



Soul Matters

Crossing Paths

Walking the Path of
Christianity

October 2018 - Sanctuary

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Welcome

Welcome to the Crossing Paths packet for October and Christianity! In addition to exploring Christianity, this packet also engages our youth with October's theme of "What Does it Mean to Be a People of Sanctuary?"

As a person who grew up Unitarian Universalist, I was naive about Christianity. What little I knew left me feeling disturbed, particularly the conservative views in Christianity. A lot has changed since then. As I researched further and asked my Christian friends to share more about their faith, I was able to open myself to Christianity in a new way. Creating this packet was another step in that process of opening up. For instance, I am now moved by the concept of sin as "missing the mark." No longer does sin feel like an impediment to my spiritual growth, but I can now relate to it as something that supports it. All of us could a little "aim improvement!"

In addition, this packet helped me better see how we all share a hunger for acceptance. Christians speak of being accepted by Jesus and God just the way they are. The non-theistic UUs among us also experience a hunger for acceptance; we just find it in our partners, our family and our community. Even if we look to different sources for acceptance, we all can find commonality in the hunger for it.

I was also moved by what Christianity teaches us about the sanctuary movement. This packet and the theme of sanctuary teaches us about how faiths need to work together, as brothers and sisters, because we can't do justice making alone. We may be motivated by different things, but we need to do it together.

I hope this packet offers you similar gifts as it did me. May you and your youth open up to Christianity in a new way. May you see your own hungers reflected. And may you come to see our Christian cousins as essential partners in the work of building a better world.

Thank you for joining us on this journey to find the beauty of each religion!

Katie, on behalf of the entire Soul Matters team

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Week 1

Map Sunday

(Mapping the Christian Landscape)

Purpose

- Introduce youth to the core beliefs of Christianity using some of the Crossing Paths lenses/binoculars

Preparation & Leader Notes

Remembering Humility & Partial Views

The aim of Map Sunday is to “get a glimpse” of each religion and explore the core aspects of its “landscape.” There is no way to capture the fullness of these rich religions in a session or two. So, as always, this session is about impressions and partial views. The goal is to set the stage for the visits and start the learning. As a leader you will need to remind your youth that there is still a lot about each religion left to explore and we need to have humility about what we are learning. Remember the blind men and the elephant? We should never let our exposure to one small part of the elephant lead us to believing we have the whole picture. It might also help to remind your youth about our second practice of welcoming: “always be curious” - i.e. always be open and never assume you understand something fully.

Dinner and Drive Time Tip (Email to parents ahead of time):

Before:

- *A core Christian belief is God loves and accepts all of humanity. This is an opportunity for you to talk with your youth about the Universalist side of our faith. Our Universalist forbearers were Christians that understood God as a parent who loved all of humanity so much that God would not damn anyone to hell. This affirming view led to the belief that all people and all religions were of worth. Our UU idea of “inherent worth” came from this. It was something we brought with us from our Christian origins. So you can help your youth understand that UUism didn’t reject Christianity as much as it grew out of its most generous and loving view of God. Christianity is our close cousin who gave us a great gift.*

After:

- *In our session, we learned that many Christians understand sin as “missing the mark.” Rather than seeing sin as an inherently corrupt part of every human, this view sees it as moments when humans “aim” for goodness but “miss the target.” Ask your youth to tell you about the “miss the mark” game we played to engage this idea.*

For You:

- *Spend some time enriching your own understanding of Christianity. Check out Stephen Prothero’s video on Christianity. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0jqabIVoT4>*
- *Also widen and/or challenge your own view of who a Christian is by getting to know Shane Claiborne, a progressive Christian who puts a compelling spin on the ideas of salvation and God’s kingdom. Here are two videos for you to watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOKGZZzOkF0> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Byz7aat9a-l>*

Pre-Session To Do List:

- Send out the Dinner and Drive Time Tip. See above.
- Create this week's graffiti board. Core question: What is Christianity?
- Make sure you have the technology needed to play the YouTube videos that are part of this session.
- Prepare the "chemical reactions"/ tea bag elements illustrating the conservative concept of sin.
- Make a goal and collect some balls for the "Missing the Mark" game.
- Make copies of Handout #3 for the Parable of the Good Samaritan skit.
- Gather some Bibles to read the original Good Samaritan story.

Session
Getting a View of the Terrain:
Christianity

Entering - Graffiti Board Writing

As youth enter the room invite them to engage the graffiti board. Encourage symbols, words, drawings. Anything that represents what they know about Christianity or any experience they have had with it.

This Month's Core Graffiti Board Question:
What is Christianity?

Gathering & Centering - Worship (10 min)

Centering Sound

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). Ring the bell/bowl/chimes. Once the sound ends, pause for a moment of silence and then end by saying "Amen" or blessing words of your own.

Lighting the Chalice

*We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us
back to our deepest self,
back to each other,
And back to life's gifts and joy.*

Welcome & Lead-In to Centering

Leader talking points:

- Welcome to Map Sunday and our exploration of this month's religion: Christianity.
- Map Sunday is when we "survey" the religion and use our "binoculars/lenses" to get a glimpse of it before we make our visit and experience it directly, and more fully.
- A central experience for Christians is the experience of being loved and accepted by God just as you are. To honor and get a feel for this, we're going to begin today with a song by a Christian musician celebrating what it feels like to be accepted as a "child of God."
- As you listen to the song, reflect on those times in your life where you've felt accepted for who you are. Think of someone in your life that has accepted you and believed in you in a way that has made you feel like you are special or unique. Who helped you notice and be proud of something unique about yourself? (Give some examples: your singing voice, your smile, your sense of humor, your athleticism, your smarts, etc.)
- Let's listen and reflect.

Music For Centering

No Longer Slaves - Steffany Frizzell Gretzinger

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYB_mEJtTI&list=RDaYB_mEJtTI

This version is best if watched, since it has the lyrics on the screen. But it is the longer version and you will need to stop it early. Good places to stop are minute 3:40 or minute 6:10.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehpC5GN26f4>

This version is best if you are just listening. It is shorter and more intimate, but there aren't words on the screen.

