



*Soul Matters*

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# Crossing Paths

Walking the Path of  
Buddhism

May 2019 - Curiosity

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# Welcome

Welcome to the Crossing Paths packet for May and our exploration of Buddhism. In addition to exploring Buddhism, this packet engages our youth with May's theme of "What Does It Mean to Be a People of Curiosity?"

Get ready for a rich journey this month. Buddhism is a diverse religion with a lot of ideas that will be new to the youth. Buddhism centers three deeply important human experiences: contemplation, compassion and a humble mind. These three values are not ones usually placed at the heart of our UU tradition. So not only will this month be one of learning some new things, but it might also be a time of discovering some new values for us to weave into our spiritual lives.

Buddhism has great stories. While we love all the stories in the traditions we have been exploring, the visual images conjured up in Buddhist stories are particularly memorable. Get ready to have the image of a strawberry and an overflowing teacup stuck in your head!

Finally, we lift up gratitude for the video of the Great Compassion Mantra by Ani Choying Drolma, used in the worship for Map Sunday. Like all Buddhist chants it fills us with transcendence, beauty, and connection to the energy of the universe.

On this note of connection, we hope this month's sessions leave you more deeply bound to each other and to the universe around us.

***Katie, on behalf of the entire Soul Matters team***

Katie Covey

Soul Matters Director of Religious Education

[soulmattersre@gmail.com](mailto:soulmattersre@gmail.com)

# Week 1

## Map Sunday

### *Purpose*

- Introduce youth to some of the basic beliefs and practices of Buddhism, using our Crossing Paths' binoculars/lenses

### *Preparation & Leader Notes*

#### **Remembering Humility**

As always, remember that the aim of Map Sunday is to “get a glimpse” of each religion. There is no way to capture the fullness of these rich religions in a session or two. So as a leader, you will need to help your youth remember that there is still a lot about each religion left to explore and we need to be humble about what we are learning. It might be helpful 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.

#### **Leader Background Resources**

These short videos and articles are recommended background information for leading the session:

##### **Top Three**

- Stephen Prothero on Buddhism:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSf-zbOQXC4>
- The Buddha  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tilBs32zN7I>
- Four Noble Truths  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHJj3djPLW8>

##### **Digging Deeper**

- Buddhism 101:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGJ1K4fT5sk&list=PLQ9\\_kWAQL7WB8-igGYA3Q1ZJc-NPT-1rG](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGJ1K4fT5sk&list=PLQ9_kWAQL7WB8-igGYA3Q1ZJc-NPT-1rG)
- Getting Zen with a Buddhist | Have a Little Faith with Zach Anner:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OREnXIS-A>
- Video about the 8 Spoke Wheel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLS81XFzaWw>
- 8-Fold path (article):  
[https://www.buddha101.com/p\\_path.htm](https://www.buddha101.com/p_path.htm)
- Other Buddhist symbols (articles)  
<http://www.ancient-symbols.com/buddhist-symbols.html>
- How Buddhism Differs From Other Religions:  
<https://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/snapshot01.htm>
- The Buddha - A Documentary Story of The Buddha's Life (2 hrs. or skim)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJWPFYygGPC>
- Wheel of Time -- Full Buddhism Documentary by Werner Herzog (1 hr. 20 or skim)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8Og2bYsPTM>

## **Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents ahead of time):**

### ***Before:***

- *Spend some time with a couple or all of these videos to deepen your knowledge of Buddhism. Share one or two things that most interested you with your youth as a way of getting them excited about what they will learn this month:*
  - Stephen Prothero on Buddhism:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSf-zbOQXC4>
  - The Story of Buddha & Buddhism:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiBs32zN7I>
  - Buddhism 101:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGJ1K4fT5sk&list=PLQ9\\_kWAQL7WB8-jgGYA3Q1ZJc-NPT-1rG](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGJ1K4fT5sk&list=PLQ9_kWAQL7WB8-jgGYA3Q1ZJc-NPT-1rG)
  - Getting Zen with a Buddhist | Have a Little Faith with Zach Anner:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OREnXIS-A>
  - Ten Things You May Not Know About Buddha  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMjJst4hZ6Y>

### ***After:***

- *In our centering worship, we talked about how compassion sits at the core of Buddhism. But we also lifted up how compassion for others begins with the skill of being compassionate with oneself. Talk to you youth about your own struggles with being compassion and kind with yourself, and if the moment is right, invite them to share a bit about their own journey of self-compassion, and in particular how they completed their “heart sentence.”*

## **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 Buddhism?
- Make sure you have the technology needed to play the YouTube videos that are part of this session.
- Locate a chime or ringing bowl for the Meditation.
- Gather or make paper hearts for writing on in worship plus markers or colored pencils.
- Purchase enough spring-loaded clothespins for the Clinging Games you choose.
- Choose your option for the Tiger Story activity and purchase Flash Paper or Dissolving Paper in advance.
- Locate a safe bowl for burning or dissolving.
- Locate enough 3x5 cards and pens, one for each group member.

