



Soul Matters

Cultivating Relationship



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Welcome to Cultivating Relationship

Welcome to the Soul Matters Multi-Platform Packet for Pre-K - 1st Grades for the month of October. This year our monthly themes invite us to think about not only what values our UU faith calls us to but also the key actions and skills that our times require of us. Pandemic time exposed the need for humanity to change and adjust in key ways. So each month we will explore a different skill that we develop so that we don't just return to normal but actually bring about a "new normal."

So this month we explore the ways in which our times call us to "Cultivate Relationship." For our littlest ones, this translates into "Making Friends." We will use both terms so that our youngest children hear the theme just like the big kids. And just as we grow a garden, we need a whole basket of tools and skills to cultivate, deepen and mobilize the key relationships around us. We are so excited about exploring this together!

A note about our approach to multi-platform support: We know our Soul Matters congregations are engaging in numerous approaches this year. Some are returning to in-person. Others are sticking with online church and slowly adjusting to in-person. Others are exploring a model of in-person and online at the same time. Here's our plan to support this wide variety of efforts: The bulk of the packet will be written as if you are doing in-person church. HOWEVER, we are also implementing two writing strategies to support online and hybrid efforts:

1. We will include "online adaptations" and "online alternatives" for many of the activities we feature. To make it easy to identify these, we will list those online adaptations and alternatives **in purple font**.
2. We will also make notes **in green font** when an activity can function for either an in-person or online setting.

Additionally, as you already know, we've been using multimedia activities and strategies for years now. So this should allow you to make your own adaptations more easily. We are excited about the way multimedia activities make it easier for you to make accommodations for those times when one or two children can come to you in person class but want to Zoom into the in-person class experience.

A reminder about our "building block" approach: As we did last year, our packets are not designed as a strict integrated curriculum that you must follow step by step. Instead, we provide you with multiple options to choose from, all organized into four key types of RE experiences:

- Light it (Chalice Lightings options)
- Introduce it (A wonder box suggestion)
- Tell It: (Various stories to make the theme come alive)
- Explore it (numerous experiential based activities to choose from)

Think of this approach as giving you many "LEGO blocks" from which you can create your own program, rather than us giving you a strict "recipe" that you must follow step by step.

And now here are the "Cultivating Relationship" skills we will explore this month!

Lesson A: The Skill of Promising (Story: The All Together Quilt**)

Lesson B: The Skill of Listening and Communicating What You Need (Story: Rabbit Listened)

Lesson C: The Skill of Rebuilding (Story: Old Joe and the Carpenter/ The Other Side**)

Lesson D: The Skill of Caring (Core Story: I am Love**)

Lesson E: The Skill of Being True to You (Story: I am Enough**/Halloween)

I want to remind you that many of the books we will focus on this year were recommended by our Widening the Circle Research Team. Those books are noted with **. The team worked with us this summer to identify books that support our UU efforts to decenter whiteness and do a better job of celebrating the diversity that enriches us all.

Relatedly, I want to highlight our upcoming webinars led by the [Widening the Circle Research Team](#). Utilizing their experiences with the Widening the Circle of Concern report, 8th Principle, and Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture, the team is hosting a conversation about their work and learnings, sharing their experience and inviting your questions about anti-racism work with children. You can sign up for these webinars on our Webinars & Trainings Page on our website: <https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/webinars--trainings.html>

So many new resources to use and so many relationships to explore this month! As UU's who honor the interconnected web of existence, we know that we don't just "have" relationships, we **are** our relationships. Blessings to you all as you help our children remember these relationships that make them who they are!

Katie, on behalf of the [entire Soul Matters Team](#)
DRE for Soul Matters, soulmattersre@gmail.com

PS. If you would like to read or review our overall approach to the 21-22 RE Packets, check out our ["Welcome to Soul Matters RE" Google Doc](#).