Thematic Check-in

Invite the group, if comfortable, to share the name of the person in their life that helped them feel accepted for who they are and notice something special about themselves.

After the sharing, leader expresses gratitude for everyone's sharing and for all those who help us feel accepted, seen and free.

Closing

"In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other and may we remember to lean into life's joy. Blessed be. Amen"

Extinguish the Chalice

Leader note: If you use a real flame, our advice is to extinguish it now to prevent accidental tipping over or pyro play with hot wax. If you use a tea light, you may wish to extinguish it at the end of the session during the closing words.

Reflecting - Graffiti Board Sharing (5 min.)

Invite reactions to the graffiti board. Instead of asking everyone to say more about what they put up, first ask the group if they see things they don't recognize? Then ask the person who wrote it on the board to explain. Help the group notice commonalities. Invite those who have Christian connections to share their knowledge.

Taking in the Terrain: A Glimpse of Christianity through the Crossing Paths Binoculars

Introduction (3 min.)

Leader notes: Explain that the focus of today is to “get a glimpse” of the world of Christianity. Stress that there is no way to capture the fullness of these rich religions in a session or two. So today is about impressions and partial views and learning a bit about Christianity before our visit. Remember the blind men and the elephant? We should never let our exposure to one small part of the elephant lead us to believing we have full understanding. Also remember our second practice of welcoming: “always be curious” - i.e. always be open and never assume you understand something fully.

I. Sizing Up the Terrain & Locating it on the Map (3 min)

You can keep this simple or get creative. The easiest and more time-efficient approach is to just share the basic facts. If you want to take it to the next level, consider getting a map for your room to capture and compare the size and location of the various religions.

When

Founded around 33 C.E.

How Many?

Christianity is the largest religion in the world with 2.18 billion adherents worldwide, Christians make up about 32% of the world population. For every one UU, there are 1,050 Christians. The number of Christians in the world equals about 6.5 times the U.S. population.

Where

25.7% in Europe

24.4% in Latin America

23.8% in Africa

13.2% in Asia and Pacific Region

12.3% in North America

II. Symbol (5 min)

Cross or Crucifix

Explain

First talk about what crucifixion is. Here are some resources:

About Crucifixion

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion>

How crucifixion was used

<http://www.newsweek.com/how-romans-used-crucifixion-including-jesus-political-weapon-318934>

Then move on to the meanings of the cross. Begin by talking about the meaning that is most likely known - i.e. that it symbolizes how Jesus was put to death for our sins, that because humans were bad (“sinful”) they were deserving of punishment. But Jesus took on that punishment for humans. Think about you getting grounded because you got into trouble, but a friend volunteers to serve that punishment for you, allowing you to be “set free.”

However, go on to note that this is only one meaning of the symbol. [Other Christians](#) see it differently. Here are three other meanings:

1. It is a symbol of the ability we all have to transform (i.e. to “die and rise again”), to go through hard things and recover and bounce back. People who believe this wear the cross as a reminder that God will always show up and give them the strength to handle and recover from life’s challenges and disappointments.
2. It is a symbol that reminds Christians that God is with those who suffer. Instead of being a God that sits on a throne and rules over people, the cross is a way of saying that God cares more about being present with those who are outcast, oppressed, poor or in pain. In a way, God cares more about the “losers” than the “winners.” People who believe this wear the cross as a reminder that they too should look out for, help and take the side of those in need.
3. It is a symbol that you are accepted by God as you are - i.e. you are “blessed” and loved by God. God is not angry at you for being imperfect but loves humans despite their mistakes and flaws. People who believe this wear the cross as a reminder that God loves them and so they should love themselves.

The Motion of the Cross: Share how the cross is also a motion that represents the trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost - i.e. show how Christians “cross themselves.” There are many different versions of the cross [online](#) if you want to explore. Explain how doing this is connected to the meanings above: as a reminder that God will give you strength in times of need (that’s why people cross themselves before a scary moment or sporting event) and as a reminder that they are blessed (when a priest does the motion of a cross over dead people or people who come forward in church to bless them).

Engage

Learn how to cross yourself.

Share the symbolism of the cross in your own words, based on the background information above. Invite the group to watch the below video and then practice how to cross themselves.

Three Ways to Cross Yourself

<http://www.wikihow.com/Cross-Yourself>

Optional Add On: Find someone (maybe even you) to tell the story of what the cross meant to them and why wearing it was meaningful. Many UUs were once Christian and likely have positive stories of what the cross symbolized for them. Bring this section to life by asking them to join you to share or have them tell you their story and get permission to share it with your youth.

III. The Problem and The Solution (35 min)

Sin & Salvation

Explain

Engaging Christianity's understanding of sin and salvation can be challenging for some UUs, especially when talking about sin. Since UUs reject the traditional idea of sin and because some of us were wounded by the idea when we were growing up, we have a natural bias against it. So it will be important to stress the goal of understanding and discourage judgement. Address this explicitly with your youth, but also remind them about our practices of "be open" and "be an appreciative listener." Approaching Christianity with a beginner's mind will not only help your youth find respect for the traditional idea of sin and salvation, but also realize that the traditional idea is only one interpretation of it.

We suggest you emphasize that Christians have debated (and continue to [debate](#)) the meaning of sin. But we also suggest that you simplify the diversity of views by sharing just the two basic liberal-conservative views:

- sin as actions that "miss the mark" and can be corrected by following Jesus' example (liberal) and
- sin as an inherent "stain" and inborn urge to disobey God and do bad things that can only be corrected by Jesus "paying our debt" and "dying for us." (conservative).

When explaining salvation, we suggest you explain that liberal and conservative Christians approach Jesus' salvific power using [two very different frames](#).

- Liberals/progressives tend to think of Jesus as an **example** that models the way to "[abundant life](#)." (God's kingdom of live here on earth).
- Conservatives tend to think of Jesus as a **sacrifice** that provided a way to "eternal life" (heaven after death).

