



# On the Road Together

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## The Path of Integrity



A Youth Group Resource  
from Soul Matters

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# Welcome

Welcome to the first of the “On the Road Together” youth packets from Soul Matters!

We've titled this subscription series "On the Road Together" in honor of the way youth groups partner youth on life's journey. Friends, community, shared values, support in the midst of life's twists and turns: These are the building blocks that make UU youth ministries meaningful and transformative. Our “on the road” frame also highlights the way in which each monthly theme is a path we all need to learn to navigate. So, for instance, January's packet is all about what it means to navigate the path of integrity.

The material itself is not a curriculum. It's more like a chest of building blocks. In other words, our goal isn't to create your youth group experience for you, but instead to give you the tools and resources you need to build your own experience. Like a box of Legos! This is our way of honoring the fact that every youth group has its own unique culture.

Our organizational structure flows from our commitment to whole person learning. So you will find sections dedicated specifically to the head, heart, hands, body, spirit, and community in every packet. Here's an overview of the sections for every single week:

- I. Getting Started (community)
- II. Spiritual Practice (spirit)
- III. Discussion Starters (head)
- IV. Express Yourself (hands)
- V. Fun & Games (body)

## **About The Path of Integrity**

Too often integrity is framed simply as an issue of morality. It's supposedly about good and bad people, about people knowing what's right and either following or ignoring it. But we know it's more complicated than that. Yes, integrity is about doing the right thing. But it's also about discovering the self that is right for you. In other words, it's not just about telling the truth; it's about finding your true self. Which means it is as much about curiosity and creativity as it is about ethics. In that spirit, we hope our packet leads you to talk about “the adventure of integrity” even more than “adherence to integrity.”

## **Join the Crew!**

Finally, I'm excited to be working with our Creative Crew, Ashley and Ivy. They are youth group advisors and supporters who brainstormed with me about the activities they have used that fit the theme of integrity. We would love one or two more Youth Leaders and Youth Advisors to join our Creative Crew. Contact me if you are interested. The role involves a once-a-month Zoom chat on the theme.

**Katie**, DRE for Soul Matters, on behalf of the Creative Crew and [entire Soul Matters Team](#)  
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# Session 1

## On Integrity and Values: Walking Our Talk

- I. Getting Started
- II. Spiritual Practice
- III. Discussion Starters
- IV. Express Yourself
- V. Fun & Games

### Calendar Connections

Some dates to keep in mind as you explore the connection between integrity and morality/social justice

- [Millard Fillmore](#)'s birthday. Jan. 7 (1800), Unitarian U.S. President, signer of the Fugitive Slave Act
- MLK, Jr. Day - Jan. 20 (connections [here](#) and [here](#))

### I. Getting Started

Connecting to Our Community  
&

Engaging the Skill of Personal Sharing

#### Check In Prompts

- Share about a time when you were faced with hypocrisy.
- What resolutions did you make? Are you keeping them?

#### Centering or Chalice Lighting Quote

“Wholeness is never lost; it is only forgotten. Integrity rarely means that we need to add something to ourselves: it is more an undoing than a doing, a freeing ourselves from beliefs we have about who we are and ways we have been persuaded to “fix” ourselves... Often in reclaiming the freedom to be who we are, we remember some basic human quality, what we find is almost always a surprise but it is also familiar; like something we have put in the back of a drawer long ago...” - Rachel Naomi Remen, Kitchen Table Wisdom

## II. Spiritual Practice

### Connecting to Our Soul & Engaging the Skills of Mindfulness & Meditation

#### **Mindful Walk: How does Greta Thunberg stay strong and connected?**

“... keeping up her routine of unwinding with long walks by strolling through Central Park and visiting New York’s museums, including her (fitting) favorite, the American Museum of Natural History... Greta is in a line of work that can be notoriously difficult: Activists often struggle to support themselves in the long term, and the emotional toll of the work can be a serious burden to bear.

She’s been open in the past about how she entered activism as she was coming out of a very serious period of depression where she wasn’t eating or speaking. Just days before we sat down to chat, she had shared on Instagram how she’s been bullied for having Asperger’s syndrome, calling out “haters” and writing in a caption, “I have Asperger’s syndrome and that means I’m sometimes a bit different from the norm. And — given the right circumstances — being different is a superpower.” - <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/greta-thunberg-climate-strike-teen-vogue-special-issue-cover>

Keeping your integrity requires unwinding and balance. So, using the suggestion below, take a mindful walk today, let your body feel what it's like to walk your talk, and let the balance of nature help keep you balanced.

Try this Walking Meditation [https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/walking\\_meditation](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/walking_meditation)  
Variation for those groups in which there is a member unable to walk or with difficulties walking: The Eagle Pose in Yoga <https://www.sunrisemedical.com/livequickie/blog/january-2019/yoga-poses-for-wheelchair-users>

#### **Deep Sharing the Meditation**

Invite their responses to the meditation.

