



Soul Matters

Embracing Possibility

RE Resources
Second - Fifth Grade

September 2021

Contents

WELCOME TO SOUL MATTERS RE FOR 2021-22!	2
WELCOME TO EMBRACING POSSIBILITY	4
CALENDAR CONNECTIONS	5
LESSON A: THE POSSIBILITIES IN AND AMONG US	6
LESSON B: FINDING HIDDEN POSSIBILITIES	10
LESSON C: THE POSSIBILITY OF BUILDING A BETTER WORLD	13
LESSON D: WHAT DREAMS MAKE POSSIBLE	16
LESSON E: THE POSSIBILITIES DISCOVERED WITH AN OPEN MIND & HEART	19
LESSON F: THE POSSIBILITY OF FORGIVENESS	23
OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADER SUPPORT	28

Welcome to Soul Matters RE for 2021-22!

Multi-platform...

More ARAOMC resources...

More stories...

And much more!

Thanks for journeying with us for another year. We're so excited about our new efforts for 2021-22. A comprehensive list of our additions and expansion efforts is below, but we want to first highlight five major enhancements:

First, we're committed to multiplatform support. We've learned a lot about offering online RE during the pandemic. We will continue to implement those online techniques and resources to support the many of you who are trying to figure out what the brave new world of 21st Century multi-platform will be. We also recognize that everyone will be moving back to in-person RE in different stages. So to support you wherever you are at, we will provide as many online alternatives as we can right alongside the in-person activities we suggest.

Second, you've probably heard that a new overarching frame will tie our themes together. Our previous frame of "What does it mean to be a people of?" focused us on the values to which our faith calls us. Recognizing the complex and important social challenges ahead of this year, we're shifting to a focus on what ***our times*** call us to be and do as religious people. We'll still ground ourselves in UU values, but we'll be extra intentional about relating our recommended RE activities to the events and needs going on in the society around us.

Third, we're also getting more intentional about anti-racism and inclusion efforts. As you've hopefully heard we've recruited a "Widening the Circle Team," made up of [four wonderful religious education colleagues](#), to help us find and curate ARAOMC (anti-racist, anti-oppression, multi-cultural) resources.

Fourth, we're getting more serious about stories! On top of finding the best storybooks for you to use, we're doubling down on our efforts to find wisdom tales. In conversation with many of you, we've heard that wisdom tales are especially important to the faith formation of our children. They serve as companions for our journeys, communicating and helping us hold on to timeless morals as we navigate not only childhood but adulthood as well. Additionally, Our Widening the Circle Team will help us ensure that both our storybook and wisdom tale suggestions celebrate diversity and support the de-centering whiteness efforts that are so important to us all.

Finally, we've simplified our session structure. Instead of having numerous separate specialized sections (Meditations, Games, Crafts, etc.), we now will have one single and larger "Explore it" section that will "house" those various ways to explore the theme and session story in more depth. We've also added a brief and basic "Light It!" section to the structure to honor how chalice lightings are a core piece of everyone's program. However, knowing that everyone approaches chalice lighting differently, we will list general sites/sources where you can find your own chalice lighting, rather than us listing specific chalice lighting for you to use. So, given all that, here's what the new session structure will be:

- Light It! - Chalice Lighting Sources
- Introduce It! - Wonder Box
- Tell It and Talk About It! - Story
- Explore It! - Digging Deeper with Activities

In addition to the above, here's a brief overview of all the enhancements we have planned for 2021-22 Soul Matters RE:

The 10 New RE Enhancements for 2021-2022

Here are all the ways we've enhanced the RE Packets, many thanks to you for your feedback!

(You can also watch a video of our 10 new RE enhancements on [YouTube HERE](#))

- **Support multi-platform RE:** We are shifting from last year's focus on resources for online RE to a new focus on resources for both in-person and online RE. This includes not only our basic RE packets but other RE resources such as Crossing Paths, Chalice Home, Soulful Home and our Youth Packet.
- **Increase ARAOMC ("Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppressive, MultiCultural") resources:** We've hired Soul Matters religious educators to be on a new "Widening the Circle RE Research Team," that will identify and curate practical RE resources for children's programming based on the Widening the Circle of Concern report, 8th Principle efforts and characteristic of white supremacy learnings.
- **Integrate ARAOMC ("Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppressive, MultiCultural") resources:** We are shifting from last year's goal of having one session a month address ARAOMC themes to *integrating* ARAOMC engagement throughout all sessions, as recommended by ARAOMC leaders. We will also strategically maintain some sessions focused fully on ARAOMC lessons.
- **Direct focus on the spiritual needs of BIPOC ("Black, Indigenous & People of Color") children and families:** Whereas last year our resources focused on increasing awareness of white supremacy systems and helping white UUs become better allies, this coming year we will increase material and resources that are centered on BIPOC needs. Our Widening the Circle RE Research Team will be integral to this work.
- **Increase the amount of "wisdom tales":** Last year our Stories for All Ages resources focused on published storybooks. We will continue to recommend storybooks, but our focus will also be on identifying public domain wisdom tales that are "told" rather than books that are "read."
- **Expand "For All Ages Moment" resources:** In addition to adding more wisdom tales, our "for all ages" resources will expand to include other experiential ideas such as science demonstrations, musical moments, skits, role plays, object lessons, and guest "star" visits.
- **Refine our meditation resources:** We will continue to develop the "meditative story" approach we've been using, and we will increase the number of body-based and movement-based meditations.
- **Redesign our "little ones" packet (i.e. prek-1st grade):** We are rethinking the categories and types of resources we include in our pre-k-1st grade packet to ensure it is age appropriate and better addresses the challenges of multi-platform church.
- **Youth Packet Research Team:** We are hiring a team to help with the design of our Youth Packets.
- **Expand our Crossing Paths line up:** Last year we added Paganism to the religions we cover in Crossing Paths. In 2021-22, we are adding Humanism.