## Session

# **Getting a View of the Terrain: Buddhism**

### **Entering - Graffiti Board Writing**

As youth enter the room invite youth to engage the graffiti board. Encourage symbols, words, drawings. These can be representations of Buddhism, words, feelings or experiences that youth have in relationship to Buddhism.

*This Week's Core Graffiti Board Question:*

***What is Buddhism?***

### **Gathering & Centering - Worship (15 min)**

#### ***Preparation***

Create or purchase red paper hearts for writing on to remind each person to practice compassion. Have a basket of markers or colored pencils available.

#### ***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 Map Sunday and the beginning of our journey exploring this month's religion: Buddhism.
- Like always, map Sunday is about introducing the basics about the religion.
- So our worship today lifts up the Buddhist core value of compassion. For the founder of Buddhism, Buddha, [nothing was more important](#) than having compassion for all living beings, including animals and even those you consider "enemies."
- But he also taught that we can't have compassion for others if we don't have it for ourselves.
- So as we listen to one of the most beloved Buddhist songs ("mantras") of compassion, let's think about some ways we can be kinder to ourselves. We all know what it's like to "beat ourselves up." We sometimes tell ourselves that we are not good enough or we are extra hard on ourselves when we make mistakes or fall short of who we want to be. Think about how you might be doing this lately. Also imagine how you would offer kindness, forgiveness and compassion to a friend who was being hard on themselves. Then think about how you could offer the same kindness and compassion to yourself.
- [PASS OUT HEARTS and basket of markers] While we reflect on being compassionate with ourselves, here are some hearts. While you are listening to the Compassion Mantra, write a note finishing the sentence, "I will be kinder to myself when...."

## **Music For Centering**

### **Great Compassion Mantra by Ani Choying Drolma (4 min.)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81HKh4RMIIME&list=RDjhGI0X6jhSQ&index=14>

About the Mantra: <https://buddhaweekly.com/great-compassion-mantra-purification-healing-protection-maha-karuna-dharani-sutra-benefiting-beings/>

About the Singer/Chanter: Ani Choying Drolma (born June 4, 1971, in Kathmandu, Nepal), also known as Choying Drolma and Ani Choying (Ani, "nun", is an honorific), is a Buddhist nun and musician from the Nagi Gumpa nunnery in Nepal. She is known in Nepal and throughout the world for bringing many Tibetan Buddhist chants and feast songs to mainstream audiences.

### **Thematic Check-in**

Invite the group to share what they wrote to complete the sentence and reflect on what it means for them.

### **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.

# Taking in the Terrain

## A Glimpse of Buddhism through the Crossing Paths Binoculars

### Introduction

Explain that the focus of today is to “get a glimpse” of the world of Buddhism. Stress that there is no way to capture the fullness of these rich religious traditions in a session or two. So today is about impressions and partial views and learning a bit about Buddhism before our visit. Remember our second practice of welcoming: “always be curious” - i.e. always be open and never assume you understand something fully.

### *Sizing Up the Terrain (5 min.)*

#### The Origin and Size of Buddhism

You can keep this simple or get creative. The easiest and more time-efficient approach is to share the basic facts verbally. If you want to take it to the next level, consider placing a large sheet of paper on the wall and writing the basic stats on it. This will allow the youth to visually compare the size and location of the various religions. Consider getting a map for your room to capture and compare the size and location of the various religions.

### When

Buddhism was founded in India in the 6th Century B.C. by Siddhartha Gautama.

### How Many?

4th largest religion; About 500 million people, representing 9% to 10% of the world's total population. (500 million is roughly the same as the populations of the United States, Canada and Mexico combined!)

It is a missionary religion! See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSf-zbOQXC4>

In comparison, there are about 200,000 UU's in North America. That makes a ratio of 2,500 Buddhists to 1 UU.

### Where

China is the country with the largest population of Buddhists, approximately 244 million or 18.2% of its total population. They are mostly followers of Chinese schools of Mahayana, making this the largest body of Buddhist traditions. Mahayana, also practiced in broader East Asia, is followed by over half of the world's Buddhists.