Calendar Connections

October 2021

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

Interfaith:

- [Feast of St Francis of Assisi](#) (Christian) - Oct. 4
- World Communion Sunday (Christian) - Oct. 3, 2021
- National Observance of [Children's Sabbath](#) - 3rd weekend of October
- [Mawlid al-Nabi](#) - the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad - Oct. 18, 2021
- [Reformation Day](#) (Christian) - Oct. 31
- Martin Luther posts [95 theses](#) - Oct. 31 1517
- [Samhain](#) (Wiccan) - Oct. 31 - Nov. 1 [[more](#) and [more](#)]

Unitarian Universalist:

- Birthday of [e e cummings](#) - Oct. 14
- [Michael Servetus](#) burned at the stake in Geneva - Oct. 27 (1553) (more [here](#))
- UU Merger Vote: Unitarians and Universalists, meeting separately in Syracuse, NY, voted to proceed with consolidation - Oct. 31, 1959. (more [here](#))

National & Cultural Holidays:

- [LGBTQ History Month](#)
- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15)
- [Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Month](#) (more [here](#))
- [ADHD Awareness Month](#)
- Birthday of Mohandas Gandhi - Oct. 2 (1869)
- Thurgood Marshall sworn in as the first African American associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. - Oct. 2, 1967
- Ruth Bader Ginsburg joins the U.S. Supreme Court as its second woman Justice - Oct. 4, 1993
- [Sisters in Spirit Vigils](#) (Canada) - October 4, 2018: Honoring the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)
- NASA launches first peopled mission, Apollo 7 - Oct. 11 (1968)
- [Indigenous Peoples Day](#) / Columbus Day (U.S.) - Oct. 11, 2022 (second Monday of October) - more [here](#)
- Toni Morrison becomes 1st African American woman to win Nobel Prize for Literature - Oct. 8, 1993
- [National Coming Out Day](#) - Oct. 11
- Thanksgiving Day (Canada) - Oct. 11 (second Monday in October)
- John Brown's Raid - Oct. 16 (1859)
- [United Nations Day](#) - Oct. 24
- Intersex Awareness Day - Oct. 26
- Halloween, All Soul's Eve - Oct. 31
- [Dia de los Muertos](#) - Oct.31 - Nov.2

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- Country Music Month (designated Oct. 1970 [by Richard Nixon](#)) more [here](#) and [here](#)
- World Vegetarian Day - Oct. 1
- First episode of Unitarian [Rod Sterling](#)'s "Twilight Zone" - Oct. 1 (1959)
- PBS begins broadcasting - October 5, 1970
- [Mad Hatter Day](#) - Oct. 6
- [World Smile Day](#) - Oct. 6
- Apple introduces new iPod - Oct. 13 (2005)
- [Clergy Appreciation Day](#) - Oct. 10 (second Sunday of October)
- War of the Worlds radio lay causes mass hysteria - Oct. 30 (1938)

Lesson A:

The Skill of Promising

(Core Story: The All Together Quilt**)

Theme Angle:

Making promises is an important part of making friends and cultivating relationships. In our UU faith, making promises is called a covenant. Our UU faith tells us that making promises in a covenant helps us live by the values we believe in, and it also ensures that everyone's unique spirituality is honored and cared for. In other words, our faith tells us, "We make promises to help people feel safe, celebrated and cared for!"

Translating This for Young Children

We make promises to help everyone feel cared for.

Light It!

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

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

Extinguish It!

Signal the end of "sacred time" or "Chalice time" with a short ritual for extinguishing the chalice. It might be just after any of the below sections or at the end of the session. Use a [candle snuffer](#) if you use real candles for dramatic effect, or just blow it out. Here are some resources for you to find the chalice extinguishing words that fits your approach:

- *UUA:* <https://www.uua.org/genre/chalice-extinguishing>
- *Worship Web:* <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/6049.shtml>
- *Katie's Words*

*We gather the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action into our hearts
Back into the world of do and say
Carry it forward into the dawning day.
Go Now in Peace, Amen.*

(Move your arms to express the actions: gather using a cupping motion from the flame of the chalice to your heart, spread that outward again.)

Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

A Quilt and a Covenant

Reflection Object: a quilt or quilted piece

Suggested Script

“Here is a quilt. *[If you have a congregational quilt, show it or visit it, if possible.]* It is made from pieces of fabric stitched together to make one big blanket or quilt. Quilts are often made by a group of people. When working together, the quilters promise to allow everyone to stitch in their own unique designs. Instead of one person creating a blanket and proudly shouting, “Look at what I made!” quilters create together and proudly sign, “Look at what we created together!”

This is also a great way to think about our monthly theme: Cultivating Relationships. Cultivating relationships is a way of saying “Making Friends.”

When you want to be friends with someone, what do you do? You might ask them, “Do you want to be friends?” You try to be nice, to share, and to play together. You might find something special which you can do together with your friend.

Making friends is like making a quilt. You like to make friends and feel warm and happy just like a quilt keeps people comfortable and warm.