Welcome to Embracing Possibility

Welcome to the Soul Matters Packet for Second through Fifth Grades for the month of September. This year our themes will engage our children with core actions that our faith calls us to and our times need from us. This month we explore the ways in which our faith and times call us to “Embrace Possibilities!”

In the spirit of providing you with options and “Building Blocks” to choose from, we’ve included six lessons on Embracing Possibilities, each grounded in a compelling picture book or wisdom tale. The books/tales recommended by the Widening the Circle Research Team are noted with **. Choose and organize from among these sessions in any way that suits your program best!

Lesson A: The Possibilities In and Among Us - for Homecoming/Water Communion (Story: The Messiah is Among You)

Lesson B: Finding Hidden Possibilities (Story: Rou and the Great Race**)

Lesson C: The Possibility of Building a Better World (Story: Say Something**)

Lesson D: What Dreams Make Possible (Story: Dreamers**)

Lesson E: The Possibilities Discovered with an Open Mind and Heart (Story: Answer Mountain or Maybe Yes Maybe No)

Lesson F: The Possibility of Forgiveness - for Yom Kippur (Story: The Hardest Word)

I am particularly excited about our new work with the [Widening the Circle Research Team](#). Utilizing their extensive experience with the Widening the Circle of Concern report, 8th Principle work, and Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture, this team has curated fantastic resources to increase and integrate ARAOMC learnings for our packets. During our meetings, there was excitement for the possibilities being brought to the table. We can’t wait to share these resources for stories, activities, and games with you throughout the year!

With the WTC Team and all of our 2021-22 enhancements in mind, we’ll definitely be embracing so many new possibilities throughout not only this month, but the entire year! It’s one big reminder of how we as a sharing circle are not only embracing but creating a year of possibility together!

Katie, on behalf of the [entire Soul Matters Team](#)
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Calendar Connections

September 2021

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

Interfaith:

- [Rosh Hashanah](#) - Jewish New Year - Sept. 6 - 8, 2021
- [Mabon/Autumn Equinox](#) - Wicca - Sept. 22, 2021 (more [here](#) & [here](#))
- [Yom Kippur](#) - Jewish Day of Atonement - Sept. 15 - 16, 2021
- [Sukkot](#): Feast of Tabernacles (Jewish) - Sept. 20 - 27, 2021
- [Rumi's birthday](#) - Sept. 30 (1207)
- [Al-Hijra/Muharram](#) - Islamic New Year (day and month) - begins Aug. 9, 2021

Unitarian Universalist:

- Ingathering/Water Communion Ritual - Early Sept. - date varies by congregation
- The first meeting of [the Transcendentalist Club](#) - Sept. 19 (1836) (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- Universalism Day: [John Murray](#) preaches [1st sermon](#) in US (1770) - Sept. 30 (more [here](#))

National & Cultural:

- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15)
- [Suicide Prevention Month](#), World Suicide Prevention Day is Sept. 10
- [Labor Day](#) – Sept. 6 (*first Monday)
- [International Literacy Day](#) - Sept. 08
- [Grandparents Day](#) - Sept. 10
- [9-11 Remembrance](#) - Sept. 11
- [International Peace Day](#) Sept. 21 (more [here](#))
- [World Gratitude Day](#) - Sept. 21
- [Bisexual Pride Day](#), CBD, Bisexual Pride, and Bi Visibility Day - Sept. 23
- [Bisexual Awareness Week](#) - Week of September 23 ([here](#))
- Publication of [David Walker's Appeal](#) - Sept 28 (1829) (more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#))

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [Johnny Appleseed Day](#) - Sept. 26
- [Talk Like a Pirate Day](#) - Sept. 19
- [Hobbit Day](#) - Sept. 22
- [Banned Books Week](#) - Sept.23-29 (more [here](#))
- [Battle of the Sexes](#) Tennis Match - Sept. 20 (1973)

Lesson A:

The Possibilities In and Among Us

Homecoming/Water Communion Focus (Core Story: The Messiah is Among You)

Theme Angle:

When hope is hard to find, we often look outside ourselves for help. We want a hero to save us, someone who we imagine has more power, smarts or creativity than we do. But our faith reminds us that we have inherent worth and more abilities than we sometimes realize. So what's our faith tell us? It says, "Don't always look outside for help and hope. There is more strength, power and possibility inside you and among you and your friends than you think. You have the power to be your own hero!" Or to put all that another way: "The possible hero might be you!"

Theme Angle when using for Water Communion/Homecoming Sunday

Many of our UU congregations spend the summer gathering water in preparation for Homecoming Sunday. We gather this water to symbolize some of our favorite places or favorite things we like to do during summertime. They are our sources of nourishment and replenishment. They remind us that sources of replenishment are plentiful and all around us.

And when we combine our various containers on Homecoming Sunday, it becomes another reminder: that we too are a source of replenishment for each other. By sharing our gifts and joys with each other, it's possible for us to become "the stream" that nourishes each other and the world.

Light It!

We know that everyone approaches chalice lighting differently. Some use the same chalice lighting words for the entire month, while others pick a new one each week and tailor it to that week's particular theme connection. So instead of offering specific chalice lightings for you to use, we offer three "places" for you to find the chalice lighting that fits your approach:

- *Worship Web: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting>*
- *[Tapestry of Faith and other common Chalice Lightings for Children](#)*
- *Our monthly Soul Matters worship packets*

Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

Lighting the Spark in Others (online or in person)

Reflection Object: two candles and a lighter or matches.