## III. Discussion Starters

### Connecting to Our Minds & Engaging the Skills of Reasoning and Personal Perspective

#### **Greta Thunberg and Behavioral Policing**

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/video/2019/sep/23/greta-thunberg-to-world-leaders-how-dare-you-you-have-stolen-my-dreams-and-my-childhood-video>

Those who dismiss or attack Greta Thunberg sometimes refer to the fact that she rides in cars, etc. to travel for her message. This is called behavioral policing and is a way to redirect attention from the real, systemic issue to individual behavior for the purpose of inducing shame or guilt.

Another example might be someone dissing a protest walk participant for carrying a non-reusable bottle of water.

- Have you experienced this kind of behavioral policing or ever had doubts that no matter how you try to live, it will not be good enough?
- How might the concept of behavioral policing work toward understanding the process of change? One way to think of it is to practice **the process** rather than seeking perfection.

“The inventor of the engine (many argue about who really did it) used a horse every day of his life. He had to because that was what was available at the time while he figured out how to make it easier.

The inventor of the light bulb worked by candlelight.

The inventor of steel had a house full of iron.

People building cleaner, renewable energy need to drive cars, ride on planes, and heat their houses with gas because that’s what’s available to them. ***Participating in the world as it is, does not disqualify you from trying to improve it.***” - [Joe Roberts, “Skid Row CEO”](#)

### **The Daily Show Interview with Greta Thunberg (9 min)**

Greta talks about her decision to no longer travel by plane and the imperative to take care of the planet. <http://www.cc.com/video-clips/ed6ma7/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah-greta-thunberg---inspiring-others-to-take-a-stand-against-climate-change---extended-interview>

How can you make simple changes in your life?

### **Millard Fillmore, person of complicated integrity or upholder of white supremacy?**

Here’s a story about Millard Fillmore, Unitarian and 13th President of the U.S. There are two camps, one camp outlines him as allying himself with rabid bigots only for the sake of his party. The other camp allows that he was trying to prevent a war and had to do so at the expense of supporting slavery. Fillmore’s story challenges us to look (with integrity) at the way all of us are complicated and full of ethical contradictions. Which camp might you fall in? How does this illustrate the complications of integrity?

Camp 1 - “Sounding a refrain that we commonly hear today from politicians allied with nativist populist movements, Fillmore denied that he himself hated immigrants or Catholics — a significant number of whom populated his hometown of Buffalo. But he revealed once and for all that, at the very least, he had no problem allying with rabid bigots if it would further his political and policy goals.” from Remembering the Sins of Millard Fillmore in <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2018/01/05/remembering-the-sins-of-millard-fillmore/>

Camp 2 - [Some](#) say Millard Fillmore “worked to preserve the union from the sectional interests that threatened to blow it apart. In doing so he supported policies with which he did not agree, in the spirit of compromise and because he felt that citizens from throughout the country should have a voice. His signing into law of the Fugitive Slave Act and his political alliance with a nativist party, both actions driven by his unionist

principles, have tarnished the reputation of a man who was greatly respected in his time and was, in an era of poor federal executive leadership, an effective president.”

### **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr - Walking the Talk for Non-Violence**

“King recounts the bombing of his home on 30 January and his speech to the throng outside. Fearing that “violence was a possibility,” he urged the crowd to “manifest love” and to “carry on the struggle with the same dignity and with the same discipline that we had started out with.” - <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/walk-freedom>

Read the interview at the website above, sharing one paragraph at a time with volunteer readers.

If your home was bombed, and your family put in danger, do you think you could still commit to non-violence as Rev. Dr. King did? Does Unitarian Universalism contain the same strong messages about integrity as the faith of Rev. Dr. King? Why or why not?

Cool fact: In 1966, Rev. Dr. King was the [speaker at the UU General Assembly!](#)

## **IV. Express Yourself**

### **Connecting to Our Creativity & Engaging the Skills of the Expressive Arts**

#### **What Hypocrisy Theatre Is and Why it Doesn't Work**

<https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2019/01/hypocrisy-theatre/#>

Learn about integrity and social media. Review the meaning of Hypocrisy Theatre in the blog. Choose some examples from your own social media feed and read them out for each other. See if you can role play the difference between the “Phone at the Table” and the “Hypocrisy Theatre” in the blog.

Phone at the Table example:

“Let’s say a friend of yours made a New Year’s resolution to stop being on their phone during dinner. It’s January 4th, you’re sharing a table, and you catch them peeping their insta. You call them on it, they apologize, and put their phone away.

Hypocrisy meet behavior. Behavior meet change. Huzzah!

That’s how calling someone out on their hypocrisy works. There are a few important factors here:

The person you’re calling out has stated (or otherwise believes) that they want to walk a particular (moral) path: “From now on, I’m going to do X.”

You notice their actions are contrary to that, and actively getting in the way of them living that espoused value or walking their talk.

You point out this gap: “You said you were going to do X, but now you’re doing Anti-X.”

This prompts cognitive dissonance, and they have to pick a path: do as they said they'd do or give up on that moral stance.

Each one of those four steps is necessary. They work as a chain reaction."