The second largest body of Buddhist schools is Theravada, mostly followed in Southeast Asia. The third and smallest body of schools, Vajrayana, is followed mostly in Tibet, the Himalayan region, Mongolia and parts of Russia, but is disseminated throughout the world. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism\\_by\\_country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_by_country)

## ***The Problem and Solution in the World (15 min.)***

**The Problem:** Suffering (caused by desire, attachment and striving)

**The Solution:** End “Clinging” through the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment (Nirvana)

### **Explain: End the Clinging & You End the Suffering!**

Start with a general introduction about the founder of: Siddhartha Gautama - the Buddha. Show the following video or use it to help you tell the story of Buddha in your own words:

- The Story of Buddha & Buddhism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tilBs32zN7I>  
(can be shortened by only watching through minute 2:27 or 3:52)

Next explain how suffering and the cause of suffering (attachment and clinging) are what makes Buddha’s teachings unique. Here are some good resources to help:

- Four Noble Truths: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHJj3djPLW8>
- The Second Noble Truth: <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-second-noble-truth-450092>
- Clinging & Craving: <http://secularbuddhism.org/2012/02/29/weekly-practice-clinging-craving/>

The important idea to convey is how the Buddhist emphasis on suffering and clinging makes it so unique. You might even contrast it with Christianity’s emphasis on sin to highlight this. There’s a big difference between being worried about people being “bad” and worrying about people suffering. For Buddhists, the problem is not that we want the wrong things or crave to do bad things; it’s the wanting and the craving itself, even how we crave the good stuff! It’s about craving and wanting *too much*(attachment)!

### **Engage: Two Games to End the Clinging & Cravings (10 min)**

A clothespin is used to attach clothes to a clothesline. You will need the spring clip clothespins for these games. Clothespins represent the cravings and attachments which we cling to. Use these games to play with the idea of letting go of what we cling to, releasing our attachments. Be sure to give some examples of common cravings as you hold up the clothespins and explain the game (winning, popularity, attention, FB likes, Instagram followers, etc.)

#### **Shake Off Cravings**

Attach several clothespins to everyone’s sleeves, pant legs, and shirts. Group members must jiggle themselves around and try to get rid of the clothespins, their cravings and attachments. They may not touch them to remove them. The person who has been able to get rid of the most cravings after a given time becomes “ENLIGHTENED”!

#### **Vanquish Clinging**

Pin up to 50 clothespins each over the clothes of a team representative. The rest of the team must pull off all 50 clothespins, First to do so, wins and become BODHISATTVAS.

## **Explain: Concentration Also Ends the Suffering!**

Talk to the youth about how people cling not only to things they want, but also to their worries. Buddhists help us see how those worries [can take up our entire view](#). To address this, Buddhists work hard to develop their skills of concentration. They remind us that we have the power in every moment to shift our focus from our worries to the good things right in front of our nose. Instead of worrying about what happened in the past or may happen in the future, they concentrate on the good things happening in [the present moment](#).

## **Engage - Concentrating The Worry Away - The Story of the Man and the Tiger (5 min.)**

Use the below favorite Buddhist story to engage the youth in this work of concentration and intentionally *shifting* our focus. Be sure to set it up by explaining it is a Buddhist answer about what to do when worries surround us and fill our view. After sharing the story, use the below questions to engage the youth in discussion and use the suggested “Remember the Strawberry” activity to help them think about the worries they need to let go of.

### **The Man and the Tiger**

A man walking across a field encountered a tiger. The man fled, running as fast as he could go, with the tiger chasing fiercely after him. The man came to the edge of the field. It was a cliff! He leaned over the edge of the cliff, grabbed a vine, and swung down against the cliff face. The tiger appeared above him, sniffing and pawing and never taking its eyes from him as it paced above his head. Terrified, the man looked down, far below to the bottom of the cliff, to see if there might be some means of escape that way. But what was this? Another tiger had appeared and was looking up at him, swishing its tail and licking its chops, waiting for him to fall! Just then, two mice—one black and one white—emerged from cracks in the cliff face. The mice skittered about, sniffing, and then, with tiny bites, began to gnaw away at the vine the man was hanging from. A little distance away, the man spied a beautiful, ripe strawberry growing on the cliff face. Grasping the vine in one hand, he reached over, plucked the strawberry, and popped it into his mouth. It was delicious!