Suggested Script

Here are two candles. [Do the following actions as you explain them.] I light one and then the other. I snuff one. Now I bring the lit candle close but not touching the unlit candle, and VOILA! The flame is lit!

This month we are exploring ways that our faith invites us to Embrace Possibility. Embracing Possibility is the theme. One way of thinking of Embracing Possibility is to imagine the spark of the divine, of God, of the Spirit of Life inside each person. It's a great way of reminding us that we have so many possibilities inside us! And there are many ways of describing that special, "full of possibility" part of each person. Our [first UU principle](#) puts it as "The inherent worth and dignity of each person..."

When things get tough, we sometimes look outside ourselves for help. We want a hero to save us, someone who we imagine has more power or smarts than we do. But our faith reminds us that we have inherent worth and more abilities than we sometimes realize. So what's our faith tell us? It says, "Don't always look outside for help and hope. There is strength and power inside you and among you and your friends than you think. You have the power to be your own hero!" Or to put all that another way: "The possible hero might be you!" Just like the candles that can light each other when they are brought close to each other, when we look into each other's eyes and honor that spark of the divine, we light that spark of possibility by trusting the strength and power inside of us and among us.

Suggested Script when using for Water Communion/Homecoming Sunday

We gather water to symbolize some of our favorite places or favorite things we like to do during summertime. They are our sources of nourishment and replenishment. They remind us that sources of replenishment are plentiful and all around us.

And when we combine our various containers on Homecoming Sunday, it becomes another reminder: that **we too** are a source of replenishment for each other. By sharing our gifts and joys with each other, it's possible for us to become "the stream" that nourishes each other and the world.

Lead With Strategy: Who in your congregation is a chemist or likes to explore chemistry? Invite them to explain the chemistry of the flame and candle. Check out [this article](#) on what makes the flame grow.

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Story)

The story can be read online or in person, or the video shared online.

The Messiah is Among You - Wisdom Tale

Our UU children may not know the meaning of Messiah, so be sure to define it, perhaps by saying it means someone who will save the world. While having differing thoughts about Jesus being the Messiah, both the Christian and Jewish faiths teach that a Messiah will come again.

Here are numerous sources for the story; choose your favorite version or use them all to create a version of your own! Since the story itself is in the public domain, you are free to use and alter it. But be sure to credit a particular source if you use it verbatim or heavily draw on it.

- **Online Story:** <https://acmillard.wordpress.com/2013/01/31/the-messiah-is-among-you/>
- **In “Doorways to the Soul” by Elisa Davy Pearmain:** Story #36. (Because of copyright issues, we can only share the story titles from “Doorways to the Soul.” This is one of our Soul Matters “[Common Shelf](#)” [Books](#))
- **A modern setting:** A version using children instead of a monastery - From Tapestry of Faith, Moral Tales, Seeing Others <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session7/messiah>

Theme Connection: Trust in the possibilities inside and among us. When things get tough, we go looking for hope outside of us, when really, it is inside each of us.

Reflection Prompts:

- Have you ever seen someone in a new light, a new way than ever before?
- Has someone ever surprised you with a talent they have that you didn’t know about?
- Have you ever surprised yourself with a talent you didn’t know was in you?!
- What would it be like to “see God” or “see the Spirit of Life” in each other’s eyes when we gather?

Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. Choose the one(s) just right for your group!

Sidewalk Chalk Art Outdoors - In Person

Welcome everyone back by decorating the [sidewalk with chalk art](#) affirmations that embrace the possibility of seeing the possibilities inside of everyone. Here are some chalk art suggestions: Hearts, “You can change the world!” “There is a hero inside you!” “You are loved!” “Walk with the Spirit of Life!” Add balloons, flowers, and words about homecoming and community like “Share,” “Seek,” “Gather,” “Celebrate.”

Namaste - Online or In Person

Teach and practice the Sanskrit [Namaste bow and meaning](#) for honoring the divine in each other. This connects to our first UU Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of each person. We embrace possibilities of good and hope in each person.

Pictionary Game on Zoom - Online

Explore the strength between us by making teams who need to try to figure out the drawing prompt together. Instructions [HERE](#).

Tug of Peace - In Person

Explore the strength between us, not outside of us, with this game with a knotted circle of rope, large enough for the entire group to grasp a section. Instructions [HERE](#).

Shine Your Light Guided Meditation

Share this mindfulness meditation with the children and honor the spark of light inside us. <https://www.greenchildmagazine.com/guided-relaxation-shine-your-light/>

Lesson B:

Finding Hidden Possibilities

(Core Story: Rou and the Great Race**)

Theme Angle:

Sometimes it takes a bit of looking before we notice the possibilities in life. The difficulties of life can seem huge and impossible to overcome. But our UU faith reminds us that hope, solutions and possibilities are always there, even when hard to see. In other words, our faith tells us, “Keep Looking! Sometimes the answers and possibilities are just a little hidden!”

Light It!

We know that everyone approaches chalice lighting differently. Some use the same chalice lighting words for the entire month, while others pick a new one each week and tailor it to that week’s particular theme connection. So instead of offering specific chalice lightings for you to use, we offer three “places” for you to find the chalice lighting that fits your approach:

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Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

Embracing Possibility

Reflection Object: a [Where’s Waldo book](#) or [other hidden object game](#)

Suggested Script

Here’s a Where’s Waldo Book [or Hidden Object Game.] Have you ever tried to find Waldo? Or all the hidden objects? It’s hard! Sometimes it takes a bit of looking before we notice where Waldo is.

This month we are exploring ways that our faith invites us to Embrace Possibility. Embracing Possibility is the theme. Sometimes it takes a bit of looking before we notice the possibilities in life. The difficulties in life can seem huge and impossible to overcome. But our UU faith reminds us that hope, solutions and possibilities are always there, even when hard to see. In other words, our faith tells us, “Keep Looking! Sometimes the answers and possibilities are just a little hidden!”