So today we’re going to explore how people can make friends and create things together. Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

Lead With Strategy: Who in your congregation is a quilter? Invite them to share some of their favorite designs and quilts and why they love quilting.

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Story)

Suggested Introductory Words:

“Here is our book! **[hold it up]**. And guess what? It’s about quilts!

In this true story, kids and grown-ups at a community center get together to make a quilt. To complete the quilt everyone promises to work together. Everyone gets to take part.

The story is a great reminder that cultivating relationships is about making friends and including everyone.

When everyone gets to take part, friendship is stronger, and on top of that, what gets created is more beautiful than what any one person could create on their own!

The All Together Quilt** by Lizzy Rockwell

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZW2RMcAJ2fE&t=145s>

Reflection Prompts:

- Do you or your family have a quilt?
- When do you wrap yourself up in a special blanket?
- How do you share a blanket with a friend? A fort? A snuggle?

Notes on the Book

**ARAOMC Context from the Widening the Circle Research Team

The WTC team chose this book because it illustrates Beloved Community - people of all ages and backgrounds working together to create a quilt together in a community space that would then benefit all of them by being kept in a community space. The team could see using the quilt theme throughout the year, by quilting pieces for each month’s theme.

Online Permission Note: *Penguin Random House Publishers, [which owns](#) Knopf Publishing, has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#). Just scroll down the section titled “Penguin Random House Publishers.”*

Explore It!

(Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. Choose the one(s) just right for your group! In many cases, these will work as well online as in-person. When a more involved online adaptation or alternative is needed, [we highlight this in purple](#).

Explore It with Fingerplay!

Q is for Quilt

(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Soft warm quilt, I love you so.

You warm me from head to toe.

No more shivers q...q...q.

Made by friends, they are so true.

Soft warm quilt, I love you so.

You warm me from head to toe.

Explore It with a Craft!

Create a Paper Quilt

Scrapbooking paper, tissue paper, magazine clippings, wrapping paper, construction paper could be used. Invite the children to create and glue a design on a piece of paper.

Each child creates a square and the RE leader collects them and puts them together. Glue them all together on a larger piece of paper. Place a pompom at the corners where the papers intersect.

[Online adaptation: Send paper options home and then create quilt squares together on Zoom.](#)

Explore It with Games

Quilt Colors Scavenger Hunt

Look at the actual quilt from the story (or a quilt that the RE director has physically) to do a scavenger hunt for certain items/colors in the quilt.

[Online Adaptation: Have them search in their home environment.](#)

Play Peek a Boo with the quilt

Hide your face with the quilt and then pop it out again. Invite the children to hide their faces, too.

Make a Quilt Tent under a table

Drape the quilt over a table and invite all the children to crawl into the tent. Can they make a "Friendship Tent?" How can they be friends together?

Explore It with an Interview!

Congregational Visitor

In the spirit of cultivating multigenerational relationships, invite a quilter or someone who owns a handmade quilt to attend the group meeting and share their fabrics, quilts and how they learned to quilt. What do they love about quilting? What is the story of their quilt?

[Can be used online or in-person.](#)

Lesson B:

The Skill of Listening & Communicating What You Need (Core Story: Rabbit Listened)

Theme Angle:

Two important parts of cultivating relationships are the skill of listening and the skill of being able to clearly communicate what you need. Our faith has a long history of being committed to these skills. Deep listening shows up prominently in our small group ministries and is now also central in our decentering work as white UUs learn to step back, limit defensiveness and listen to the wisdom and voices of non-white UUs and leaders. We've less emphasized the skill of clearly communicating your needs, and yet our principle of inherent worth clearly calls us to develop that skill of sticking up for ourselves and being bold about our truths. So when it comes to Cultivating Relationships, our faith clearly tells us, "Listen to others and don't be shy about expecting others to listen to you."

Translating this for Young Children

Listen to others to make friends.

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Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

Let the Bell Fully Ring

Reflection Object: a bell or other ringing object

Suggested Script

“Here is a bell. We listen to it. It rings clearly. **[Invite the children to listen to it until the sound fades completely.]** Did you hear how long the sound of the bell lasted? Was it hard for you to silently listen until the ringing was all done?

Well sometimes that’s how it is when we are listening to others. They are telling us something important, but we often don’t stay quiet long enough to hear their entire thought. Or we interrupt them before they are done speaking. How does that feel to you when others don’t fully listen and let you finish? Not so good huh? It makes us feel bad and kind of hurts our relationship with that person.