### **Discussion Questions:**

- What are your initial reactions to the story?
- If you had to put the moral of the story in your own words, what would it be?
- What do you think the tigers and the mice represent as metaphors?
- Have you ever overlooked a gift or good thing in front of you because you were focused only on your worries?
- Do you have your own ways of shifting your concentration away from your worries?

### **Engagement: “Remember the Strawberry” (10 min)**

- Now hand out “flash paper” to the youth (available on [Amazon](#) or find in a local Walmart or crafts store). An alternative to using fire is to use “dissolving paper” which dissolves in another element, water. (available on [Amazon](#)) or to simply burn strips of paper in a safe container.
- Also hand them a 3\*5 card.
- Explain that, for Buddhists, “right concentration” is not a complicated thing that takes years to learn and can only be done by monks. It’s available to everyone. Mostly it is a matter of shifting your focus away from your worries and remembering to intentionally keep a lookout for the “strawberries” - the gifts and good things they might otherwise miss.
- Explain that you are going to use the flash paper and 3\*5 cards to help remember that we all have this power to control our focus and concentration.
- Ask the youth to think about a worry they currently have and write it on the flash paper.
- Then, one-by-one, have them burn it in a safe pot or bowl you’ve brought (or dissolve it in a pot of water.) As each youth does this, have them say, “I will not let my worries stop me from noticing the good things in my life.”
- Now have all the youth write the following on their 3\*5 card: “Remember to look for the strawberries.”
- Invite them to put the 3\*5 card somewhere where they will run into each day during the coming week - their sock drawer, their wallet or purse, their locker. Consider having each person share where they plan to put it.
- Acknowledge that this may seem a bit silly to some of them but testify in your own words why such intentional reminders have such power. Ask them to at least give it a try. Also tell them that you personally hope it helps them with their worries this week.

### **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 about Buddhism 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 (2 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”

# Week 2

## Tack Sunday

### *What Does It Mean to be a People of Curiosity... for Buddhists?*

#### **Purpose**

- Explore how Buddhists think about and engage the theme of Curiosity.

#### **Preparation & Leader Notes**

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

###### **Before:**

- *Ask your youth what they are planning to put on the graffiti board this week. This is a great way to help them prepare in a more thoughtful way and it allows you to be more connected to how their understanding of Buddhism is evolving.*

###### **After:**

- *During our worship this week, we will talk about how Buddhism speaks to our church monthly theme: curiosity. In our worship, we explored curiosity as a way to achieve the Buddhist goal of “being in the present moment.” We asked the youth to focus on and be curious about the sounds and smells around them. Ask them how it went and talk with them about your own struggles and successes with “living in the present moment.”*
- *We also learned about the Buddhist concept of the beginner’s mind by engaging a great story about a teapot and a know-it-all profession. Ask your youth to tell you the story and the games we played to engage the story’s theme.*

###### **For You:**

- *Deepen your own understanding of the beginner’s mind with these three recommend resources:*
  - *Jon Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness & the Beginner’s Mind: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssqclf52ZpY>*
  - *Approaching Life with Beginner’s Mind: <https://zenhabits.net/beginner/>*
  - *The Zen of Not Knowing: <https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/zen-not-knowing/>*

### **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.
- Make copies of Handout #3 Four Questions for worship, plus pens.
- Gather teapot, water, a tea cup and a tray to catch the spill over for the story “A Cup of Tea.”
- Teapot Art - gather markers, paper and a blindfold for each person.
- Cups and Downs Game - 20+ paper cups
- Empty Your Cup Game - 2 cups, a source of water, such as a bucket, a coin to flip, outside space.
- Gather different color markers for the graffiti board work.
- Copy Handout #2 Interview Questions so participants can choose one or make up their own for the visit.
- Copy Handout #1 Eight Practices of Welcome for review.
- Purchase 3-4 boxes of breakfast cereals and gather bowls and spoons for the Beginner’s Mind Cereal Eating Activity. Consider some milk or milk substitute.

## Session

# ***What Does It Mean to be a People of Curiosity... for Buddhists?***

### **Entering - Graffiti Board Writing**

*Same Core Question: What is Buddhism?*

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 (15 min)**

#### ***Preparation***

Make copies of Handout #3 Four Questions for each person at worship. Gather a basket of pens.