Here's a very simple summary of both sin and salvation:

Liberal: Sin = actions that miss the mark; Salvation = abundant life by living like Jesus did (heaven on earth)

Conservative: Sin = stain and imperfection; Salvation = eternal life earned by Jesus' sacrifice (achieving heaven after our time on earth)

Leader Resources (Background and support for leaders so they can explain in their own words)

The many definitions of sin

<https://progressivechristianity.org/resources/what-about-sin/>

Two Ways to Think About Jesus

http://www.progressivechristianitybook.com/Chapter_2.html

Progressive Christianity and Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypHNvW5B5HI>

The Kingdom of Heaven will be ON Earth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MM4STAugd1U>

Reclaiming Salvation for Today

<https://progressivechristianity.org/resources/reclaiming-salvation-for-today/>

Original Sin

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/originalsin_1.shtml

Engage: Making the Conservative View Come Alive!

Stress the Emotional Relationship to Salvation When Explaining: Conservative Christians tend to focus on Jesus's sacrifice for us. This sacrifice is a joyful thing for Christians because it erases our debt from doing bad things and earns us a sense freedom here on earth and eternal life after we die. While the idea of God requiring Jesus to die for us may be hard for our youth to personally understand, it is important to help them focus on the feeling of freedom and joy that this brings to Christians. For many Christians, this is great gift, actually the greatest gift.

Use one of the object lessons below to illustrate it: Instead of verbally explaining the conservative view, make it come alive with one of the below object lessons:

Jesus' Death Object Lesson: "Absorbing Our Sin"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFNOQvL9OSo>

Jesus, Sin and You ("Dissolving Our Sin")

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z_SMrnEial (see instructions below the video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkfH8cmt5QI> (see instructions below the video)

The Tea Bag Gospel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4Fqu5fFIGM>

Leader note: When presenting these activities you will need to adjust some of the language. Use your own judgement when doing so.

Engage: Making the Liberal/Progressive View Come Alive!

Missing the Mark Game (10-15 min)



Use this game to explain the liberal view of sin and salvation. It's a fun way to engage the concept of sin as "missing the mark." Explain that many Christians believe that we miss the mark of goodness because we've "turned our backs on God's way" and instead focus on other priorities such as ego, money, selfishness and status. The "cure" for this is "repentance," which comes from the Greek word "metanoia," meaning "to turn." So if you want to get better at "hitting the mark," you can't simply try harder, you must intentionally "turn around." As this game wonderfully illustrates!

Directions: Set up a trash can or box as a goal/target. Assign a toe mark at a short distance from the goal/target. Invite the group to stand at the toe mark and try to sink a ball, wadded newspaper, or whatever object you designate. But, have them do this *with their backs turned toward the target*. Playfully call this the "sinful stance."

Go on to make a game out of it. You can divide into teams, with one group having to stand in the "sinful stance" and the other getting to face the can (the "repented position"). Or you can have each group take turns throwing from each position. Or you can play cooperatively by the entire group doing it from one stance and then the other and seeing which stance allows greater points.

IV. Core Story (35 min)

The Parable of the Good Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37 (30 min)

So far this session introduces youth to Christianity through the lens of statistics, symbol and the problem & solution. We now turn to the lens of a core story of the faith. While it is difficult to pick one story to best represent Christianity, The Good Samaritan is a perfect one to explain Christian ethics. Its unexpected twist also provides an important lesson and challenge for all of us!

Explain

Leader Resources (background so you can introduce it in your own words)

This parable exemplifies the radical message Jesus brought into the world. It is not simply a story about "being nice" or helping those in need. It is about a love that calls us to cross borders, challenge our stereotypes and open ourselves to the goodness in those we sometimes write off as "no good opponents." It is about loving people who we believe don't deserve it. It is a caring for people who are opponents, enemies or even threats. Christians believe that God loves them even though they are sinful and don't deserve it. Having received this undeserving love, they are compelled to offer the same to others. We UUs honor this radical form of loving in

our sources, which honor “Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.” Bottom line: Forget the idea that this is a nice little story about making time for kindness; this is a bold story that challenges us to have the courage to cross boundaries and challenge assumptions in the name of love.

More background on the parable:

Jesus’s Most Radical Parable - Updated for the 21st Century

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christian-chiakulas/jesus-s-most-radical-parable_b_10295418.html

A Radical Perspective on the Parable of the Good Samaritan

<https://www.johnlaurits.com/fiction-prose/essays/a-new-perspective-on-the-parable-of-the-good-samaritan/>

"The Parable of the Good Samaritan" Speech by Dr. Martin Luther King

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geX-a5PqxaY>

Engage: Putting Ourselves in the Parable!

The Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37, NIV

This parable is often thought of as a sentimental story suitable for young children about being nice to each other. A deeper dive suggests the power of Jesus’ teaching. This activity invites the group to re-enact the parable by inserting themselves into the story and giving it a contemporary spin. Stop along the way to explore and engage its call to courageously let love trump our stereotypes and biases.

Part One - Mad Libs to make it current

Before learning the story, invite the group to think of 2 people or types of people who they admire or consider to be examples of “good people” or “my kind of people.” Give examples to stimulate their imagination: The UUA President, my minister, Bernie Sanders, a Greenpeace activist.

Then think of 1 person or type of person whose views they oppose.

Part Two - Choosing Roles

Invite 2 group members to be in the roles of admired people.

Invite 1 group member to take the role of the person whose views they oppose.

Stop for Reflection: Ask each of the actors to share how they feel being in these roles. End by acknowledging gratitude for the courage of all three actors. It’s not easy to take the stage.

Part Three - Acting it Out: Round One

Invite the youth to pick up the bibles and see who can find the story first. Tell them the Bible verse and let them hunt: Luke 10:25-37.

Invite volunteers for the three roles of priest, Levite and Samaritan.

Also, needed are these cast members: narrator, a lawyer, Jesus, a man, robbers, donkey, innkeeper

Read and act out the parable using the traditional roles.

Part Four - Acting it Out: Round Two

(Part Four is also copied below as Handout #3 since the youth will need the script in their hands while doing the activity.)

Now replace the priest and Levite actor with the two admired actors. And replace the Samaritan with the non-admired actor.

Read and act out the story again, replacing the names of priest, Levite and Samaritan with these three contemporary people, stopping for reflection as directed below:

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you read it?"