Lead With Strategy: Who in your congregation loves puzzles? Invite them to share why they keep trying them even when parts seem hidden.

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Story)

The story can be read online or in person, or the video shared online.

Rou and the Great Race by Pam Fong Picture Book**

Video: <https://www.pbs.org/video/rou-and-great-race-english-captions-q7nhrw/>

Book: [HERE](#)

“In a time when a flower is so rare that it is the grand prize of an annual race, Rou’s only wish is to win for her grandma, who is haunted by memories of when flowers were once abundant. But sometimes the real prize is not what’s offered by others, but what we make for ourselves.” - Amazon

Theme Connection: In this science fiction book for children, Rou notices the possibilities of the trampled plant. She and her grandmother grow it into many flowers. Sometimes it takes a bit of looking before we notice the hidden possibilities in life.

Reflection Prompts:

- Have you ever really wanted to win a contest? What happened?
- Do you think the future could be as bare as Rou’s imaginary world?
- What is your favorite part of the natural world?
- When have you taken a closer look and found something hidden to you at first?

Notes on the Book

****ARAOMC Context from the Widening the Circle Research Team**

This story is an [OwnVoice](#) book with Asian main characters, including both a child and a grandmother. The WTC Research Team chose this book because it decenters whiteness by telling a story about the characters that does not center around their race; it speaks to building beloved community and relationship as she shares the flowers, she grows with everyone.

Online Permission Note: Reycraft Books has not publicly shared direction about online use, so you will need to make your own judgement call about use of this story for online use. For help thinking through that see our Soul Matters document: [Copyright Guidance for Online Story Reading](#).

Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. Choose the one(s) just right for your group!

Flower or Plant Sharing - In Person or Online

In the video of the book, Pam Fong shows how to split potted violas to re-pot and share with others. Violas like to grow in cooler weather if this works in your geography. You can provide simple pots, potting soil and a potted viola for this activity at home. Then re-pot the plants together online.

Notice the “hidden possibilities” of the roots of the plant, that provide the new possibilities of new plants! Sharing the flowers helps others feel like life is hopeful and full of possibilities.

Variations: Use Jade plant cuttings, succulent leaves or baby spider plants from congregants and distribute them to families to re-pot and then share with others.

Paper Flower Craft - In Person or Online

Create flowers out of paper.

Keep trying and new possibilities will reveal themselves. There’s more than one way to create the flowers, more than one way to look at a problem.

Send supplies home or make together. Consider playing some [meditative music](#) while you create the flowers.

Provide a variety of colors and markers.

[Lily Handprint Flower](#)

[Accordion Fold Tissue Paper Flower](#)

Outdoor Races and Tag - In Person

Run some races and play tag outdoors to celebrate being together. Consider playing some cooperative games to illustrate how the world might be different from the competitive world which Pam Fong created. [Try these.](#) With cooperative games, hidden solutions emerge from the group sharing

Lesson C:

The Possibility of Building a Better World

(Core Story: Say Something**)

Theme Angle

People sometimes treat each other unfairly. This can make us feel sad and even helpless. But our faith tells us that it's possible to build a better world. It's possible for each of us to make a difference. And even more than that, our faith also tells us we have the responsibility to help others feel that life is full of possibilities, to believe that justice is possible.

Light It!

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- [*Tapestry of Faith and other common Chalice Lightings for Children*](#)
- *Our monthly Soul Matters worship packets*

Introduce It

(Wonder Box)

Reflection Object: a paintbrush

Suggested Script:

The theme this month is embracing possibility. People sometimes treat each other unfairly. This can make us feel sad and even helpless. But our faith tells us it's possible to build a better world. It's possible for each of us to make a difference. Our faith tells us that we have a responsibility to help others feel life is full of possibilities.

Making a difference can happen in many different ways. For instance, this is a paintbrush that can be used to make a sign, paint a mural, or capture a portrait. It might even be used to paint on your face or your arm! Using a paintbrush is one possibility for making a difference and changing the way people look at the world. There are lots of other possibilities. The world needs your voice. It might be through poetry, on a sign, or as a hug. It might be with a marker, a paintbrush, or a song.

Maybe you don't know what your favorite way of expressing yourself is. If so, you can try out a variety of possibilities until you find the one or two ways which are your favorite. That is part of the fun of embracing possibilities!

Lead With Strategy: Invite a person who expresses themselves via art or music or theatre. What is their favorite way of saying something?

Tell It and Talk About It

(Story)

Say Something by Peter Reynolds**

"The world needs your voice. If you have a brilliant idea... say something! If you see an injustice... say something!... Each of us, each and every day, have the chance to say something: with our actions, our words, and our voices. ...There are so many ways to tell the world who you are... what you are thinking... and what you believe. And how you'll make it better. The time is now: SAY SOMETHING!"... -- School Library Journal"

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4waMR24zsl>

Book: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts:

- What was your favorite way that the author used to say something?
- How have you spoken up when you experienced something bad going on?
- What happened?
- Why do you think the world needs your voice?
- What do you wish adults would speak up about?

Notes on the Book

****ARAOMC Context from the Widening the Circle Research Team**

The Widening the Circle Research Team chose this book because there are diverse characters throughout the book. The story talks about “saying something” when you see something that is wrong. It shows that there are many different possibilities to “say something” besides giving a speech or writing.

Online Permission Note: Orchard Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House Publishers, has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#) Just scroll down to the section titled “Orchard Books.”