You personally knew the person you were calling out;

Recognized that their behavior was directly antithetical to their goals.

Called them out, with a message that was directed at them, and explicitly for their benefit. You wanted to help them line up their values and actions.

And your message invoked cognitive dissonance: it made them see that they weren't walking their talk, because they sincerely weren't.

#### Hypocrisy Theatre example

"Hypocrisy Theatre, at face value, is similar to the Phone-at-the-Table Example above, but it never plays out that way. There are a load of reasons why.

You don't know the person you're calling out;

Recognize that their behavior is directly antithetical to your goals.

Call them out to your people, with a message that benefits you (by raising your status or making you A Good One) or your cause. You don't care if they align their values and actions.

And your message doesn't invoke cognitive dissonance in the mind of the hypocrite (if they even received the message), but instead invokes outrage or disgust or galvanizes a "that person sucks" feeling within your circle...

Hypocrisy Theatre reduces complicated, multi-dimensional, intersectional, and nuanced viewpoints into two-sentence hot takes.

It motivates us to seek the approval of people who already agree with us, at the expense of everyone else. The likes. The retweets. "If you're getting hated on, you must be doing something right."

It tells us that it's okay to think for someone else, to ignore their values, and to dismiss them altogether. "We don't need them, we have us."

It lulls us away from whatever our goals are or figuring out the actions that could line up with our values, because it's far more comfortable, easy, and safe to just point out what others are doing wrong, than it is to create something right. "They're so backwards lol."

Seek a deep understanding of integrity in order to stay rooted to your inner voice.

## V. Fun & Games

### Connecting to Our Bodies & Engaging the Skills of Play

Connect to our theme of integrity with playful hypocrisy - engage in a lie as well as truths about yourself. How does it feel to be so sly?

#### **Two Truths and A Lie**

“Ask all players to arrange themselves in a circle. Instruct each player to think of three statements about themselves. Two must be true statements, and one must be false. Each person shares the three statements (in any order) to the group. The goal of the game is to determine which statement is false. The group votes on which one they feel is a lie, and at the end of each round, the person reveals which one was the lie.”

- from <https://www.icebreakers.ws/small-group/two-truths-and-a-lie.html>

# Session 2

## On Integrity and Joy: Following Your Bliss

- I. Getting Started
- II. Spiritual Practice
- III. Discussion Starters
- IV. Express Yourself
- V. Fun & Games

### Calendar Connections

Some dates to keep in mind as you explore the connection between integrity and joy:

- [National Hug Day](#) - Jan. 21
- [Belly Laugh Day](#) - Jan. 24 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

### I. Getting Started

Connecting to Our Community  
&  
Engaging the Skill of Personal Sharing

#### Check In Prompts

- Share a time when you were immersed in joy.
- Share a TV series you are joyfully obsessed with and why.

#### Centering or Chalice Lighting Quote

“Follow your bliss. If you do follow your bliss,  
you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while waiting for you,  
and the life you ought to be living is the one you are living.  
When you can see that, you begin to meet people  
who are in the field of your bliss, and they open the doors to you.  
I say, follow your bliss and don't be afraid,  
and doors will open  
where you didn't know they were going to be.  
If you follow your bliss,  
doors will open for you that wouldn't have opened for anyone else.”  
— Joseph Campbell

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness  
and the world's deep hunger meet.”

— Frederick Buechner

## II. Spiritual Practice

### Connecting to Our Soul & Engaging the Skills of Mindfulness & Meditation

#### **Bliss Meditation**

Use this practice to discover your bliss. Try practicing during the week. The more you practice invoking bliss, the more it becomes available to you.

1. Get comfortable and, if you wish, close your eyes. Become aware of your breath and breathe slowly and deeply. Breathe in relaxation and a sense of ease. Let go of any tension as you exhale. Let the warmth of relaxation flow through your whole body, from your head all the way down to your feet.
2. Find your own way to the still, quiet center of your being, with your body relaxed, your emotions calm, your mind peaceful and spacious. If you find yourself thinking about something, simply return to your breathing.
3. Now imagine a time when you experienced bliss or a sense of well-being, perhaps when you were in a beautiful place or with a good friend. It may not have been an excited feeling, more a sense of contentment, like being happy for no reason. This feeling might be familiar because you experienced it as a child, running around with an inexplicable bliss and endless curiosity.
4. Recall your experience with as much detail as you can. If possible, bring an image of that moment to mind. What was happening? What was the environment like? Were you alone or with others? What sights or sounds can you remember?
5. Remember how the experience of well-being or bliss felt in your body. Did your body feel light? Energetic? Expansive? What did bliss feel like in your mind? Did your mind feel open? Present? Clear? Take a few moments to let your awareness feel the sensations in your body and the mood in your mind. Let them fully register as you breathe in this feeling of well-being and bliss. Relax into it with each exhalation.
6. Imagine placing those sensations and mood in your hand. Imagine a place where you will be able to find it every time you need it, perhaps on a special shelf in your heart, in the crook of a tree in your mind. Take a moment to place it there and remember it for when you need it next.
7. Now, begin to return to the present moment. Say goodbye to your special place that will hold your bliss for you. Feel your breath filling your body. Your body returns to this room. Your eyes open and see the circle around you. Smile and exhale with a final breath.