The expert answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But the expert wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Stop for Reflection - How are you feeling, Lawyer?

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

A _____ (fill in the blank with one admired person) happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

Stopping Point - how are you feeling, actor? Why might you have passed by?

So too, a _____, (fill in the blank with another admired person) when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

Stop for Reflection: Admired actors, why did both of you pass by?

But a _____, (fill in the blank with the person whose views you oppose) as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Stop for Reflection: Unadmired Actor, how do you feel? Why did you stop?

Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

Jesus: "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Group Reflection: Engage the group in discussion using questions such as:

- Actors, say a bit more about how your feelings and thoughts changed while you were acting out your parts?
- What did everyone feel as they watched this version of the story?
- How do you feel about the unadmired person right now?
- What if your minister walked in right now and called the unadmired person “a *real UU*”?
- Have you ever withheld help from a person because they weren’t part of your friend circle?

Graffiti Board - Filling in the Gaps (3 min.)

Invite the youth to add a picture or word to the graffiti board, picking one thing that engaged them most about today’s session. What did they learn that they think is most important to add.

Remember to use markers that are a different color than was used to fill or the board at the start of the session, so you can continue to track learning over the sessions.

Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (1 min)

Thank the youth for their participation this week. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the session you just did with them.

Remind the youth what is happening next week and make sure they know what they have to do ahead of time. Note one thing that you are particularly looking forward to.

Closing Words (1 min)

“In the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

Extinguish the chalice if you haven’t already done so.

Week 2

Tack Sunday

What do Christians believe about being a people of sanctuary?

Purpose

- Introduce and engage the monthly theme of sanctuary.
- Explore the connection between our monthly theme of sanctuary and Christianity.

Preparation & Leader Notes

Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents prior to the meeting):

Before:

- Explore one or more of these videos about the sanctuary movement with your youth:
 - *A Christian Perspective on the Sanctuary Movement:* <https://vimeo.com/189690725>
 - *Sanctuary Through the Eyes of a UU Minister:* <https://vimeo.com/156501172>
 - *Youth Speak Out Against Deportation*
John's Story: <https://vimeo.com/88108249>
Hannan's Story: <https://vimeo.com/88694918>

After:

- We talked about church sanctuaries as "housing the holy" and explored various ways different Christian denominations design worship space to help people connect with their central values. We then had the youth engage this idea by creating a stained-glass window of their core values. Invite your youth to share their "window into what's sacred" with you.

For You:

- Spend some time thinking about the role of sanctuary in your own life. How do you make space for the holy? Where do you find sacred space?
- Dig deeper into the sanctuary movement and learn how our UUA is engaging the work by exploring these resources:
 - *Inside the Sanctuary Movement*
<https://relevantmagazine.com/feature/inside-the-sanctuary-movement/>
 - *UUA Sanctuary Toolkit:*
https://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org/uploads/7/6/9/1/76912017/interfaith_sanctuary_toolkit.pdf

Pre-Session To Do List:

- Send out the Dinner and Drive Time Tip. See above.
- Make sure you have the technology needed to play the YouTube videos that are part of this session.
- Check tokens and Tack Bowl to make sure they are complete.
- Make copies of Stained Glass templates for drawing.

Session

What Does It Mean to be a People of sanctuary... from a Christian perspective?

Entering - Graffiti Board Writing

Same Core Question: What is Christianity?

As youth enter the room, direct them to check out the graffiti board as a way to remind themselves of what they've been learning. Using a new color for the markers, invite them to add a new item or embellish an item they've already put up.

Gathering & Centering - Worship (30 min including silence)

Centering Sound

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). Ring the bell/bowl/chimes. Once the sound ends, pause for a moment of silence and then end by saying "Amen" or blessing words of your own.

Lighting the Chalice

*We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us
back to our deepest self,
back to each other,
And back to life's gifts and joy.*

Welcome

Suggested Script/Talking Points:

- Welcome to Tack Sunday and to our continued exploration of this month's religion: Christianity. Today we are going to explore - or "tack up" with - how the Christians think about the monthly theme we are exploring here at our church: sanctuary.
- One way Christians think about sanctuary is by trusting Jesus to be with them ("offering them sanctuary") in the midst of the storms of life. There are several parables, or stories, about Jesus as shelter from the storm in the New Testament of the Bible.
- Our meditation song is about this. As you listen, think about what or who gives you sanctuary or shelter in the midst of the storm of life?
- So take a deep breath and let's now listen to the song ...

Music For Centering

"Oceans" by Hillsong | Performed with Dance
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFNp06eB1PU>

Thematic Check-in

Invite the group to share, in a sentence, their answer to the reflection question: When the "oceans rise" and the "waters get threatening" what or who do you call out to or hold on to, to find peace?

After the sharing, leader expresses gratitude for everyone's sharing and willingness to work with the practice of sitting in silence.

Closing

"In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life's joy. Blessed be. Amen"

Extinguish the Chalice

Leader note: If you use a flame, our advice is to extinguish it now to prevent accidental tipping over or pyro play with hot wax. If you use a tea light, you may wish to extinguish it at the end of the session during the closing words.

Session Focus: Christian Views on Sanctuary

Below are two different angles that Christianity takes on the meaning of sanctuary. Use these suggested activities to make these two views come alive.

Activity #1 The Sacred Call to Offer Sanctuary to the Stranger

Explain

The idea of offering sanctuary is rooted in the Bible, maybe most clearly in this passage from Leviticus:

"When the alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 19:33-34 and 24:22

[Our UUA](#) also provide this helpful short history of the idea and practice of offering sanctuary:

"The original concept of religious spaces as sanctuary for refugees is rooted in Judaism. The ancient Hebrew people allowed temples and even whole cities to declare themselves places of refuge for persons accused of a crime which they may not have committed. This practice allowed those wrongfully accused to escape swift and harsh retribution until they could receive a fair trial. In the late Roman Empire, fugitives sometimes found refuge in Christian churches. Later, during the medieval period, the English common law permitted an accused felon to seek sanctuary in a church, and then choose either to submit to trial or to confess and leave the country."