Explore It

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Speech Bubble - in person or online

It's possible to build a better world. What would you say?

https://kids.scholastic.com/content/dam/scholastic/kids/pdf/say-something/Scholastic_SaySomethingSpeechBubbleActivity01.pdf

Say Something Activity Pack for Drawing - online or in person

https://kids.scholastic.com/content/dam/scholastic/kids/pdf/say-something/Scholastic_SaySomethingActivityPack.pdf

Stations for Self-Expression - in person (could be outdoors, too)

Each station provides a different way to “Say Something” that will help build a better world.

Stations can include a painting or art creation station, a poetry station, a microscope or magnifying glass observation station, a dress-up station, a sign-making station, and even a whisper-to-the-world station.

Encourage the kids to try more than one station to realize that there are many ways they can say something.

After rotating through stations, have the children share what their favorite way of saying something was that day with reasons to support their thinking. Share their creations with each other. Take photographs and share with the congregation.

What's Our Church Saying Something About? - Guest and activity

Invite one of the social action leaders in your congregation to reflect on what the church is speaking up and out against. Ask them to come up with a way the children could lend their voice, such as making a protest sign, packing bags of cans collected for the hungry or placing flyers on cars in the parking lot to remind people to save energy.

Lesson D:

What Dreams Make Possible

(Core Story: Dreamers**)

Theme Angle

Sometimes it's hard to embrace and imagine possibilities. People tell us "You can't do that!" or "Follow our rules!" or "This is the way things will always be!" But our faith encourages us to imagine a better world and view ourselves and life as full of unimagined possibilities. It tells us, "Trust in your dreams and almost anything is possible!"

Light It!

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Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

Dreaming Your Own Possibilities

Reflection Object: a pillow

Suggested Script: The theme this month is Embracing Possibility. This is a pillow. When you put your head on your pillow and sleep at night, you often have dreams. Or even nightmares. They aren't much fun, that's for sure! But good dreams are nice to have.

There is another way to dream - to dream about possibilities for a better life. You might think, who can I be if I make a change? You trust in your dreams. You might **have to** make a change so that you can explore the possibilities of those dreams. Sometimes, you need to deliberately make a change. That can be scary and sad. But the scary and sad parts also have a balance. There can be dreams, hopes, and possibilities that will grow and unfold. Our faith tells us to respond to the call of the times by embracing possibility so that we can fulfill dreams of a better life.

Lead With Strategy: Recruit someone from your congregation who has moved, who is an immigrant, who has changed their name, or who has changed their identity? Invite them to tell the story of how they embraced possibility and pursued a dream.

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Story)

The story can be read online or in person, or the video shared online.

Dreamers by Yuyi Morales**

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILtQ28Dbv7A>

Book: [HERE](#)

“Yuyi Morales brought her hopes, her passion, her strength, and her stories with her, when she came to the United States in 1994 with her infant son. She left behind nearly everything she owned, but she didn’t come empty-handed. Dreamers is a celebration of making your home with the things you always carry: your resilience, your dreams, your hopes and history. It’s the story of finding your way in a new place, of navigating an unfamiliar world and finding the best parts of it. In dark times, it’s a promise that you can make better tomorrows.” - Amazon

Theme Connection: The author embraced the possibilities of finding a new life for herself and her son.

Reflection Prompts:

- Have you ever been in a place that you were unfamiliar with? What happened? How did it feel?
- What does it mean to “make our voices heard”? How do you make your voice heard?
- What dreams do you have?
- Are there parts of yourself which are waiting to unfold?
- How might you make a deliberate change so that you can explore possibilities?

Notes on the Book

****ARAOMC Context from the Widening the Circle Research Team**

The Widening the Circle Research Team chose this book to bring awareness to DACA and Dreamers, and to shed light on the immigrant experience and journey. As a bilingual book it also challenges the idea of white supremacy by exposing children to another language (Spanish).

Learn more about DACA and the Dreamers: <https://www.fwd.us/daca-101/>

It is important to consider that you may have children in your group whose family members or they themselves are immigrants, undocumented and/or “Dreamers.” Be prepared and sensitive to those children and be mindful as to how you discuss this. Children who may not have shared this previously may disclose it during the lesson and that information should only come from the student themselves.

Online Permission Note: Neil Porter Books, an imprint of Holiday House Publishers, has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#). Just scroll down to the section titled “Holiday House Publishers.”

Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Play with Butterflies

Yuyi Morales' book is filled with Monarch butterflies. Butterflies are the symbol of change and possibilities, going through so many changes in their identities, unfolding their wings like an unfolding dream. Embrace butterflies in your day!

- **Butterfly Life Cycle Video, online**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3J1SZK06mE>
- **Make Butterflies Craft with coffee filters, in person or online**
<https://onelittleproject.com/coffee-filter-butterflies/>
- **Butterfly Body Scan Meditation**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56_8aK3cLEA

Learn More About Immigration and the Dreamers from <https://www.adl.org/media/12244/download>

“Engage students in a discussion about immigration. First, read “My Story” in the back of the book (pages 30–31) about the author’s immigration story. Then, ask students: What does it mean to be an immigrant? What is immigration? Define immigration as the process of coming into a non-native or foreign country to live. You can share with students that 40 million people who live in the U.S. were born in another country and that the U.S. has more immigrants than any other country in the world.”

Draw and write a new page and/or write your own dream as suggested in the [ADL webpage](#).

Lesson E:

The Possibilities Discovered with an Open Mind & Heart

(Core Story: Answer Mountain or Maybe Yes Maybe No)

Theme Angle

When something bad happens, it's easy to assume that things will always be bad. When a person does a mean or unkind thing, it's easy to assume that they are a "mean person." but our faith reminds us that people and situations are never one thing. They are more complicated and contain more possibilities than we can notice right away. With this in mind, our faith tells us, "Stay open! Embrace all the possibilities! Each day is a new day. Each person can surprise us. So always keep an open mind and an open heart!"