This is a reminder about how important listening is to making friends. Remember, this month we are exploring the theme of “Cultivating Relationships” and listening carefully is one of the best ways we can make friends. It helps us really understand our friends and what’s important to them. It makes them feel like we care.

So today we’re going to explore a bunch of ways in which listening helps make friends. We’re going to become better “listening friends.”! Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

Lead With Strategy:

Does your congregation have a handbell choir, some of whom could share their sounds and love of handbells?

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Story)

Suggested Introductory Words:

“Today’s story is a great way to explore how listening makes friends.

It’s a story about a little boy who builds a block tower. Then the tower is knocked over. All his friends try to help. But one friend knows how to listen. Let’s listen to the story together!”

The Rabbit Listened

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHPoj53dy8o>

Book: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts:

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- How did you feel when the rabbit snuggled up close to Taylor?
- How could you be like Rabbit and listen?

Online Permission Note: *Dial Books has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#). Just scroll down the section titled “Dial Books”*

Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

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

In many cases, these will work as well online as in-person. When a more involved online adaptation or alternative is needed, we highlight this in purple.

Explore It with Fingerplays

OPEN YOUR HANDS

(A Movement Rhyme)

Open your hands

Then clap, clap, clap

Now, you lay them in your lap.

Two little eyes looking straight ahead.

Two little ears, hearing what is said.

Wiggle Worms

Once there were some little worms.

And all they did was squirm and squirm.

They wiggled and wiggled up and down.

They wiggled and wiggled all around. (Let your children wiggle around for a while)

They wiggled and wiggled and wiggled until,

They were tired and could sit very still. (Have children sit down)

Now they could listen,

Now they could see

All of the things

I have here with me. (Start a game or show n tell)

Explore It with a Game

[Simon Says Game](#)

Practice listening skills in a classic listening game.

Can be offered online or in-person.

Homemade LEGO Listening Game

<http://www.storiesandchildren.com/homemade-lego-listening-game/>

Explore it with an Interview

Congregational Visitor (online or in person)

In the spirit of cultivating multigenerational relationships, invite a member of a handbell choir?

Can be done online or in-person.

Explore it with one of these Mindful Moments

Fading Tone Meditation (online or in person)

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

Listening to sounds. Put your hand on your heart, on your head, on your shoulders when the sounds fade.

A Meditation on Practicing Powerful Pauses (online or in person)

Learning to listen deeply is important in cultivating relationships.

Learning to pause so we can better listen to others or listen to our own needs is a very important tool. Pausing, reflecting, and moving into silence gives us a moment to catch our breath. This mindfulness exercise teaches us about this “practice of powerful pauses.”

Centering:

I invite you to move into our meditation position.

Sit comfortably in your chair or on the floor.

Put your hands on your lap or on your knees.

Sit up nice and tall.

Focus your eyes in front of you.

Find your breath moving in your body by taking in one breath through your nose and then slowly breathing it out through your mouth.

Mindful Moment Instructions:

Here are [two great options from Magination Press](#) to help children learn about “powerful pauses”:

Option #1: Counting the Breath

“Like computers, at times our “operating systems” can benefit from a reboot. How many breaths does it take to reset your nervous system? Begin with five breaths in and out.

Inhale for one count; exhale for one count. (For very young children, start with “breathe in, breathe out” until they grasp the meaning of inhale and exhale.)

Inhale for two counts; exhale for two counts.

Inhale for three counts; exhale for three counts.

Inhale for four counts; exhale for four counts.

Inhale for five counts; exhale for five counts.

Ask your child to notice any changes after the exercise.”

Option #2: Take 5

“A YogaKids classic, this exercise has your child lift one finger with each full breath, until all five fingers are extended. Then, if desired, count backward while lowering one finger at a time with each breath.

Kinesthetic learners can use their hands for a more tactile version of Take 5. Have your child trace one hand with the opposite index finger. Ask him to begin at the base of the thumb, inhaling as he traces up the thumb, then exhaling down the opposite side of the thumb.

Continue breathing up and down each finger. When he finishes on the pinkie finger, he will have taken the “magic five” full breaths.

Another kinesthetic variation is to count objects. Marbles, balls, pebbles, candy—there’s no limit! Pick up one on the inhale; place it down in a new pile on the exhale.”

Lesson C:

The Skill of Rebuilding

(Core Story: Old Joe and the Carpenter/ The Other Side**)

Theme Angle

As a covenantal religion, our faith places relationships and our promises to each other at the center of our faith. Since we're human we sometimes break those promises and hurt those relationships. So apology and repair is necessary and sacred work. So what's one of the ways our faith guides us into cultivating relationships? It tells us to "Get comfortable with the work of apology and repair!"