Here are some additional resources for you to explore to help you explain the sanctuary movement in your own words:

A Christian Perspective on the Sanctuary Movement:

<https://vimeo.com/189690725>

Inside the Sanctuary Movement

<https://relevantmagazine.com/feature/inside-the-sanctuary-movement/>

UUA Sanctuary Toolkit:

https://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org/uploads/7/6/9/1/76912017/interfaith_sanctuary_toolkit.pdf

Engage

Choose one or more of the following videos to show to the youth:

A Christian Perspective on the Sanctuary Movement:

<https://vimeo.com/189690725>

Sanctuary Through the Eyes of a UU Minister

<https://vimeo.com/156501172>

Youth Speak Out Against Deportation

John's Story: <https://vimeo.com/88108249>

Hannan's Story: <https://vimeo.com/88694918>

Before watching the videos of your choice, invite the youth to try to identify one moment or phrase in the video that most strikes them. Have them share that compelling moment or phrase after watching.

Whichever video you choose, also use the following questions to help your youth engage the topic personally:

- When has someone offered you protection?
- Do you think youth have a special perspective on the issue of immigration and offering sanctuary? How might youth be able to share some wisdom that adults might miss?

Activity #2 Housing the Holy

Explain

Explain that Christians call their worship spaces sanctuaries. In ancient times, these spaces were seen as the places that God's presence would be most strongly experienced. You might think of this as "housing the holy." In more modern times, Christians think of these special spaces as pointing to or reminding people of what's most important. Different Christian groups have different core values, so they design their spaces differently. Their unique sanctuaries house their unique values.

Engage

Activity #1: What kind of holiness is being housed?

To learn more about this and to have a bit of fun, share the various pictures found in the slideshow below and have the youth guess what kind of values or messages the various Christian sanctuaries are trying to "house" and remind people of. What values are reflected in the architecture and design? What does the space and design say about how to find God and the holy?

Housing The Holy Slideshow Link:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1AzT0Xw8lhifVBkw8KNAr164J113yW5zZeOVA8xGKVyA/edit?usp=sharing>

Be prepared to help coach the youth about what to look for. For instance, how the simplicity of the Quaker sanctuary encourages the focus to be inward and find God within. Or how the absence of pulpit in a Quaker

sanctuary says a lot about who speaks for the holy and how to hear it. What do the high ornate ceilings of cathedrals say? Or the big screens with the preacher's face in mega church sanctuaries? What kind of value or message about the holy is conveyed by stained glass that can only be lit up by light from outside?

Activity #2: A Window into What's Sacred for You?

A key piece of many sanctuaries is their stained-glass windows. They quite literally are a window into what's holy for their churches. Playing off this idea, invite the youth to make their own windows into what's sacred and of value to them. Use a basic template like [this one](#) and have the youth fill in the various parts of the window with images that represent their values or what they consider holy. End by having them share or invite conversation as they are drawing. Also encourage the youth to put their drawings in a place they will see it in the coming weeks as a way of reminding themselves of the values they want to keep front and center.

Graffiti Board - Filling in the Gaps (3 min)

Invite the youth to add a picture or word to the graffiti board, picking one thing that engaged them most about today's session. What did they learn that they think is most important to add?

Remember to use markers that are a different color than was used to fill or the board at the start of the session, so you can continue to track learning over the sessions.

Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (5 min)

Thank the youth for their participation this week. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the session you just did with them.

Remind the youth that next week is THE VISIT! Share a bit about where you are going, go over logistics and stress any rules that will need observed-e.g., let them know about clothing expectations.

Tacking up our Eight Practices of Welcome

Hand out the list of the Eight Practices of Welcome, Handout #1. Remind the youth that we are using them during our visit next week and will be reviewing how well we do. So ask them to please make time to think about them during the week. Which one do you particularly need to remember and work on for yourself?

Choosing an Interview Question (either now, or before you leave for your visit on Summit Sunday)

If you are able to include a conversation with a leader as part of your visit, we suggest that you bring questions for the youth to ask. We have included interview questions at the end of this packet as part of the preparation for the visit, labeled Handout #2. We suggest that you ask the youth to look over the list and each pick a question they are most interested in asking at the visit. If none of the questions interest them, invite them to develop their own. The other approach that works well is to send the list of questions to the interviewee and invite them to pick the 5-6 that interest them the most.

Closing Words (1 min.)

"In the days ahead, May the ropes be with you. May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life's joy. Blessed be. Amen"

Week 3

Summit Sunday

(The Visit)

Purpose

- Visit a Christian church.
- Engage and use our Eight Practices of Welcoming

Preparation & Leader Notes

Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents prior to the meeting):

Before:

- Talk to your youth about the 8 practices of welcoming and how they might use them in their visit.
- Remind youth to bring an offering. We recommend an amount of \$_____.
- Remind the youth about any dress requirements. [**Leader note: tailor this bullet to the visit**]

After:

- Ask your youth to share their favorite part of the visit. Ask them if anything surprised them about their visit and led to them changing their mind about the religion.
- Reflect with them on your own experiences with and understanding of Christianity. Be sure to talk about how your understanding and attitudes have changed over the years. Be sure to model a gracious spirit and talk about what you appreciate about Christianity.

For You:

- Carve out meditative time to watch and reflect on this Christian video from The Art of Examen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7-ODAMLZr0>. Use the questions lifted up in the video for further meditation throughout the week: How has your sense of purpose overtaken your prioritization of people? Have you become too important to be “interruptible”? Too busy to entertain angels unaware?