Inspired by <https://www.yogajournal.com/meditation/meditation-to-invoke-joy>

#### **Deep Sharing the Meditation**

Invite their responses to the meditation.

## III. Discussion Starters

### Connecting to Our Minds & Engaging the Skills of Reasoning and Personal Perspective

#### The Bliss Process

[https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/ken-rabow/teen-problems-into-teen-s\\_b\\_1246998.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/ken-rabow/teen-problems-into-teen-s_b_1246998.html)

*"What did you do as a child that created timelessness, that made you forget time. Therein lies the myth to live by." -- Joseph Campbell*

What if you could do anything you wanted to with your life? What would you do? How would you be? How would you go about it? Who would you seek out? What if it wasn't what you thought it would be? How would you know when you'd arrived?

Read the Bliss Process from the article and invite each person to journal their answers, then share. Steps in the Bliss Process:

- Target
- Aim
- Adjust
- Seek
- Reboot the arrow
- Pierce the target

#### How to determine your passion in 14 questions

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2018/06/04/cant-figure-out-your-passion-ask-yourself-these-14-questions/#41b8f7f550c0>

Invite the group to share their answers to these questions.

## IV. Express Yourself

### Connecting to Our Creativity & Engaging the Skills of the Expressive Arts

#### The Art of Childhood

Young children laugh on average between 200-300 times per day. As youth, we laugh on average only 15-20 times per day. Where does all that laughter go? We have literally lost hundreds of laughs each day due to societal conditioning, judgment, pressures, and limiting rules. Throughout our growing, our connection with our joyful self has been taken over by seriousness. Re-awaken your deep inner joy with making art with mediums from your childhood. It might be playdough, clay, or finger-painting. Follow them back to the bliss and joy (and silliness) of "being a kid."

While playing and creating, chat a bit about these questions: How do the stressors of adolescents cut you off from the joy of silliness and play? How might you pull some joyful play back into your life? I. What memories of deep inner joy emerges while playing with the art medium?

### **Bliss Board Collaging**

Collect magazines and print images off the web to create a collage full of the things and activities that bring you bliss/joy. You can spice this up by making two collage boards: one filled with things that bring you joy and bliss *now*, and another filled with things you think will bring you joy and bliss *in the future*.

## **V. Fun & Games**

### **Connecting to Our Bodies & Engaging the Skills of Play**

#### **Belly Laughs with Laughter Yoga**

Connect with your inner bliss with some laughter! Bianca Spears leads you through some laughter exercises, including Ignition Laughter, Puppet Laughter, Blossom Laughter, Surfing Laughter, Laughter Cream, A Gentle Laughter Meditation at min. 16. “A giant internal smile and inner peace.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVkG3L79sL4>

**Don't forget about the Calendar Days as suggestions for fun and games.**

- [National Hug Day](#) - Jan.21
- [Belly Laugh Day](#) - Jan. 24 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

# Session 3

## On Integrity and Our True Self: Living from the Inside Out

- I. Getting Started
- II. Spiritual Practice
- III. Discussion Starters
- IV. Express Yourself
- V. Fun & Games

### I. Getting Started

Connecting to Our Community  
&  
Engaging the Skill of Personal Sharing

#### Check In Prompts

- Share about a time when you felt totally and fully yourself.
- During what activity do you feel most fully yourself? (playing music, sports, in the woods, with friends, alone, in the early morning, etc.)
- What do you like about yourself (not something new that you *want to* develop) and what do you want to keep?

#### Centering or Chalice Lighting Quote

Can you remember who you were, before the world told you who you should be?  
- Charles Bukowski

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.  
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

## II. Spiritual Practice

### Connecting to Our Soul & Engaging the Skills of Mindfulness & Meditation

#### **Courage Meditation for when you need to stand alone**

Let yourself relax. Take in a nice, slow, deep breath. And then let it out. Breathe in. And out. Deep. Slow. Breathing in. And breathing out. (Pause)

And let your bodies relax. Let your muscles relax. Let your face relax. Let your mind relax. Whatever you've been carrying around with you all week that you don't need right now, let it go. Let all of you—body, mind, and spirit—deeply and fully relax. Keep breathing. (Pause) Feel the connection with that kind and strong voice in your head, the one that comes around to offer you encouragement and kindness, the one that wants you to be your full self, the one that doesn't want you to hide any part of yourself. Being your full self can be scary. We know that we will feel fear when we take the risk of showing who we are to the world, but we know that we have deep inner strength to call upon.

So Take in a nice, slow, deep breath. And allow yourself to hear the voice of your inner courage...:

"I am filled with courage.

I am filled with courage.

[pause for 10-15 seconds]

As you dig down deep inside of yourself and feel the courage that lies within you, connect it to a part of yourself that you want to more fully live out in the world, that you don't want to keep hidden, that . Feel the strength. Feel the power.