Translating This for Young Children

It's important to say you are sorry to keep friends.

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Introduce It (Wonder Box)

Building Bridges

Reflection Object: three blocks or small planks of wood (for creating a fence, then a bridge, so they should be able to stand on their ends)

Suggested Script:

“The theme this month is Cultivating Relationships. Another way to say that is “Making Friends.” Sometimes we fight with our friends. When we do this, we build fences between us. **[Place the three blocks on end to build a fence]** It happens in families, between friends, here at church and between people who don’t know each other. It’s part of being human, to make mistakes and break promises whether we mean to or not.

When it happens, we need to dig deep and say I’m sorry so we can still be friends. We need to learn from our mistakes and try to do better. When we show others we’ve learned from our mistakes, those fences we caused begin to come down. **[Take the fence down and build a three block bridge.]** And instead of being a wall separating us, it becomes a bridge connecting us. **[Replace the blocks in a way that looks like a bridge between people]**

So today we’re going to explore saying I’m sorry and what it means to become “bridge builders”! Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

Lead With Strategy: Invite someone who builds with wood to share about things they have built and perhaps to demonstrate the fence and bridge building metaphor with their own items.

Or invite a farmer from your church who works with building fences and have them explain how they need to be built not just to separate animals but also with gates to let them connect with each other and the world beyond the fence.

Tell It and Talk About It

(Story)

Option #1 Old Joe and the Carpenter

Suggested Introductory Words:

Today's story is all about bridge building.

It's about two friends who got into a fight and needed a little help to make up and forgive each other.

It's a good reminder how hard it is to say I'm sorry and how sometimes it takes listening to someone not involved in the fight to help us out.

Let's listen to the story together!"

Old Joe and the Carpenter by Pleasant L. DeSpain

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFO8Kff2s_0

Online Story: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts:

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- How did you feel when the two friends in the story were mean to each other?
- What kinds of arguments have you been in with friends? What happened?
- Has anyone ever helped you work out a fight between you and one of your friends?
- What do you wish would happen when people argue?

Online Permission

Published on the Learning for Justice website of the Southern Poverty Law Center. "[We provide free resources to educators—teachers, administrators, counselors and other practitioners—who work with children from kindergarten through high school....](#)"

Option #2 The Other Side** by Jaqueline Woodson

Suggested Introductory Words:

"Here's a story about two girls, one white and one Black and a fence.

The girls make friends as they find a way to meet on top of the fence that separates the white side of town from the black side of town. Their friendship finds a way to build a bridge across the racism which is around them.

They cultivated a relationship in creative ways even when they were not supposed to pay attention to each other.

The Other Side** by Jaqueline Woodson

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C80HdoDkHxY>

Book: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts:

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- How did you feel when Clover and Annie Paul decided to get around their mothers' rule of not climbing over the fence by sitting on it together instead?
- Have you ever been told not to play with someone? How did that feel?
- When have you experienced a time when children are more open to something than adults?

Notes on the Book****ARAOMC Context from the Widening the Circle Research Team**

Two girls, Clover and Annie, become friends in a small, segregated town. The [author](#) “wanted to write about how powerful kids can be. Clover and Annie fight against segregation by becoming friends. They don’t believe in the ideas adults have about things so they do what they can to change the world. We all have this power.” They made a silent promise together to be friends.

Online Permission Note: *Penguin Random House Publishers, [which owns](#) G.P. Putnam Books for Young Readers, has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#). Just scroll down the section titled “Penguin Random House Publishers.”*

Explore It

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

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Explore It with a Craft!

Building Bridges

Invite the children to build with craft sticks. Can they build a bridge together? Or try peas and toothpicks. What can they create?

[Online Adaptation: Send the craft sticks home and invite the children to build a bridge, then share it.](#)

Explore It with an Interview!

Congregational Visitor

Invite a church member (or two) who is willing to tell a story about getting into a fight at church and how they worked it out.

[Can be done online or in-person.](#)

Explore It with Learning a Carpentry Skill!

Learn to Hammer

Teach the way Katie's father taught her to hammer, as described in her session in [Tapestry of Faith's Toolbox of Faith](#).

Explore It with a Mindfulness Moment!

Meditation - The Feeling of Sorry

Centering:

I invite you to move into our meditation position.