#### ***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: Buddhism. Today we are going to explain - or "tack up" with - how Buddhism thinks about the monthly theme we are exploring here at our church: Curiosity.
- Last week we talked about how Buddhists encourage us to live in the present moment and use our attention to take our focus away from our worries about the past or future.
- Well, being curious is another great way to help us [be present](#). By asking questions about their current surroundings, Buddhists clear their mind and shift their focus to what's right in front of them.
- We're going to practice this today as we listen to our centering music. Here are four questions for you answer while you are listening. Take your time. Pause after answering each one. They ask you to listen and smell and notice what's around you. Do it slowly and carefully. Let the experience sink in. Let it feel more like meditation than a quiz.
- [HAND OUT #3 WITH THE 4 QUESTIONS AND A PEN]
  - How many different smells do you notice? List them.
  - How would you describe the temperature in the room. Be very specific.
  - How many different sounds do you hear? List them.
  - What else do you notice while being present?

### ***Music For Centering***

- **Living In The Moment - Jason Mraz**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUFs\\_1vKYIY&list=PLMub0bK-9En9LQPXTMW8k4lo4r5zQsmDZ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUFs_1vKYIY&list=PLMub0bK-9En9LQPXTMW8k4lo4r5zQsmDZ)

### ***Reflection***

Invite the youth to share which of the four questions they found the most interesting and what their answer to it was. Also invite them to comment on whether or not they felt the questions inviting curiosity, helped them be “fully present” and bring their whole selves into the room.

### ***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:**

# **Finding Curiosity in the Beginner's Mind**

### **Explain (5 min)**

#### **Leader Resources (background so you can introduce the activity)**

- Jon Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness & the Beginner's Mind: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssqclf52ZpY>
- Approaching Life with Beginner's Mind: <https://zenhabits.net/beginner/>
- The Zen of Not Knowing: <https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/zen-not-knowing/>

#### **Introducing the Connection Between Beginner's Mind and Curiosity**

##### **Suggested Script/Talking Points:**

- As we've been learning, paying attention to the present moment is a major part of Buddhist spiritual practice.
- By being present one escapes the suffering of worrying about the past or future. But being present is about more than escaping painful worries. It's also about noticing the gifts right in front of you in the moment you are in.
- To help notice and be present to these gifts, Buddhists recommend what's called the beginner's mind. It's basically about acting as if you're just learning or experiencing something for the first time. It's close to what we mean when we say, "Go in with an open mind." Or to connect it to our monthly theme, it's about being curious rather than assuming you already know the answer or already know how an experience will turn out.
- And that's how we notice the gifts of what's right in front of us! When we are humble rather than being a know-it-all, we are better able to learn things from others. When we approach every experience as if it's our first time having it, we are surprised by things we've never noticed before. When we stop assuming we know how things will turn out, we are more likely to give things a try.
- So that's what a beginner's mind is and does for us. But what does it *feel* like? To experience that, let's listen to a story and play some games!

### **Engage - A Beginner's Mind Starts with an Empty Mind**

**Preparation:** *bring in a teapot full of water, a tea cup and a tray large enough to hold spilt water. Real tea, rather than water, is optional.*

Explain to the youth that Buddhist teachers often start lessons about the beginner's mind with the below story about emptying your mind. Read the story yourself or have a youth read it. As you do so, make it come alive by pouring and overflowing water into the tea cup you brought in.

## Story of the Tea Cup

"A university professor went to visit a famous Zen Buddhist master. While the master quietly served tea, the professor talked about Zen. The master poured the visitor's cup to the brim, and then kept pouring. The professor watched the overflowing cup until he could no longer restrain himself. "It's full! No more will go in!" the professor blurted. "This is you," the master replied, "How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup." <http://truecenterpublishing.com/zenstory/emptycup.html>

**Reflection:** Use the analogy of a "know-it-all" to tease out the meaning of the story, comparing the "beginner's mind" to the professor's "expert mind." Then engage the youth in discussion with the following questions:

- Do you know anyone who is a bit of a know-it-all like the professor in the story? Someone who acts like an expert about things?
- Have you ever slipped into being a know-it-all? Usually, it's not because we're cocky but rather it's about us feeling like we want someone to notice us or notice how hard we've worked to learn or achieve something. Do you relate to that?
- Do you think you've missed out on things because you've forgotten to bring an "empty cup" to a conversation or relationship?

### Activities (15 min):

#### Option #1 - Teapot Art

The empty, beginner's mind comes to an encounter with no preconceived notions. We all have preconceived notions about a teapot, right? We all know what one looks like, right? Try to encounter a teapot from a fresh perspective (beginner's mind) by drawing one without looking through "already full eyes."