Pre-Visit To Do List:

- Share Interview Questions in Handout #2 in advance with the faith leader, if there will be an opportunity to interview them afterwards. If the youth haven’t picked which questions from Handout #2 they want to ask, invite the faith leader to pick the 4-5 questions from the list that most interest them rather than asking them to answer them all.
- Arrange for and prepare the drivers.
 - Make sure the drivers:
 - Have the address of the destination and a phone number to call if there are problems.
 - Have a list of who is in their car and their emergency contact numbers.
 - Are familiar with and comply with congregational safety guidelines, such as a license and proof of insurance on record.
- Make sure to collect signed permission slips from group members, with all relevant contact information and emergency numbers. Make a copy to leave at the church, and a copy to bring on the trip.
- Let parents know the approximate time of return and post it on the door of your meeting room.
- Prepare to post a “We Will Return Soon” note in case someone comes late, such as “Sorry we missed you. The Crossing Paths group is visiting _____. We will return at _____.
- Bring offering money for each group member or remind them to bring some

- Consider purchasing or bringing a gift for your host. Perhaps an interfaith [poster](#) or [calendar](#).
- Make sure you have collected and clarified all the rules & expectations for your visit. You will share this information before you leave your church on Summit Sunday. Rules and expectations include:
 - the name of the faith community you are visiting. (e.g., First Congregational Church of...)
 - the religion's name for their house of worship. (e.g., temple, church, mosque...)
 - what the religious leader is called and how they should be addressed (e.g., "They are called a minister and they should be addressed as Rev. Jones or Pastor Jones.")
 - other behaviors that should be observed (e.g., expected dress, silence in certain spaces, when one can and when one shouldn't participate in a ritual, etc.)
 - When and if it is appropriate to take pictures with phones. (Remember that we want to have some select moments when photos are gathered so they can be used in the end of year scrapbook or video)

Session - Visit

Before You Go

Before you leave, gather as a group at your home church and do the following:

Remembering to be a Good Guest:

Leader reviews basic information and guidelines about how to be respectful during the visit:

1. Share the **name of the faith community** you are visiting. (e.g., First Congregational Church of...)
2. Share the religion's **name of their house of worship**. (e.g., temple, church, mosque...)
3. Tell them what the **religious leader is called** and how they should be addressed (e.g., "They are called a minister and they should be addressed as Rev. Jones or Pastor Jones.")
4. Review other **behaviors that should be observed** (e.g., silence in certain spaces, when one can and when one shouldn't participate in a ritual, etc.)
5. Make sure everyone's **dress is appropriate** and honors the expectations of the tradition you are visiting. If someone has forgotten, address the situation according to the understandings you've made ahead of time.
6. Share when and if it is appropriate to take **pictures with phones**. (Remember that we want to have some strategic moments when photos are gathered so they can be used in the end of year scrapbook or video)
7. Share expectations about **texting and use of smartphones**.
8. Remind them that **they are guests** and will be representing Unitarian Universalism to your hosts
9. Go over the **travel plans** and rules:
 - Assign participants to a car and make sure they know to return in the same car.
 - Be respectful of their drivers and cars.
 - Give emergency contact numbers to drivers.

Packing Up Our Eight Practices:

Stand together in a circle and share a blessing based on the Eight Practices of Welcoming.

We recommend that you print out this blessing, so the youth have the Eight Practices physically available. Here's one version of a blessing you could do. Do it as a group by each person taking turns reading one line:

Leader: Let us take a breath and pause before we go.

[PAUSE IN SILENCE]

*With our feet firmly grounded here at our church home, we are grateful.
Here we find community and comfort.
Here we also encounter the call to go out, explore and become more.*

*On our journey today, let us take our practices and values with us
so we can notice and receive all the gifts offered to us.*

May we remember to...

- 1. Be fully present*
- 2. Be curious*
- 3. Be open to being changed*
- 4. Be comfortable with discomfort*
- 5. Be an appreciative listener*
- 6. Be light-hearted*
- 7. Be gentle when mistakes are made*
- 8. And, be ourselves*

*With all these commitments tucked tightly in our hearts and heads,
Amen, Let's go!*

The Visit

Have a great time!

Don't forget about collecting pictures for our future scrapbook/memory wall/video project. At the very least get a picture of the youth standing in front of the house of worship.

Have the youth text or email you 1-2 of their favorite pictures that they took. Save for the spring scrapbook/memory wall/video project.

After the Visit (just before everyone heads home)

Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (1 min.)

Thank the youth for their participation. Praise something about how the youth handled themselves. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the visit.

Remind the youth that next week is Lake Sunday. Lift up anything they need to do or think about ahead of time.

Closing Words

“In the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

Week 4

Lake Sunday

(Reflecting on the Visit)

Purpose

- Reflect on the visit.
- Review our use of the Eight Practices of Welcoming

Preparation & Leader Notes

Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents prior to the meeting):

Before:

- *Ask your youth how the graffiti board is going. Ask them how it's been changing over the past few weeks. Invite them to share what they are planning to put on it this week to represent what they learned from the visit.*

After:

- *Ask your youth to share which of the 8 Practices of Welcoming were hardest them personally.*
- *Ask them to share something about the graffiti board. They have been adding to each week. Ask them how the board has changed? What's interesting about how it has changed and grown? How does it show that the group's understanding of Christianity has evolved?*

For You:

- *Talk with your spouse/partner or a friend about how your own view of Christianity has evolved over the month as a result of your conversations with your youth.*

Pre-Session To Do List:

- Get a thank-you card for everyone to sign.
- Review the rope activities. Make sure the ropes are available.
- Choose a few favorite games, as suggested.
- Prepare a snack to eat together, as suggested.
- (optional) Invite a guest with a Christian background or experience, perhaps identified in the Parent Orientation, or from a request to the congregation at large. Share Handout #2 with them and let them know the youth will be asking them the questions listed.
- (optional) Make plans to attend the adult service or part of the service as a way of exploring the monthly theme of Sanctuary.

Session

Entering - Graffiti Board Writing

Using the same graffiti board from past weeks, invite those entering to add words, pictures or impressions that represent what stuck out for them about last week's visit.

Gathering & Centering - Worship (10 min)

Centering Sound

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). Ring the bell/bowl/chimes. Once the sound ends, pause for a moment of silence and then end by saying "Amen" or blessing words of your own.

Lighting the Chalice

*We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us
back to our deepest self,
back to each other,
And back to life's gifts and joy.*

Welcome

Suggested welcome script: "Welcome to Lake Sunday! Lake Sunday is about "coming back from our journey - back down the mountain - and reflecting on our trip." I'm so excited for us to talk about our visit. To express the joy of completing the journey, we'll share a fun video for our worship. As you enjoy the video, let's pass around and sign the thank you card, and share one thing from our visit we enjoyed."