I am filled with the courage to live my full self (or I am filled with the courage to be all of me)

I am filled with the courage to live my full self. (or I am filled with the courage to be all of me)

I am filled with the courage to live my full self. (or I am filled with the courage to be all of me)

I am filled with the courage to live my full self. (or I am filled with the courage to be all of me)

I am filled with the courage to live my full self. (or I am filled with the courage to be all of me)

[pause for 10-15 seconds]

Now as that courage and hope energizes your body, add commitment to it by promising yourself that you will follow through on bringing your whole self to the world. Allow yourself to feel the promise as it courses through your veins. Feel the strength that lies within you. We each have a place of strength, of power, of courage that lies within. Go deeper and deeper inside of yourself until you contact that deep well of courage that lies within you.

I promise to be courageous and find one small way to be my full self.

I promise to be courageous and find one small way to be my full self

I promise to be courageous and find one small way to be my full self

I promise to be courageous and find one small way to be my full self

I promise to be courageous and find one small way to be my full self

[pause for 10-15 seconds]

Now slowly come back to our space by taking in one deep breath through your nose and then slowing letting it out through your mouth.

Amen and Welcome Back.

Inspired by <http://hayleymermelstein.blogspot.com/2012/03/i-am-filled-with-courage.html>

### **Deep Sharing the Courage Meditation**

Invite their responses to the meditation. How can we open up to more courage in our lives?

## **III. Discussion Starters**

### **Connecting to Our Minds & Engaging the Skills of Reasoning and Personal Perspective**

#### **Integrity Discussion Questions**

1. Is integrity for you about allowing yourself to unfold, putting the pieces back together, matching your insides with your outsides or refusing to hide?
2. Have you ever tried to “fix” something about yourself that you didn’t really want to “fix” or change? Something that you were fixing for someone else? Something you were trying to fix or change to receive someone’s approval?
3. When and where do you “wear a mask” to fit in better or to make a situation go well?
4. Which is easier for you? Telling the truth to others or telling the truth to yourself?
5. How did your parent(s) teach you about living your full self and staying true to yourself? Was there a moment or saying or lesson you remember about being true to yourself from your childhood?

#### **What are Your Core Values? (from the [Soul Matters Small Group Packet](#))**

Integrity and value-clarity go hand in hand. But do we really take the time to name and bring our core values into awareness? And do our self-proclaimed values match how others see us? This exercise invites you to wrestle with both of these questions.

To keep it simple, we’ve created [a list of values](#). Here’s how to engage it:

1. Pick your five core values from the list.
2. Give a blank copy of [the list](#) to a fellow group member and ask them to pick the five they think are your core values, without letting them know which you picked earlier.
3. Compare lists and discuss the differences, as well as why each of you picked what you did.
4. Come to back to the large group ready to share insights.

### Video Poem: Standing Tall - Joseph Solomon (5:45 min)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZiH\\_ODRN8vs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZiH_ODRN8vs)

“Listen, relate, and laugh along with Joseph Solomon as he details his struggle with being a Tall Guy. He shares how he pushes past stereotypes in pursuit of finding what God sees him as.”

Watch the video together. How have you been challenged to live as yourself? Heads up that there is God language. Joseph Solomon is from a different theological context, but his struggle with being true to himself is universal in spirit.

## IV. Express Yourself

### Connecting to Our Creativity & Engaging the Skills of the Expressive Arts

#### Write a Poem: Name Your Many Names (from the [Soul Matters Small Group Packet](#))

This exercise asks us to explore the connection between integrity and memory. It asks us to remember all of who we are. It’s a reminder that integrity is about finding and holding on to our wholeness.

We turn to Israeli poet, [Zelda](#), to lead us on our way. In her poem, [Each of Us Has A Name](#), she makes it clear that integrity is a matter not so much of holding tight to your one true name, but remembering and embracing the many names given to us by the experiences of our lives. The full poem can be found at [this link](#), but here’s a taste:

Each of us has a name given by God  
and given by our parents...  
Each of us has a name given by the mountains  
and given by our walls...  
Each of us has a name given by our sins  
and given by our longing...

So, this month, reflect on how these universal human experiences have “named you” and how those names call you back to integrity. Spend a few hours or a few days going through Zelda’s poem line by line, stopping after each one to think about how that experience imprinted itself on you and added a dimension to the wholeness and integrity of who you are.

It helps to think of each of these experiences as saying to you: “You are...” or “I name you...” Here’s an example of what you might ask yourself as you work with each line:

- What name was I given by “God” (or Love)? How did my first God experience say to me: “You are ...”?
- What name was I given by my parents? How has my relationship with them said to me: “You are ...”?
- What name was I given by the mountains? How has my experience with nature said to me: “You are ...”?
- How has my experience with my shadow side or mistakes said to me: “You are ...”?

To help, we've created [a fill in the blank form](#) related to the lines of the poem. Find it [here](#).