Provide each person with a piece of paper, a marker and a blindfold. The goal is to draw a teapot without looking. Have everyone take a turn and then compare everyone's efforts. Be sure to note how fun it is. Use that to point out how approaching life with a beginner's mind makes life more joyful and surprising.

#### Option #2 - Empty vs. Full: A game to express the battle between empty and full minds

Let's be honest: it's not easy to empty our minds. It's a struggle. Our full minds want to impress people. Our humble and open minds fight to push back. Put this struggle on display with this game:

**Instructions:** Place 20 or more cups in the middle of the room, put half of them upside down as "empty minds" and the other half the right way up as "full minds." Divide the group into 2 teams and give each team a name, Team Empty and Team Full. "Team Full" needs to turn as many cups up as possible, and "Team Empty" needs to flip as many down as possible. When the allocated time limit is over, count all the cups and whichever team has the most turned up their way wins.

Suggestions:

- If a team member knocks cups over, they are out.
- Make sure to spread the cups out. The wider they are spaced apart, the less likely the team members will be knocked over and cups will be knocked over.

### **Option #3 - Empty Your Cup (involves throwing cups of water. Best played outside.)**

Emptying our minds of preconceptions is not only freeing but fun. It is joyful thing to feel so open to all that the world has to teach and show us. Engage this feeling of joy with the following game:

#### **Instructions:**

1. Form two teams. Both teams line up sitting down facing away from each other. Members of each team hold hands.
2. At one end, the 2 players from either team line, face inwards and place their hands by their sides - ready to grab the cup. A leader (or neutral group member) holds a cup of water in between them.
3. At the other end, 2 players from either team are watching a leader (or neutral group member) flip a coin. If the coin lands on heads, the player must squeeze the next person's hand gently. This hand-squeezing continues down the line until the last person feels their hand being squeezed. This person then grabs the cup of water before the other team does and throws it on the opposing team member.
4. Points are gained for grabbing the cup of water first on a "heads" round. If the cup is grabbed on a "tails" round, then points are deducted.
5. Rotate the positions so that everyone gets a chance to be at each end. The first team to get the person who started back to the coin reader wins.

### **Engage - Tasting a Bowl of Cereal with a Beginner's Mind (15 min)**

#### **Introduction - Suggested Script:**

The teapot story highlights how a beginner's mind opens up room for new *ideas*. Buddhists also stress that a beginner's mind allows us to have old *experiences* in new ways.

Buddhists focus on the fact that everything is always changing. Given that, no person or experience is ever the same. They always have the ability to surprise us. There's always something new about them to discover. But only if we approach them with the curiosity and openness of a beginner's mind.

So, let's try it out with some bowls of cereal!

#### **Activity:**

##### *Preparation:*

Buy 2-4 boxes of well-known cereals. Bring them in along with enough bowls and spoons for all the youth. Milk or milk substitute is optional.

##### *Instructions:*

1. Hand out bowls and spoons to everyone
2. Have them fill up their bowls with whatever cereal is **most** familiar to them.
3. Tell the youth to take a deep breath and prepare themselves to take a taste with a beginner's mind, i.e. Act like you are eating it for the first time and eat it with as much curiosity and attention as you can.
4. The goal is to discover 4 new things about the cereal. Four things that they've never noticed before. Something about the taste or smell or crunch. It's like finishing the sentence, "I never noticed before that the cereal \_\_\_\_\_."
5. Afterward discuss what it was like to try to experience the cereal anew. Was it harder or easier than they thought? Why do they think they hadn't noticed these things before? Do they want to eat breakfast from now on with a beginner's mind?

### **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 the 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 which question they would like to ask. Be flexible to allow youth to ask their own questions, paraphrase the question from the Handout in their own words, or ask it straight out.

*(Remember that we also recommend sending the list of questions ahead of time to the faith leaders you are going to interview. This will allow them to prepare. You might also want to let them know that the youth will be taking turns asking their favorite questions from the list or ones they have generated themselves.)*

### **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 Day

(The Visit)

### Purpose

- Get a direct experience of Buddhist tradition with a visit.
- 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 your youth about dress requirements. [Leader note: tailor this bullet to the visit]

##### **After:**

- Ask your youth to share their favorite part of the visit.
- Reflect with them on your own experiences with and understanding of Buddhism. Share your assumptions and stereotypes and ask your youth how their experience relates to those assumptions and your past experiences.