Sit comfortably in your chair or on the floor.

Put your hands on your lap or on your knees.

Sit up nice and tall.

Focus your eyes in front of you.

Find your breath moving in your body by taking in one breath through your nose and then slowly breathing it out through your mouth.

Meditation Suggested Script:

When we make a mistake, it doesn't feel good. We get a sick feeling in our stomach. We feel anxious. Our breathing even gets fast as if our bodies are preparing to run away. And this is what's so great about saying we're sorry. It's scary to say "I'm sorry" but it also feels good, doesn't it? Once someone has accepted our sorry, we feel calm again. Saying the word "sorry" is like breathing out all the bad energy and breathing in soothing air. So for our mindfulness moment today, I want to invite us to feel that good feeling we get when we say we're sorry.

And we're going to do that by first learning how to say sorry in sign language. [teach it: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siQnKSRRg_c]. Now try that yourself. It kind of feels good to rub your chest in a circle like that, doesn't it? It feels soothing; just like when we say sorry.

So let's keep doing the sign but now as you rub your hand in a circle on your chest, take a breath in through your nose and then slowly blow it through your mouth. Now let's try doing that three times in a row. How do you feel? Calmer right? So remember that next time you're feeling bad after making a mistake. Remind yourself of how good it will feel once you stir up the courage to say sorry. It will help the person you are apologizing to and help you too!

Lead With Strategy: Invite a person who knows ASL to teach the sign language.

Lesson D:

The Skill of Caring

(Core Story: I am Love**)

Theme Angle

Cultivating relationships requires empathy and caring. Relationships can't grow with selfishness and meanness. Our faith lifts this up in our commitment to the principle of building "justice, equity and compassion in human relations." It tells us, "None of us can make it on our own and compassion feeds us all."

Translating This for Young Children

Kindness and caring help us be friends.

Light It!

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

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

Extinguish It!

Signal the end of "sacred time" or "Chalice time" with a short ritual for extinguishing the chalice. It might be just after any of the below sections or at the end of the session. Use a [candle snuffer](#) if you use real candles for dramatic effect, or just blow it out. Here are some resources for you to find the chalice extinguishing words that fits your approach:

- *UUA:* <https://www.uua.org/genre/chalice-extinguishing>
- *Worship Web:* <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/6049.shtml>
- *Katie's Words*

*We gather the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action into our hearts
Back into the world of do and say
Carry it forward into the dawning day.
Go Now in Peace, Amen.*

(Move your arms to express the actions: gather using a cupping motion from the flame of the chalice to your heart, spread that outward again.)

Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

Love Each Other

Reflection Object: a heart

Suggested Script:



Can any of you tell me what this hand sign means? [show hand sign like the image to the left]

Love... that's right. And one way we show those close to us that we love them is by being kind and caring for them. So we are a faith that promises to love and care for one another. Can we all do that together? [do the hand sign and say "love each other" together.]

So today, we're going to explore the skill of loving and caring for each other. Are you ready?! Let's begin!"

Lead With Strategy: Invite someone from your congregation's pastoral care team/committee who helps care for the people in your church.

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Story)

Suggested Introductory Words:

“Here’s a great story about the skill of loving and caring for each other called “I am Love.”

The story talks about what we can do to love.

Here we go.

I am Love** by Susan Verde (Author), Peter H. Reynolds (Illustrator)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nuz-aXpBKXU>

Story: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts:

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- How does this make you want to help and care for others?

Notes on the Book

**ARAOMC Context from the Widening the Circle Research Team

The illustrations in this book show children of various race/ethnicity helping each other through hard times. It models allyship at a level children can understand: It talks about seeing someone (in the illustration, a Black character) “going through a storm of hurt and unfairness, of anger and sadness”. It shows one aspect of compassion being “I can listen and not say a word. I can be there. Love is being present.” Another page says, “I can speak softly and choose my words and actions carefully.”

Online Permission

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Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

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

In many cases, these will work as well online as in-person. When a more involved online adaptation or alternative is needed, [we highlight this in purple](#).

Explore It with Fingerplays!

[Heart](#)

I put my hands together,
This is how I start.
I curve my fingers right around,
And I can make a heart!

[My ...Heart](#)

(point to lips) When I say I love you
(hand on heart) It comes from my heart
(point to ear) You hear it in your ear
(point to head) And it sounds very smart
(stand very tall) I love it when you're proud of me
(stretch arms wide) You say it all day long
(point to ear) And when I hear you say it
(hand on heart) My heart sings a merry song

[Where is Thumbkin?](#)

Explore It with a Craft!