Music for Centering

Farmer Dancing

<http://people.com/human-interest/this-video-of-a-farmer-dancing-to-sia-is-the-best-thing-youll-see-all-day/>

Thank you Check-in

While the video is playing, pass around a **thank-you card** and have the youth sign it and share one thing they enjoyed during their visit.

After the sharing, leader expresses gratitude for everyone's sharing.

Closing

"In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life's joy. Blessed be. Amen"

Extinguish the Chalice

Leader note: If you use a flame, our advice is to extinguish it now to prevent accidental tipping over or pyro play with hot wax. If you use a tea light, you may wish to extinguish it at the end of the session during the closing words.

Reflecting on the Visit (40 min)

Questions to guide the discussion:

Initial Reactions

- 1. What surprised you?** What was completely new? What didn't you expect?
- 2. What was the most interesting part?** What was "cool"? When were you having the most fun?
- 3. What didn't you fully understand?** What confused you? What do you want to learn more about (Leader note: Answer the questions/confusions if you can. Or see if the group can help. If time, look up the answer on a computer/phone. If no time for that, encourage the youth to look it up with their parents or promise to look it up for them)

Personal Application

- 4. How did it make you think about your own life differently?** How do you wish your life was more like the Christians you met?

Lead the group in discussion about their personal takeaways. Invite them to think about how the visit and all the learning of the past weeks gave them a challenge for their own life. Give them some example questions to help them reflect: Did the idea of salvation as "turning around" make you realize there are something that you need to turn away from or turn toward? Did the parable of the Good Samaritan make you realize you want to do a better job of keeping your eyes out for a way to heal the world every day? Did our discussion of the sanctuary movement leave you wanting to learn more about how to help support immigrants in our country? Remember our "housing the holy" session where we drew pictures our of values on a stained-glass window? Did drawing that help you remember to act better and stay true to your values?

Consider sharing your own personal takeaways first to model and help them think about this. How did the visit and learning invite you to think differently or want to make a change or add something more to your life?

Engaging the Graffiti Board - Stepping back and seeing how far we've come! (10 min)

- Gather around the graffiti board or take it down and bring it into the circle.
- Pause to see if there are any last things to add.
- Invite reactions and discussion
 1. **What strikes you as you look at all the colors?** Were there some weeks where we seemed to learn more than others? Are there more words than pictures? What does that mean?
 2. **Is there anything on the board that needs corrected?** Any "understanding" that was incomplete or misunderstood?
 3. **What 2-3 things seem to best describe the essence of Christianity for you?** If you had to explain Christianity to someone else, which 2-3 items on the board would you talk about?
- Take some selfies! Individual and as a group. Remember to remind the youth that we will be using these pictures in the spring to create a scrapbook, memory wall or video to document our journey this year.

Eight Practices Review

Remind the youth that Crossing Paths is not just about visiting and learning about other religions. It's also about learning skills and practices to better engage new people and new ideas throughout our entire life. So explain that you are reviewing how well the group used the 8 Practices not just to "grade ourselves" but also to push ourselves to develop them as "life practices."

There are a number of ways to review the practices:

1. **As a group:** Have the group evaluate itself as a whole by going through the list one by one and asking the group to share when they did each practice well and when they could have done it a bit better.
2. **As individuals:** Ask each person to pick one practice they feel they did well and one practice they wish they had done better and want to work on. Take turns having each youth share their answers.

Testing Our Ropes

It has been a while since we tested our ropes for "Many mountains, many paths." Do you remember what they stand for?

Invite the group to share what they remember, then review the meanings of the ropes as the 3 lifelines.

Reviewing the three lifelines of Unitarian Universalism

Review the UU theological framework that undergirds Crossing Paths by putting the following script in your own words:

"In Crossing Paths, we explore various religious traditions through different lenses, which we call "binoculars" in keeping with our mountaineering metaphor. These lenses or binoculars include such things as a faith's symbol, rituals, or holy days. One of the most important lens is how each faith defines "the problem in the world" and "the solution" to that problem. For instance, Buddhism sees the problem in the world as suffering and the solution is Nirvana or enlightenment. Christians see the problem in the world as sin and the solution as salvation.

To help us describe our unique UU way of looking at the world, Crossing Paths uses a framework that can be called a "theology of connection." Put simply, UU's over time have tended to see "separation" as the problem and "reconnection" as the solution. What grabs our attention and breaks our hearts is seeing how the world separates or disconnects people from their deepest selves, each other and life's gifts. And so UUs respond by helping people restore those three sacred connections. You might say, we offer people three "lifelines." These three lifelines are represented by the three ropes on our worship table. The ropes remind us that our faith reconnects us in three ways:

- A small thin rope that reminds us of the connection to our deepest self
- A circle rope that reminds us of the connection to each other and the interdependent web
- A long rope that reminds us of the connection to life's gifts and joy

We will keep these symbols in front of us all year to remind us of our religion's distinctiveness as we go out to explore and celebrate the distinctiveness of other religions.

Does anyone remember how this symbolism is also represented in our chalice?

- The flame represents our inner light and connection to our deepest self.
- The cup represents the container of community and our connection to each other.
- The circle around the chalice symbolizes life itself and the way it surrounds us, heals us and offers us a sense of belonging and home.

Each week, we will continue to highlight these three symbols in our Chalice Lighting and our worship Closing Words:

Chalice Lighting

*We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us
back to our deepest self,
back to each other,
And back to life's gifts and joy.*

Closing Words

*"In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with us.** May we stay close to our inner and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. May we remember to lean into life's joy. - Blessed be. Amen"*

And now let's have some fun with our ropes!

The Ties that Bind - The 2nd Lifeline & Helping Each Other Get Out of the Mud

Remind them about the 3 ropes - the 3 lifelines - and how they help reconnect:

- Back to our deepest self
- Back to each other
- Back to life's gifts

Pull out the "second lifeline" - the circle rope. Remind them that this symbolizes the connections that bind us together in community, friendship and support. Stress how these connections to each other help "pick us up when we fall" or "get us get us out of the mud."