##### **For You:**

- As our youth go off to visit a Buddhist community and learn from their leaders, spend a little time yourself learning from one of the most beloved Buddhist leaders and writers, Pema Chödrön:
  - This Lousy World: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buTrsK\\_ZkvA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buTrsK_ZkvA)
  - On becoming comfortable with groundlessness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDsUcSKdqYs>
  - Be grateful to everyone: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddEb1Z8xajs>
  - What Are We Afraid Of?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6nK42pism0>

#### Pre-Visit To Do List:

- 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.
- Send the Interview Questions to the faith leader, optional.
- 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 call a minister and they should be addressed as Rev. Jones or Pastor Jones.")
  - other behaviors that should be observed (e.g., expect 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, if not done the Sunday before:

#### **Choosing an Interview Question**

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 the 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 which question they would like to ask. Be flexible to allow youth to ask their own questions, paraphrase the question from the Handout in their own words, or ask it straight out.

### 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., The Zen Center of \_\_\_\_\_)
2. Share the religion's name for 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 call 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:** Gather in your church foyer or parking lot before you go. Move 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...*

*Be fully present  
Be curious  
Be open to being changed  
Be comfortable with discomfort  
Be an appreciative listener  
Be light-hearted  
Be gentle when mistakes are made  
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 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 Our 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:***

- *Talk with your youth about what they plan to write on the Thank You Card that will be sent to the faith community they visited last week. This will help them prepare, give them a chance to reflect more on the visit and better enable them to write something meaningful.*

##### ***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 Buddhism has evolved?*
- *Watch "Little Buddha" Movie (1993) G | 2h 3min:  
[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107426/?ref =nv\\_sr\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107426/?ref =nv_sr_1)*

##### ***For You:***

- *Talk with your spouse/partner or a friend about how your own view of Buddhism 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.
- (optional) Invite a guest with a Buddhist 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.
- (optional) Make plans to attend the adult service or part of the service as a way of exploring the monthly theme of Wholeness.

## 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.

### **Thank You Card**

Set out a thank-you card and have the youth sign it and share one thing they enjoyed during their visit.

### **Gathering & Centering - Worship (10 min)**

#### ***Preparation***

Choose a Thank You Card to send to the Buddhist Faith Center that everyone can sign. Gather pens and markers.

#### ***Centering Sound***

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). A Buddhist ringing bowl or chime would obviously be great to use this month. 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, in script form:

- Welcome to Lake Sunday and our final session on this month's religion: Buddhism. 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 and notice all the gifts the visit gave us.
- In that spirit, our centering music is a high-spirited and fun song reflecting the joy that one feels from Buddhist teachers, often called bodhisattvas.
- A "bodhisattva" is a wise and compassionate leader, someone who could attain nirvana and leave the earthly cycle of birth and rebirth, but instead choose to stay among regular people to help, teach and guide them on their path. The Dalai Lama of Tibet and the Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, are often cited as bodhisattvas. Siddhartha Gautama - the Buddha himself - was also considered a bodhisattva. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was named a bodhisattva by the Buddhist people of Vietnam.
- This is very important to keep in mind because it reminds us that Buddhism wants us to see the Buddha as a teacher not as someone to be worshipped. The whole goal of Buddhism is to learn about walking the path that the Buddha taught. In other words, he is a guide to help us on our way, not a God to be worshipped.
- So as you listen to this playful and energetic 1970's "Bodhisattva song" think about a person in your life that has been a special guide to you. *Who has been a great role model or helped you find your way? Name the person and the lesson they taught you.* In addition, sign the Thank You card and include any special note or reflection you would like to share with the Buddhist leader(s) who were such generous teachers to us this past week.

## **Music For Centering**

*The Peanuts Gang singing "Bodhisattva" by Steely Dan*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WssjDa1th2U>

*"Bodhisattva, would you take me by the hand  
Bodhisattva, would you take me by the hand..."*

Song explained: "Bodhisattvas are the "priests" of Mahayana Buddhism: they help others reach nirvana ("would you take me by the hand"). The "shine of your Japan" and "sparkle of your China" lyrics relate to nirvana. The line about selling the house links to the Buddhist teaching of non-attachment and that material properties lead to suffering.

### **Thematic Check-in**

Invite the group to pause for a moment of reflection and continue thinking about who has been a special guide or role model to them. Invite the youth to share the name of this special person as they are comfortable. *Who has been a great role model or helped you find your way? Name the person and the lesson they taught you.* Share your own example.

After the sharing, leader expresses gratitude for everyone's sharing and writing a note in the Thank You card.