Light It!

We know that everyone approaches chalice lighting differently. Some use the same chalice lighting words for the entire month, while others pick a new one each week and tailor it to that week's particular theme connection. So instead of offering specific chalice lightings for you to use, we offer three "places" for you to find the chalice lighting that fits your approach:

- *Worship Web: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting>*
- *[Tapestry of Faith and other common Chalice Lightings for Children](#)*
- *Our monthly Soul Matters worship packets*

Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

Embrace Possibility with Flexibility

Reflection Object: a rubber band or other stretchy object

Suggested Script: The theme this month is Embracing Possibility. That means welcoming change with an **open mind**. And to keep an open mind, you need to stay flexible. Just imagine yourself as a rubber band. Embrace the possibility of a new teacher? Stay flexible! Embrace the possibility of a new musical instrument? Stay flexible! Our faith tells us to respond to the call of the times by embracing possibility. So, just as you keep an open mind when you are changing teachers, we learn about keeping an **open mind and staying flexible** to possibilities and change when you are meeting other new people, when you are trying to make a decision, when you are working for justice.

Lead With Strategy: Recruit someone from your congregation who can do the splits, or practices yoga, or is otherwise very flexible. How have they had to keep an open mind and embrace possibilities when practicing their skill?

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Story)

With this theme angle we offer two stories to pick from. Each can be read in person or online.

Maybe Yes, Maybe No

There is not a video of the story but consider pairing with an [Eagles Eye View of the Alps video](#), for some dramatic scenes of mountains, to set the stage.

Story: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/session4/109542.shtml>

Theme Connection:

This story is all about staying open to life. If we can resist assuming the worst or assuming the best, we will notice that every situation keeps unfolding. Nothing stays the same. Each day is a new day. Every situation is full of many possibilities.

Reflection Prompts:

- When was a time when you wished the answer was yes or no?
- When was a time when you worked on an answer that was “under construction?”
- How have you stayed flexible during a time of change?

Online Permission Note: Tapestry of Faith material has been authorized for online use. See

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/downloading>

Lea’s Back! This time with story as well as song!

The Soul Matters Team is thrilled to announce that we’ve entered into another “creative collaboration” with Lea Morris. We let Lea know that we’re focusing on wisdom tales this year and she generously offered to build one of her new projects around those wisdom stories we’ve selected to go with our 2021-22 monthly themes. This project is a story & song venture in which Lea tells a wisdom tale and then shares a song that the story inspired her to write. It’s such a beautiful blending of her wonderful story-telling skills and her luminous songwriting and singing.

Her first video aligns with our theme for September - Embracing Possibility - and features the well-known and well-loved story, “Maybe Yes, Maybe No.”

- *You can preview the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cylvR7fBA1Y>*
- *You can purchase at <https://www.hopesingseternal.me/stories/maybe>*

As with all ten of the videos she’s creating, the purchase price per video is \$20. With your purchase comes the following usage rights:

- *Playing the video in online and in-person worship services (including recorded services)*
- *Playing the video in online and in-person children’s religious education programs/presentations (including ones that are recorded and posted online)*
- *Sending out a link to the video to parents so they can watch it with their children at home as part of their family spiritual life activities*

We will soon share all ten of the stories that Lea will feature, but here are a few that are in the works: [The Parable of the Spoons](#) (for Cultivating Relationship - Oct), [God Loves Stories](#) (for Holding History - Nov), [The Tiger and The Strawberry](#) (Opening to Joy - Dec), and [The Cricket and the Coin](#) (Living with Intention - Jan).

Answer Mountain Tale

There is not a video of the story but consider pairing with an [Eagles Eye View of the Alps video](#), for some dramatic scenes of mountains, to set the stage.

Online Story: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/session4/109542.shtml>

Theme Connection:

This story is about staying open to multiple perspectives. Every problem is different. Even when we all face the same problem or challenge, the solution might be different for different people. There is rarely one answer that “fits all.” There are, almost always, many possible answers to a problem or challenge. The more we stay open and flexible, the more possibilities we notice!

Reflection Prompts:

- When was a time when you wished the answer was yes or no?
- When was a time when you worked on an answer that was “under construction?”
- How have you stayed flexible during a time of change?

Online Permission Note: Tapestry of Faith material has been authorized for online use. See <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/downloading>

Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Elbow Tag - outdoors in person

In this game, participants must adapt to quickly changing circumstances and/or be flexible. Elbow Tag requires at least six participants and a fairly large open space.

Divide the group into pairs. Have partners link elbows and stand in a very large circle, leaving at least ten feet between each pair. Now choose one of the pairs and designate one partner as "It" and the other as the one being pursued. If Xander can tag Elena, she becomes "It." However, if Elena wants to escape (and take a rest from running), she simply runs toward one of the standing couples and links elbows with one of the pair to make a threesome.

In this game, two is company but three's a crowd: When Elena latches on, the one member of the pair whose arm she did not take must break away at top speed. This player instantly becomes new prey for "It" (Xander), until he/she dashes to yet another pair for safety. The confusing transitions can provide a break for weary runners and give even a slow-moving "It" a chance to catch Elena.

Outright Lie - in person or online

Who can be most imaginative? Part of being flexible is imagining other ways of being or other points of view.

Pass a small object around the circle or show it on the screen and make up incredible stories about it. Example: "This necklace was buried in my grandmother's yard in a sealed envelope from an anonymous admirer." Vote on the best story and elect the best liar in the group.

Flex Test - in person or online

Everyone's body is flexible in different ways. Sometimes, we can make our bodies more flexible by stretching and practicing a particular movement.

