery Line Up
- Wisdom Walk Hullabaloo
- Collective Wisdom (This is a particularly good one for an intergenerational activity.)

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 and 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: <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

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Thanks to all the Soul Matters Religious Educators who send in suggestions for our monthly packets and participate in our monthly packet brainstorming calls.

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