After answering the questions, consider assembling all the sentences or all of your names into a list that functions as a poem of sorts. Read your many names aloud one by one or ask someone close to you to read them as you listen.

Share your "poem of names" as well as what surprised you about the exercise and the 1 or 2 most significant insights that came from it.

### **Plaster masks**

Bandages of plaster, placed on the face, then when dry, decorated with your inner self. Masks are things we use to hide who we are, use this activity and this mask to turn that around by having the youth decorate the outside with things they think and feel "inside."

Instructions: <https://m.wikihow.com/Make-a-Plaster-Mask>

Note: This is a very messy activity as it requires wet plaster being placed over the face that is already smeared with Vaseline to keep the plaster from sticking. It could be done over two meetings to give the masks time to dry, or at a retreat or social.

## **V. Fun & Games**

### **Connecting to Our Bodies & Engaging the Skills of Play**

#### **Not Fitting In Game**

Adapted from <https://animalearning.com/fresh-start-10-improv-games-to-develop-courage-compassion-and-creativity/>

We might be scared of not fitting in. This game builds a different relationship to not belonging. Here, each person comes in front of the room one at a time. After "claiming" the stage, that person shares with pride a made-up time of not fitting in and the courage to leave of theirs. Something like "I decided not to color my hair at the sleep over" is great. Or how about "I decided not to jump into the monkey yard at the zoo when my friends did it." Once they've shared the 'not fitting in', the rest of the group gives them a wild and rousing ovation in celebration. The person on stage should take a grand and vigorous, deep "ta-da!" bow, soaking in the applause to full effect. The game finishes when everyone's had the chance to celebrate having 'not fit in and had the courage to leave.'

Insider Tips:

Make sure to explain why you're playing this game before you play it or to debrief it afterward: we're trying to create a new relationship to what we think of as not fitting in. When we have the courage to stand alone or leave, it often means we're pushing ourselves to develop new skills. It means we're taking risks. And our so-called 'failures' can lead us to possibilities we never would have imagined. That's all worth celebrating.

#### **A Cairn for Being Yourself**

If you are able to access the outdoors, invite the group to find a rock, and tell the rock that it is beautiful just the way it is. Make a cairn ( a pile) of rocks in an out of the way place, as a monument to living truthfully and not sacrificing yourself, that only the group knows about. Invite the group to visit it when they need comfort or support.

# Session 4

## On Integrity and Promise Keeping: Creating and Sustaining Community through Covenant

- I. Getting Started
- II. Spiritual Practice
- III. Discussion Starters
- IV. Express Yourself
- V. Fun & Games

### I. Getting Started

Connecting to Our Community  
&  
Engaging the Skill of Personal Sharing

#### Check In Prompt

Name two groups you have committed yourself to.

#### Centering or Chalice Lighting Quote

“Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law; this is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.” James Vila Blake, 1894

“Come, come, whoever you are. Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving. It doesn't matter. Ours is not a caravan of despair. Come, even if you have broken your vows a thousand times. Come, yet again , come , come.” — Jelaluddin Rumi

Consider playing the music video at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91\\_cWWneybg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91_cWWneybg)

## II. Spiritual Practice

### Connecting to Our Soul & Engaging the Skills of Mindfulness & Meditation

#### **Meditation - Back to the Future**

Inspired by <https://www.opentableucc.org/sermon/guided-meditation-evolving-faith-and-a-new-covenant/>

Take a deep breath. Imagine what a future look like if we can evolve not only physically and intellectually but also morally and spiritually.

What are ways we might eventually evolve in matters of faith?

Imagine a more spiritually evolved humankind thousands and thousands of years from now. What would a future—tens of thousands of years hence— be like IF we as a species can develop spiritually?  
PAUSE AND SILENCE.

Imagine a universal community with universal principles of love and justice because the welfare of the other is as important as our own welfare.

Imagine a future where this spiritual state is not rare but is attained by most people.

Take a few moments to inhabit that world mentally.

PAUSE AND SILENCE

What would it be like for compassion and justice to be our default interactions?

How would you live differently if compassion was the rule rather than the exception, the “law” of the land?

PAUSE AND SILENCE

We do have some choice about the ways we will live. We can cultivate habits of hopefulness and an eye for new possibilities. We can be the change we wish to see in the world. Bring the future and that change into your heart now and feel how it would change you.

PAUSE AND SILENCE

Now, prepare to return from the future to this time and place. Take a deep breath and return to your body. Open your eyes when you are ready.

#### **Deep Sharing the Meditation**

Invite their responses to the meditation. Share if you wish to, the future that you saw. What would a future—tens of thousands of years hence— be like IF we as a species can develop spiritually?

# III. Discussion Starters

## Connecting to Our Minds & Engaging the Skills of Reasoning and Personal Perspective

### Covenant Creation, Review and/or Deepening

*Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law; this is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another. James Vila Blake, 1894*

Many of our UU youth groups begin the year with a covenant. If it's you, use this time to review and deepen your covenant. If not, now might be the time to make one. Here are some questions, phrases and approaches to help.