Invite participants to share ways that their bodies are flexible. Who can do splits? Who can bend their thumb, so it touches their wrist? Who can do any yoga poses? Invite participants to suggest other large or small ways to demonstrate flexibility. (Touch index fingers behind your back, twist arms together, make a fist, roll tongue into different shapes, expand and contract nostrils, cross eyes, flex and point toes, etc.)

- From [Tapestry of Faith, Toolbox of Faith](#)

Lesson F:

The Possibility of Forgiveness

Yom Kippur Focus

(Core Story: The Hardest Word)

Theme Angle

We all make mistakes. We accidentally break things or hurt someone's feelings. When that happens it can feel like things will forever be broken. People won't like us again. People will be afraid of us. People will never be able to trust us to be responsible again. We get sad because we think it will be impossible to ever fix it. But our faith reminds us that something magical happens when we find the courage to say, "I'm sorry" and then work to repair what we've broken: it makes room for "do overs." And so what does our faith tell us? It says, "Say or accept apologies and embrace the possibility of beginning again!"

Light It!

We know that everyone approaches chalice lighting differently. Some use the same chalice lighting words for the entire month, while others pick a new one each week and tailor it to that week's particular theme connection. So instead of offering specific chalice lightings for you to use, we offer three "places" for you to find the chalice lighting that fits your approach:

- *Worship Web: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting>*
- *[Tapestry of Faith and other common Chalice Lightings for Children](#)*
- *Our monthly Soul Matters worship packets*

Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

A Mistake with a Ball

Reflection Object: a ball

Suggested Script:

Do you know what this is? It's a ball (or baseball, tennis ball, golf ball depending on the family sport.) It's used to play baseball, which is a game. How many of you play baseball? What happens in baseball? You hit the ball with a bat and try to run around the bases. Is it hard to hit the ball? Yes. You miss it, or it flies off in a different direction. Sometimes when the ball flies off in a different direction, it hits something it's not supposed to. Like breaking a window, crushing some flowers, or even hitting a car that was parked nearby. [The Jones' had something like this happen, and they have agreed to share the mistake that was made and what happened afterwards.]

When we make mistakes, we need to find the strength to repair what went wrong. That means owning up to the damage. Saying you're sorry. When we repair our mistakes, we are renewed, made happy again. It's hard to do, but it is the right thing to do. When we do the right thing, we feel back in balance with the world. Our Jewish friends celebrate a holiday this month called "Yom Kippur" as a time to say, "I'm sorry."

Lead With Strategy: Is there a family who can share about a time when there was a mistake and an apology owed?

Tell It and Talk About It

(Story)

The Hardest Word: A Yom Kippur Story by Jacqueline Jules, Illustrated by Katherine Janus Kahn

About how forgiveness and apology unleash and make room for new possibilities. Connected to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=17&v=Rmuiw70rkBA&feature=emb_logo

Book: [HERE](#)

Example of telling the story in your own words: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rwg3cKn7FI>

(Note: the story is on the longer side so you might want to abbreviate it.)

Reflection Prompts:

- What mistakes have you made?
- How have you made apologies?
- Why is “sorry” the hardest word?

Online Permission Note: “Kar-Ben Publishing” has not publicly shared direction about online use, so you will need to make your own judgement call about use of this story. For help thinking through that see our Soul Matters document: [Copyright Guidance for Online Story Reading](#).

Explore It

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Try a Shofar

Leader Background

Here are some articles to help you put this into your own words:

What is a Shofar?

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shofar/>

11 Reasons Why We Blow the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah

http://www.chabad.org/holidays/JewishNewYear/template_cdo/aid/2311995/jewish/11-Reasons-Why-We-Blow-the-Shofar-on-Rosh-Hashanah.htm

Hearing the Sound of the Shofar

<http://www1.cbn.com/hearing-sound-shofar>

The Shofar is a wakeup call to honestly and bravely admit and own our mistakes.

It’s an entirely different way of announcing the new year. The Jewish new year starts with Rosh Hashanah and ends with Yom Kippur. Rosh Hashanah starts this year, 2021, on September 6. Yom Kippur ends on Sept. 16.

Make or Listen to The Sound

The shofar is a Ram's horn which is hollow. A trumpet mouthpiece will work. See who has an instrument with a mouthpiece who might be able to blow into it. Or show this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grZDPCKORGg>.

The shofar is not a nice sound. Its harsh tone is meant to remind one of the pain in one's hearts and the pain one has caused. It wails and cries out and waits for an answer. Here are the three types sounds made by the blowing of the shofar:

Tekiah (wake up!)

Shevarim (3 2-second blasts ending the same way)

Teruah (9 staccato blasts)

If you have access to a real Shofar, share it with the group. It is hard to blow and create a sound! The trick is to blow it with lips and cheeks tight, as with a trumpet mouthpiece.

Feeling the Weight of Our Mistakes

Jews tend to think in terms of owning their sin or feeling the weight of it. It's a unique way of thinking about how we release ourselves from our mistakes and move on. Instead of just asking others for forgiveness or letting go of our mistakes, this approach says that we can't open our hand and let our mistakes go until we have first steadied our grip and felt the full weight of what we've done.

Here's a fun way to illustrate this idea and engage it experientially:

Weighty Bath Bombs, online or in person

Prep for online:

Get the bath bombs that they've acquired ahead of time.

Also have them go and find a medium sized bowl or container with water in it, preferably a clear glass container to make it easier for others to see the bath bomb explosion through their Zoom windows.

For family prep:

Order online: [HERE](#)

DIY: <https://www.popsci.com/how-to-make-your-own-bath-bombs/>

(Leave out all the fragrance and fancy stuff.)