Make Hearts and Heart Finger Puppets

Provide red paper, pre-cut into heart shapes of about 2 inches wide. Invite the children to add a design to the heart with markers or crayons.

Or make finger puppets by adding two googly eyes and taping the heart to the child's finger. How can the puppet show love?

[Online adaptation: Send home the hearts and googly eyes and invite the children to make a finger puppet at home, then share it.](#)

Explore it with Yoga!

Try some "heart opening" Yoga poses

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2owM2oqGb8>

Explore It with an Interview!

Congregational Visitor

In the spirit of cultivating multigenerational relationships, invite someone who cares for others, a health care worker, therapist, teacher, someone on your church's pastoral care team or other person who can share how they care for others, and why they chose a caring profession.

Can be done online or in-person.

Lesson E:

The Skill of Being True to You

(Core Story: I am Enough**/Halloween)

Theme Angle

Part of cultivating relationships is practicing the skill of being true to yourself. By honoring your true identity, you encourage other people to be true to themselves, and can have a relationship based on equality, not pretense. At Halloween, many of us pick costumes that represent something we hope to become or some part of us we want to celebrate. So with this session we celebrate the joy of Halloween and the joy of who we are!

Translating This for Young Children

Be who you are inside to be a good friend.

Light It!

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(Move your arms to express the actions: gather using a cupping motion from the flame of the chalice to your heart, spread that outward again.)

Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

Your True Spirit for Halloween

Reflection Object: a mask

Suggested Script: Here is a mask. We wear them at Halloween and can pretend to be someone or something else. But it's not always about pretending to be something different from who we are, is it? Sometimes we pick costumes that are like some part of us. If we feel brave, we might choose to be a superhero. If we like the way we are smart and like to figure things out, we might choose to be a scientist. If we like sports, we might dress up like a soccer player. If we like jokes, we might dress up like a mischievous monster.

It's a way of telling the world what's special about you. And when we let others know what we like about ourselves, we also become closer to them. They get to know us better and we get to know them better.

So today we're going to explore making friends by using the skill of telling people who we are. It's all about being true to who we are! Let's begin!

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Story)

Suggested Introductory Words:

“The story “I am Enough” is a great way to explore being true to yourself.

In this story, there are girls with different skin tones and body shapes. As a child, the author of the book was teased for having deaf parents. She wrote the book to empower children to love and accept themselves.

The story is a great reminder that it helps to be friends when you are true to who you are.”

I am Enough** by Grace Byers (Author), Keturah A. Bobo (Illustrator)

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mp4GZ1I0pfY&feature=youtu.be>

Reflection Prompts:

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- The story talks about things that make the children special. Can you tell us something that is special about you?
- Who reminds you that you are special?

Notes on the Book

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

The book depicts girls of diverse body shapes and skin tones. Author Grace Byers is an actress and activist, and a multicultural, biracial CODA (Child of Deaf Adults). Grace was bullied throughout her childhood, which inspired her first picture book, the New York Times bestseller *I Am Enough*—an ode to the empowerment of young girls.

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

Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Explore It with an Interview!

Congregational Visitor

In the spirit of cultivating multigenerational relationships, invite someone who has been on a personal journey and is comfortable in being true to themselves. Invite them to share their story.

Can be offered online or in-person.

Explore It with a Craft!

Make a Mask

Here are some resources for making simple masks:

[Color Your Own Superhero Masks from Oriental Trading](#)

[10 Crafty Mask Ideas](#) (we love the emoticon mask and the Cotton Ball Ghost Mask!)

Make an Inner Glow Light

Provide an LED tea light and some playdough. Invite the children to create a candle holder out of the playdough and place the tea light inside.

Online Adaptation: Include tealights and playdough in a supply box to be sent home and invite the children to make a glow light at home, then share their creation.

Explore It with Costumes!

Invite the children to come to the group time in costume. Or if you have a dress up center, invite them to dress up.

Online Adaptation: Invite the children to dress up at home in a costume which represents a part of themselves and share it online.

Children's Chapel & Time for All Ages Suggestions

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

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

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

We hope both lists support whichever approach you use!

From This RE Packet

The All Together Quilt by Lizzy Rockwell**

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZW2RMcAJ2fE&t=145s>

Making a quilt is like making a covenant.