Then have the group stand in a circle and lay the rope out on the inside of the circle, touching each person's feet. Have everyone squat down, reach forward and grasp the rope with both hands. Have them all lean back simultaneously until there is tension to the rope. Then have them slowly work as a group to rise up together.

Group Building Games and Activities (10 min)

Letting Our Hair Down Together!

Leader Note: Too often we gallop along, and don't take time to savor the activities we most enjoyed. Use this session to take the opportunity to reinforce group-building. An important goal for young youth is to create a peer group of friends in the congregation. When the youth pull away from parents, we want them to pull towards their friends in their faith community. Games can provide the opportunities for making friends and creating a strong supportive peer group.

Collage Mural

Make a mural of a mountainous landscape that echoes the “Many Mountains, Many Paths” theme of Crossing Paths, and invite the group to add plants, animals, people, shelter, geology to it. Images may be hand drawn or cut out from magazines and calendars. Encourage each person to develop their corner, and also interact with what others are creating.

Long Rope

Play with the long rope, symbolizing the lifeline to remembering life's joys and gifts. Offer options depending on the familiarity, abilities and comfort of the group. Some will want to try jump rope, some will want to try limbo, some will want to go under the rope and try to grab it.

For Jump Rope:

1. Simple swing back and forth, not overhead, to practice jumping rhythm.
2. A few overhead turns, starting inside with the rope at the side of your feet.
3. Exiting or entering while the rope is turning.
4. Jump to a rhyme:

Not last night but the night before,
24 robbers came knocking at my door
I asked them what they wanted, and this is what they said:
Spanish Dancer do the splits, the twist
the turnaround and touch the ground, and out the back door
Spanish Dancer please come back, back, sit on a tack, read a book and do not look,
(jump with eyes closed, everyone counting out loud: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5... until you miss)

Elbow Tag - “There's always an elbow will to reach out, if we reach out to it!”

- Play Elbow Tag: <http://www.playworks.org/playbook/games/elbow-tag>
- Be sure to frame it as a way of thinking about the second lifeline/rope (“There's always an elbow will to reach out, if we reach out to it!”)

Jenga

<https://www.amazon.com/Hasbro-53557-Game-Jenga/dp/B000GBA60W>

Apples to Apples

https://www.amazon.com/Mattel-Apples-Party-Crazy-Combinations/dp/B00112CHCK/ref=sr_1_6?s=toys-and-games&ie=UTF8&qid=1504752773&sr=1-6&keywords=apples+to+apples+game

Eating together

Pick a playful snack to go along with all the games. Ropes of pasta, licorice, or grapes strung together? Fruit chalices of slices of melon, bananas, and grapes? Chocolate chalices of Tootsie Rolls, Reese's PB cup and a Hershey's Kiss flame?

Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (1 min.)

Thank the youth for their participation this week. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the session you just did with them.

Remind the youth what is happening next week: WE ARE STARTING A NEW RELIGION AND NEW THEME! Make sure they know what they have to do ahead of time. Note one thing that you are particularly looking forward to.

Closing Words

"In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with us.** May we stay close to our inner and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. May we remember to lean into life's joy. - Blessed be. Amen"

Extinguish the chalice if you haven't done it earlier.

ALTERNATIVES & ADD ONS

The options below can be used as alternative exercises to those above or as add ons if you have longer meeting times.

Option #1 - Interview

If you have time, consider inviting a congregant with a background in Christianity to visit and talk with the youth. You can do this after or before you reflect on your visit - both have advantages and disadvantages. Use Handout #2 Interview Questions.

Option #2 - Attend the Adult Service on Sanctuary

“Visiting” your own worship service can enrich the experience tremendously. If you usually meet during the service, consider changing and expanding your schedule for Lake Sunday, attending the service first then staying after to do the Lake Sunday session. You can go even deeper with this by asking your minister or ministers to come talk with the youth after the service about what they appreciate about Christianity and how they see U.U.s and Christians being similar and different when it comes to belief and their understanding of what it means to be a people of Sanctuary.

Handout #1
The Eight Practices of Welcoming Difference

1. Be fully present
2. Be curious
3. Be open to being changed
4. Be comfortable with discomfort
5. Be an appreciative listener
6. Be light-hearted
7. Be gentle (allow and heal mistakes)
8. Be yourself

Handout #2

Interview Questions

1. How has Christianity helped enrich, heal or deepen you?
2. What one or two things most distinguish you from other Christian traditions?
3. What does the cross symbolize for you?
4. How has Christianity influenced your understanding of “the divine”?
5. Who is your favorite Christian/biblical historical figure?
6. What is your favorite service, ritual or holiday of the Christian year? And why?
7. What is your favorite Christian poem or quote?
8. Do you have a spiritual practice? How has Christianity influenced your personal spiritual practices?
9. What sound or taste do you most associate with Christianity?
10. If you grew up Christian, what was your favorite thing about going to church as a teenager?
11. What are the major misconceptions out there about Christians? What do you wish others better understood?
12. Is there a particular Christian belief or perspective that you think is especially relevant to our culture and political climate right now? For instance, we learned a lot about what Christianity has to say about immigration and the sanctuary movement.
13. Our church’s monthly spiritual theme is “How are we a People of Sanctuary?” What does “Being a person of Sanctuary” mean to you? How has Christianity influenced that?
14. Do you have any questions for us?

Handout #3

Good Samaritan Role Play

Read and act out the story again, replacing the names of priest, Levite and Samaritan with the three contemporary people, stopping for reflection as directed below:

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you read it?"

The expert answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But the expert wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Stop for Reflection - How are you feeling, Lawyer?

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

A _____ (fill in the blank with one admired person) happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

Stopping Point - how are you feeling, actor? Why might you have passed by?

So too, a _____, (fill in the blank with another admired person) when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

Stop for Reflection: Admired actors, why did both of you pass by?

But a _____, (fill in the blank with the person whose views you oppose) as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Stop for Reflection: Unadmired Actor, how do you feel? Why did you stop?

Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

Jesus: "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

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To keep you inspired as a group leader, check out our
Soul Matters Facebook inspiration page:
<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

And our Soul Matters Spotify music playlists:
<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/spotify-lists.html>



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