Target: <https://www.target.com/p/6ct-bath-bombs-spritz-153/-/A-54267000>

Instructions

To feel the weight of our mistakes, invite each participant to hold the bath bomb in their hands. As they do so, have them imagine what heavy mistakes they have made which they would like to own and then release. Invite them to share where and how they feel that weight in their bodies, minds and hearts. Then drop the bath bomb into a large bucket of water and watch the mistakes fizz away. We suggest one bucket of water for each bomb.

Variation: if you don't want to use bath bombs, use heavy rocks and simply drop them in water after holding them.

Childrens' Chapel & Time for All Ages Suggestions

Below is a list of picture books, tellable wisdom tales and activity based "message moments" to support your efforts beyond RE classes and groups, such as children's chapel or Multigen times for all ages.

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

We also know that some congregations like to have stories in childrens' chapel and multigen worship that complement but are different from those shared in RE classes. So we've also listed some suggestions not found in the sessions above.

We hope both lists support whichever approach you use!

From This RE Packet

- **The Messiah is Among You** - found [here](#) and [here](#)
When hope is hard to find, we often look outside ourselves for help. We want a hero to save us, someone who we imagine has more power, smarts or creativity than we do. But our faith reminds us there is more strength, power and possibility inside us and among us and our friends than we think. Or to put it another way: The possible hero just might be you!
- **Rou and the Great Race** - found [here](#) and [here](#)
Sometimes it takes a bit of looking before we notice the hidden possibilities in life.
- **Say Something** - found [here](#) and [here](#)
It's possible for each of us to make a difference. And even more than that, we have the responsibility to help others feel that life is full of possibilities, to believe that justice is possible.
- **Dreamers** - found [here](#) and [here](#)
- **Answer Mountain** - found [here](#)
Every problem is different. Even when we all face the same problem or challenge, the solution might be different for different people. There is rarely one answer that "fits all." There are, almost always, many possible answers to a problem or challenge. The more we stay open and flexible, the more possibilities we notice!
- **Maybe Yes Maybe No** - found [here](#) and [here](#)
If we can resist assuming the worst or assuming the best, we will notice that every situation keeps unfolding. Nothing stays the same. Each day is a new day. Every situation is full of many possibilities.
- **The Hardest Word** - found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)
About how forgiveness and apology unleash and make room for new possibilities. Connected to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Additional Wisdom Tales, Story Books & Message Moments

- **The Overflowing Teacup** - found [here](#)
To embrace the possibility of wisdom we have to be humble, to empty our mind and make room for the new. Pour a cup of tea as a prop and keep on pouring until it overflows into a plate or basin you have ready.
- **Be You! By Peter H Reynolds** - found [here](#)
On embracing the unique possibilities of you!
- **The Power of Half** - found [here](#)
On the possibilities unleashed through generosity and meeting needs greater than our own.
- **The Story of Caroline Veatch** - found [here](#)
On the possibilities unleashed through generosity and meeting needs greater than our own.
- **Rainstorm Sound Chorus**
Here's a popular water-related sound chorus to use for a Water Communion Service. It really sounds like a rainstorm! Scroll down on the webpage to find the Rainstorm activity. The message: Creating as a group can expand possibilities for wonder even more than with one person.
Online description: <https://www.uua.org/youth/library/deepfun/bond-building>

Opportunities for Leader Support

Come share together

Online Zoom Labs, Join Us!

Zoom Information:

All Labs take place on Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/5857099120>

Audio only: Dial: +1 408 638 0968 or +1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 585 709 9120

Password: 333

RE Leader Labs - Katie's Overview and Group Sharing!

In our leader labs, Katie gives an overview of the packet for the next month's theme, and then RE Leaders share challenges, opportunities and take-aways.

Meeting time: *Second Wednesday of each month at 1 pm Eastern. These Labs are recorded and posted on the YouTube Soul Matters Channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe2pmT_ATh-pbkjF2m7rfOA*

- **Wed. July 14, 2021, 1 p.m. ET Start Up and Overview**
- **Wed. Aug 11, 2021, 1 p.m. ET for September's theme of Embracing Possibility**
- **Wed. Sept 8, 2021, 1 p.m. ET for October's theme of Cultivating Relationship**

Brainstorming Labs

In our brainstorming labs, RE Leaders support Katie by sharing ideas for upcoming packets. Attendees like the way it gives them ideas in advance. The packets are always stronger when our sharing circle members pitch in their creativity!

Meeting time: *First Wednesday of the Month at 1 pm ET. Brainstorm on the upcoming theme 2 months away.*

- **Wed. July 7, 2021, 1 p.m. Oct. theme Cultivating Relationship**
- **Wed. Aug 4, 2021, 1 p.m. Nov. theme Holding History**

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](#).

Chalice Home Guide

Each monthly Chalice Home packet will be designed to be sent to your families and will include a family worship and family activity that is built around adding a new item/symbolic object to your family's home "altar" or as we refer to it, "Chalice Home." These activities and objects will connect to our monthly themes and lift up a different source of spiritual nourishment. Here's the link to the Chalice Home page on our website:

<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/chalice-home.html>

"On the Road Together" - Soul Matters Senior High Youth Packet

A monthly packet for High School Youth Groups! Here's the link to the [Soul Matters Youth Packet](#) page on our website.

Sessions with resources for Check In, Spiritual Practice, Discussion Starters, Expressing Yourself with the Arts, Fun and Games, and Off-Road Excursions.

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>.

There are three types of subscriptions: congregational, family and gift subscriptions. Check them all out!

Soul Matters RE Packet Author and Support Team

Packet Author: Katie Covey, Soul Matters Director of Religious Education

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

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

Rev. Michelle Collins, Soul Matters Small Group & Special Projects Researcher
Rev. Scott Tayler, Soul Matters Team Lead



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Learn how to join at <http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com>