#### 1. Questions to Think About:

Here are some questions to help create a covenant which is more than just a set of behavioral guidelines. The questions are based on the YouTube video "Unitarian Universalist Covenant: What Do We Promise One Another?" recommended for viewing with your group at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmZLK2bEh6Q> :

- What responsibilities do we have and to whom?
- What is your ultimate concern?
- To what do you owe your loyalty and commitment?
- What promises do we make to each other?
- How willing and capable are we of commitments that ask us to live our high aspirations?
- What promises do we make to our faith?
- What sacrifices are we willing to make to create and sustain communities of welcome, hope and service?
- What promises do we make to the world?
- How do we become the people who others can count on to side with love?

#### 2. Language to Include

Here are a few of the phrases popular in youth covenants. Do you want to include some of them?

**"Respect Umbrella"** – "a way of saying have respect for what's all around you; other people, their belongings, boundaries and feelings, the physical space you are in, and for your own self."

**"The Vegas Rule"** – z'a riff on the adage 'what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas,' this is a shorthand way of lifting up privacy and discretion. When at a Youth Con or in the context of youth group, all individuals can feel safe to share personal thoughts, stories and reflections with assurances that they will not be repeated."

**"Oops/Ouch"** – "Simply, this offers a way for a person to alert others they have been hurt by something that was done or said by saying 'ouch.' To which 'oops' can be replied as a way into acknowledging and apologizing. For simple misunderstanding or mis-speaking it offers a quick way to 'call someone out' (hopefully) without putting them on the defensive or for someone to apologize while saving face. That's the first layer."

Saying 'oops' is also an option when a person catches themselves saying or doing something they realize could be hurtful to others or was said in bad taste. A way to simultaneously acknowledge to the community that you stumbled, but that you are willing to own your words and that you want to do better next time.

**Be a Croissant, not a Bagel** - A croissant is shaped in an open "C," a bagel is closed. So it's a way of saying "Stay open." - GA Middle School Camp, 20016.

### **3. Approaches to Building a Covenant**

Review your covenant and the model you used to make it. Would you like to try a different process?

#### **"1. SCAFFOLD MODEL of BUILDING a COVENANT- add/change/rearrange**

The facilitators of the group provide a starting point for the covenanting process. This is a very basic list of "good ideas." The group can agree to accept this covenant in total or choose to edit it by adding elements unique to the group, changing elements that don't fit for the group and/or rearranging the elements to fit their needs and priorities. This model works best for a group of people that has never covenanted before and need a lot of guidance or a group who has a very short amount of time to build a covenant.

#### **2. BRAINSTORM MODEL of BUILDING a COVENANT - from nothing to something**

The facilitator of the group guides the group through the three stages of brainstorming: 1) throwing out any ideas without judgement, 2) synthesizing by grouping like ideas and discarding ideas the group agrees are not needed, 3) making a decision to accept the final product. The scribe supports the group by writing down verbatim what group members say. This model works best for a group that has the luxury of time or a group that would benefit from going through this process as a community building exercise.

#### **3. HOCKET MODEL of BUILDING a COVENANT - from many to one**

Each person, or small groups, writes down a few key points they would like to be included on the group covenant on a piece of paper or a note card. This is done in silence or with minimal talking. The group elects a small number of delegates to synthesize the items and write a draft covenant to bring back to the group. The whole group provides feedback and adopts the covenant by consensus. This model works best for a large group, a group where some people are dominant speakers and others' voices go unheard or a group that has difficulty coming to agreement. - <https://www.uua.org/blueboat/faith/3-models-youth-group-covenanting-beyond>

## IV. Express Yourself

### Connecting to Our Creativity & Engaging the Skills of the Expressive Arts

We often focus on how we are a part of the wider web and we stop there. In addition, we need to recognize our responsibilities to being interconnected, our promises to it.

#### Finger Weaving the Interdependent Web to Which We All Belong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsZsUBYU0qU>

Follow the simple directions or ask for a volunteer who knows how to finger knit. This is a popular “youth-culture” activity, so someone usually knows how.

Invite the youth to wear it not just as a reminder of how they are a part of the group, but of the promises and responsibilities to the group.

#### Me to We

“While playing with paints I (re)discovered that if you fold a piece of paper in half and then write “WE” with a lot of paint on one half, when you refold it will create a mirror image, “ME”. Same as in church. We honor individual worth and dignity as we organize around collective purpose. As we strive together for this mission and vision larger than ourselves, we actually find a deeper notion of ourselves mirrored in the collective. When we surrender to the larger community, we can find our authentic self. How to do that? It’s so hard and counter-cultural! The US economy is built on—is literally counting on—the notion of radical individualism coupled with consumerism. But what if our congregations are where we come to understand that we are more than enough? What if we can have enough in community? What if we not only acknowledge the “interdependent web of all existence” but learn to feel it in our very bones, and live accordingly?” from PWR newsletter, Rev. Tandi Rogers.



Invite the youth to print it not just as a reminder of how they are a part of the group, but of the promises and responsibilities to the group. You are part of the interdependent web of the “WE.”