Jingle Dancer by Cynthia Letitch Smith**

Video: <https://acmillard.wordpress.com/2013/01/31/the-messiah-is-among-you/>

Book: [HERE](#)

"Pure Love on the Dance Floor" Video of 4 Jingle Dancers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4SQ26uwaYQ>

Love and support in an extended modern Indigenous family.

Old Joe and the Carpenter by Pleasant L. DeSpain

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFO8Kff2s_0

Online Story: [HERE](#)

Two good friend farmers get into an argument. A carpenter arrives and Old Joe asks her to build a fence. Instead, she builds a bridge and the two farmers reconcile.

The Parable of the Long Spoons

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhU5JEd-XRo>

Online Story: [HERE](#)

Lea's Story and Song: <https://www.hopesingseternal.me/stories/maybe>

I am Enough by Grace Byers (Author), Keturah A. Bobo (Illustrator)**

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mp4GZ10pfY&feature=youtu.be>

When we are true to ourselves, we can be in relationship with others in an equal way.

Additional Wisdom Tales, Story Books & Message Moments

A Pillow Full of Feathers By Shoshannah Brombacher

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/812861/jewish/A-Pillow-Full-of-Feathers.htm

A Rabbi instructs a man who gossiped and destroyed his relationships.

The Legend of the Three Sisters (Oneida and Ganondagan Nations)

<https://ganondagan.org/learn/legend-of-the-three-sisters>

Cultivating the relationship between corn, beans and squash.

Born into Covenant (Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker)

<https://revgretchenhaley.wordpress.com/2012/06/01/top-ten-stories-for-all-unitarian-universalists-stories-9-10-and-a-bonus/>

Parker's life mirrored that of her relatives, born into relationships that define them.

The Tale of the Lion's Whisker (Ethiopia)

<https://storiestogrowby.org/story/the-tale-of-the-lions-whisker-a-bedtime-story-from-africa/>

How a woman learns the value of patient, loving care.

Thick Stories (Rev. Christine Robinson)

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/listen-heart>

The value of listening deeply to one another.

Darkness and Light

<https://philipchircop.wordpress.com/2013/07/17/darkness-and-light/>

When can you tell the darkness from the light?

Respect and the Platinum Rule

<https://legacycultures.com/respect-platinum-rule/>

Treat others how they would like to be treated.

Crown: An Ode to a Fresh Cut by Derrick Barnes, illustrated by Gordon C. James.**

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1yCg2PdeEA>

The importance of the role that a barber shop plays in a young black boy's life. Increasing awareness of places you might not expect for relationships to be nurtured and cultivated.

Min Jee's Lunch by Elizabeth Kleinrock**

Read aloud: <https://youtu.be/2ydEPIrluA>

Full text: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2020/min-jees-lunch>

When a classmate says Min Jee's Korean lunch is "how everyone got sick," will her friends speak up?

When Aidan Became a Brother by Kyle Lukoff and Kaylani Juanita**

Book: [HERE](#)

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

Celebrates the changes in a transgender boy's life, from his initial coming-out to becoming a big brother.

Making a Paper People Chain Message Moment

Cultivating relationships means being part of a community. Cut the paper people chain while chatting about the ways that your congregation cultivates relationships. Invite everyone to cut out a paper people chain and then tape them all together as a grand finale to hang in the social hall.

Online How to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZo68K6vWZ4>

Opportunities for Leader Support

Come share together

Online Zoom Labs, Join Us!

Zoom Information:

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

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

Password: 333

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

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

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

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

Brainstorming Labs

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

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

- **Wed. Aug 4, 2021, 1 p.m. ET Nov. theme Holding History**
- **Wed. Sept 2, 2021, 1 p.m. ET Dec. theme Opening to Joy**

Other Resources and Sources of Support

RE Leader Facebook Page

Don't forget about our RE Leader Support Facebook page. Here is where our colleagues post bulletin board pictures, share books, and ideas. It's a great ongoing source of support. Your colleagues are available to support you at the click of a button and with the ease of a post:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/545202255591601/>

Inspiration Facebook Page

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

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

Soul Matters Music Playlists

We create two different playlists on the monthly theme each month: one in Spotify and another in YouTube. Music connects us to the themes in a way like nothing else.

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

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

Chalice Home Guide

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

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

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

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

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

Soulful Home Family Guides

Invite your parents to explore the themes at home with their family by subscribing to our monthly parent guides, **Soulful Home**. Here's the link to the Soulful Home page on our website:

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

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

Soul Matters RE Packet Author and Support Team

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

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

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

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



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