### **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 on the Visit (20 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*

**How did the visit and our sessions make you think about your own life differently?** How do you wish your life was more like the Buddhists you met and learned about?

Lead the group in discussion about their personal takeaways. Invite them to think about how the visit and the past few weeks of learning gave them a challenge for their own life. Here are some example questions to help you on your way:

- Was the Buddhist emphasis on meditation attractive to you? Did it leave you wondering about doing it more regularly?
- We talked a lot about the Buddhist "Middle Way" of avoiding extremes, Do you agree with this? Did it help you notice extremes in your life that you want to eliminate? Or did you find yourself disagreeing a little bit. Are some extremes worth it?
- What do you think about the fact that Buddhism does not consider a belief in God to be important?
- As we learned, Buddhists place compassion at the core of their ethics. Of all the values you think are important, how high would you rank compassion? Are there some values even more important for you? Or did learning about Buddhism make you want to move compassion higher on your list of values?
- Do you think of our UU church as a place of compassion? How have you experienced our church being a "community of compassion"?
- Remember the story of the tiger and the strawberry? Is there something - like the strawberry in the story - that you want to pay more attention to in your life? Are your worries and responsibilities making you miss out on something right in front of you, something you think you might someday wish you had paid more attention to?
- Remember our beginner's mind activity with the cereal? Have you thought about approaching any other activities with a beginner's mind?

Leader Note: Consider sharing your own personal take-aways 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?

## Games and Activities (15 min)

This month has been full of options. Choose a favorite game or activity to repeat or to try if you didn't have time.

## 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.
  1. **What strikes you as you look at all the colors?** Were there some weeks where we seemed to learn more than other weeks? Are there more words than pictures? What does that mean?
  2. **Is there anything on the board that needs to be corrected?** Any "understanding" that was incomplete or misunderstood?
  3. **What 2-3 things seem to best describe the essence of Buddhism for you?** If you had to explain Buddhism 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 (10 min)

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." The 8 Practices are included below, in Handout #1.

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.

## Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect

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

"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 done so earlier. Invite any participants to sign the thank-you card if they haven't done so.*

## ***Add-Ons for Groups with More Time***

### **Option #1 - Interview**

If you have time, consider inviting a congregant with a background in Buddhism 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 Curiosity**

"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 Buddhism and how they see UUs being similar and different when it comes to beliefs and the understanding of what it means to be a people of Curiosity.

***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. What is your favorite Buddhist story?
2. What is your favorite Buddhist ritual or holiday of the year? How does your tradition or Sangha celebrate it differently than other Buddhist traditions?
3. What do you wish others most understood about the role the Buddha plays in your religion? We've been told that it's best to see him as a teacher rather than as someone to be worshipped. Is this right? Is there something else we should understand?
4. If you were raised in the Buddhist tradition, what is your favorite memory as a child? If you weren't raised a Buddhist, what made you want to become a Buddhist?
5. How did your journey as a Buddhist begin? For instance, Christians mark the official beginning of their journey with baptism or confirmation. What ritual welcomed you into your faith?
6. What should we know about the symbolism of the Eight Spoke Wheel? Is there a meaning to it that non-Buddhists often overlook?
7. What other symbol of Buddhism is especially important to you?
8. Do you have a favorite meditation practice?
9. What sound do you most associate with Buddhism?
10. Our church's monthly spiritual theme is "What Does It Mean To Be A People of Curiosity." What does being "a person of curiosity" mean to you? How has Buddhism expanded or altered your understanding of "curiosity"?
11. Is there a particular Buddhist belief or perspective that you think is especially relevant to our U.S. culture and political climate right now?
12. What is unique about the Buddhist approach to social justice?
13. What are the major misconceptions out there about the Buddhist tradition? What do you wish others better understood?



## Some Resources to Remember:

### Soulful Home Family Guides

Invite your parents to explore the themes at home with their entire 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>.

Here's [a link](#) to a PDF flyer you can share with families.

### Inspiration Facebook Page

To keep you inspired as a group leader, check out our Soul Matters Facebook inspiration page:

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

Consider also sharing it with your youth and their families!

### Soul Matters Spotify Music Playlists

Discover musical inspiration on each of our monthly themes through our playlists:

<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/spotify-lists.html>

A great source of inspiration and connection for you, the youth and their families!

## ***Crossing Paths Authors:***

***Katie Covey, DRE of Soul Matters Sharing Circle***

***Rev. Scott Tayler, Team Lead and Founder of Soul Matters Sharing Circle***



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