## V. Fun & Games

### Connecting to Our Bodies & Engaging the Skills of Play

#### **Wave Stretching - a promise to change together.**

Have students form a large circle (you may even choose to do this in small groups depending on the space). Begin by picking one person within the circle. Have them call out a stretch. Going either clockwise or counter-clockwise, every person must do the stretch one by one. The idea is to pass the stretch as you go along. Once the stretch gets back to the original person you chose, have the next person call out a new stretch. The other people will have to hold the initial stretch until the new stretch makes its way to them. You can play this activity for however long you'd like.

<https://www.teachhub.com/6-awesome-cooperative-classroom-games>

Theme Connection: Our circle of "WE" changes and is flexible.

#### **Shadow Sculpture Outside - a promise to build together**

If you have a sunny day, create a Shadow Sculpture of We - a way that everyone's shadows combine to create a bigger singular entity. "A whole is greater than the sum of its parts" - attributed to Aristotle.

For us, it means the "We" can accomplish even more than one person.

#### **We Sculpture Human Machine Game - an indoor promise to build together**

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

If you don't have a sunny day, or access to the outdoors, make a "We Sculpture" with bodies. Variations: Announce that the control lever is going haywire and the machine is speeding up! Announce that the control lever is breaking and the machine is slowing down!

# Grab Bag

## Things to Do Outside of Regular Sessions

### Participate in an MLK Weekend Parade or Marade

One example is Denver's Marade, part march, part parade.

The sights and sounds of Denver's 2019 MLK Marade

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

Reflection about the 2016 MLK Con by Kenny Wiley, "The youth of color spoke truth to white adults who needed to hear it, those who have incredible souls and hearts and still, at key times, can get in the way." Read more about what happened and how to live with integrity, we must be able to listen and learn. <https://grandvalleyuu.org/blog/mlk-facebook-post-by-kenny-wiley>

### New Year's Eve/Day Integrity Lock In

Plan an overnight at your church for New Year's with the theme of Integrity. Use the Integrity Questions in Session #3 as Midnight Worship prompts. Choose some of the worship, games, reflections and other activities in this packet. This would be a good event to offer the Mask Making in Session #3. Invite families to join you for a New Year's pancake breakfast together. Invite the parents to cook it.

## Movies

*Movies on the theme that are longer.*

### Yesterday (PG-13, 2019, 116 minutes)

Common Sense Media Review

<https://www.common Sense Media.org/movie-reviews/yesterday>

"YESTERDAY, Jack Malik (Himesh Patel) was a struggling singer-songwriter who played music that nobody really liked, except for his loyal best friend and manager, Ellie (Lily James). But then Jack gets hit by a bus at the exact same time as a mysterious global blackout. When he returns to consciousness, it's to a world in which the Beatles never existed: Only Jack remembers their songs. He starts performing the Fab Four's hits as his, and he leapfrogs to success ... But is it really success if, deep down, all the adulation doesn't make Jack feel truly happy -- or deserving?." - Common Sense Media. The resolution of Jack's dilemma demonstrates his integrity and courage.

### Selma (PG-13, 2014, 122 minutes)

Common Sense Media Review

<https://www.common Sense Media.org/movie-reviews/selma>

"What's especially powerful about Selma is that it's not all-consumingly grim and upsetting (although there are a few nearly unbearable moments when it's hard not to cry)... there are also bits of humor -- like when King and a seemingly never-ending group of friends descend on a preacher's home for his wife's cooking, or when Johnson tells Alabama Governor George Wallace (Tim Roth) exactly what history will say about him.." - Common Sense Media

# Inspiration, Support and Gratitudes

## Share Your Ideas for the Monthly Packets!

If you come across an activity, reflection piece or meditation that would be great for any of our upcoming themes, send it our way at [soulmattersre@gmail.com](mailto:soulmattersre@gmail.com)

Our upcoming themes...

**February:** Resilience

**March:** Wisdom

**April:** Liberation

**May:** Thresholds

**June:** Play

## Inspiration Facebook Page

Offer your advisors and youth leaders spiritual nourishment and inspiration by encouraging them to join the Soul Matters Inspiration Facebook Page. Use the memes for your congregational FB page, as well:

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

## Soul Matters Music Playlists:

We create two different playlists on the monthly theme each month: one in Spotify and another in YouTube. The playlists are full of songs that your youth will connect with. Consider letting them know about the lists. Maybe even create your own list on the monthly theme that they can all contribute to and create together!

Click [here](#) for links to the [Spotify playlists](#) for each month.

Click [here](#) to check out the [YouTube playlists](#).

## ***Packet Author***

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A special thanks goes out to our Creative Crew: Ashley Egan and Ivy Breivogel

Thanks as well to the other Soul Matters Team members who contribute to the content and shape of these packets.

### **Join the Crew!**

We would love one or two more Youth Leaders and Youth Advisors to join our Creative Crew. Contact me if you are interested. The role involves a once- a- month chat on the theme.



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