



*Soul Matters*

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# Holding History



RE Resources  
Pre-K - First Grade

November 2021

# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>WELCOME TO HOLDING HISTORY</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>CALENDAR CONNECTIONS</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>LESSON A: PEOPLE DIE, LOVE DOESN'T</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>LESSON B: STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE</b>                         | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>LESSON C: FREEING HEALING AND BEAUTY WITH TRUTHFUL TELLING</b>                           | <b>14</b> |
| <b>LESSON D: SEVEN GENERATIONS - LOOKING BACK &amp; LOOKING FORWARD WITH RESPONSIBILITY</b> | <b>19</b> |
| <b>OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADER SUPPORT</b>   | <b>28</b> |

# Welcome to Holding History

Welcome to the Soul Matters Multi-Platform Packet for Pre-K through First Grades for the month of November. 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 exposes the need for humanity to change and adjust in key ways. Each month we will explore a different skill that we need to develop or lean into 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 "Hold History." For our littlest ones, this translates into "Hugging Stories." We will use both terms so that our youngest children hear the theme just like the big kids. We will hold the stories close to us to remember. We are so excited about exploring this together!

There are four ways we will tease apart the idea of holding history/hugging stories with our children. Here they are:

**Lesson A: People Die, Love Doesn't** - On holding on to the memory of loved ones and the imprint they've left on us.

**Lesson B: Standing on the Shoulders of Those Who Come Before** - On honoring the work that's been passed to us and holding on to the responsibility of moving the work forward.

**Lesson C: Freeing Healing and Beauty with Truthful Telling** - On holding up the hidden, painful and shameful parts of history as a means of healing and repair.

**Lesson D: Seven Generations - Looking Back and Looking Forward with Responsibility** - On honoring our responsibility to those who come after us and being aware that we hold their futures in our hands.

I am particularly excited about the exploration of how we free healing and beauty with truthful telling of the ways in which the history of people of color have been erased. By recognizing the damages, we move forward into wholeness, then we move forward into the healing, from which emerges the beauty of lives once trampled by racism. I loved watching the PBS Learning Media "Molly of Denali" episode about Grandpa's Drum. This clip, suggested by our Widening the Circle Research team, gently revisits the pain of residential schools for Indigenous children. When Grandpa finds his drum and his singing voice, he sheds tears of joy. I love the way this reminds us that being honest about our history is not just about the truth, but also about unleashing beauty and gifts into the world, that are gifts to us all. It gives me hope for our future.

With that in mind, I wish beauty for you all this month. As you look back and forward, may it change the way you experience your present, helping you and the children with whom you journey to notice the many blessings surrounding us all.

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

*Legend:*

*Purple Font* - online adaptations and alternatives

*\*\* books recommended by the Widening the Circle Research Team*

# Calendar Connections

## November 2021

### Interfaith:

- [All Saints Day](#) (Christian) - Nov. 1 (more [here](#))
- [All Souls Day](#) - Nov. 2 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Samhain](#) (Wiccan) - Oct. 31 - Nov. 1 [[more](#)]
- [Diwali: Festival of Lights](#) (Hindu) - Starts Nov. 4, 2021
- [Advent](#) (Christian) Nov. 28 -Dec. 24, 2021 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Hanukkah](#) (Jewish) - Nov.28 -Dec. 6, 2021 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

### Unitarian Universalist:

- [James Luther Adams](#) birthday - Nov. 12 [[more](#)]
- [Francis David](#) died in prison on Nov. 15 (1579) (more [here](#))

### National Holidays & Cultural:

- [Native American Heritage Month](#)
- Alzheimer's Awareness Month
- [Dia de Los Muertos](#)/Day of the Dead - Oct.31 - Nov. 2
- Carol Mosely Braun became the 1st African American woman elected to the US Senate - Nov. 3, 1992
- U.S. Elections - Nov. 2, 2021
- James Weldon Johnson & J. Rosamond Johnson composed "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" - Nov. 6, 1900
- Birthday of [Dorothy Day](#) - Nov. 8 (1897)
- [Veterans Day](#) - Nov. 11
- [Remembrance Day](#) (Canada) - Nov. 11 (observed Nov. 12)
- U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation on public buses was unconstitutional - Nov. 13, 1956
- [Jamar Clark](#) is shot by police in Minneapolis - Nov. 16, 2015
- [Transgender Day of Remembrance](#) - Nov. 20 [[more](#)]
- [Thanksgiving Day](#) - Nov. 28
- [Tamir Rice](#) is shot by a police officer after carrying a toy gun in Ohio - Nov. 23 (2014)
- Grand jury decision not to indict Officer Darren Wilson for the killing of Michael Brown, sparking protests in Ferguson and cities across the U.S., including Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Boston. - Nov. 24 (2014)
- [Origin of Species](#) published & [Evolution Day](#) - Nov. 24
- Black Panther Party [founded](#) - [Late Nov](#) (1966), exact day in Nov. varies among sources

### For Fun and On the Fringe:

- Sesame Street" first aired on PBS - Nov. 10, 1969
- Birthday of Elizabeth Cady Stanton -Nov. 12, 1815
- Mickey Mouse's Birthday - Nov. 18, 1928
- Charles Schulz B Day - No. 26 (1922) (more [here](#) and [here](#) and on his [spirituality](#))
- Apple introduces new iPod - Oct. 13 (2005)
- [Clergy Appreciation Day](#) - Oct. 10 (second Sunday of October)

# Lesson A:

## People Die, Love Doesn't

### (Core Story: Badger's Parting Gifts)

#### Theme Angle

Our theme this month is Holding History. One of the key ways we UUs hold history is to remember that people die, but love doesn't. We have fond memories in our hearts that make us smile. We also sometimes feel like there are messages and voices in the "ear" of our heart. These are the memories of loved ones and pets who have died who can guide us, inspire us, and support us through the memory of who they were, how they lived and how they loved. So *holding on to the history* of who they were is no small thing. We wouldn't be who we are without it.

#### Translating This for Young Children

People die, but love doesn't.

## 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)

### Hugging Stories

**Reflection Object:** a book

**Suggested Script**

“Here is a book. We read it to hear stories. When someone dies, we remember them, in all the ways that they lived and loved and taught us. The memories become a story. This month our theme is “Holding History.” Another way of saying it is “Hugging Stories.” [Pass around the book so each child can hug it.] We can hug the memories and stories close to us and remember. When we hold the memories close, we feel close to the person or pet who has died. The person has died, but the love doesn’t die.

So today we’re going to explore a bunch of ways in which holding tight the memories of loved ones allows them to comfort us still. Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

**Lead With Strategy:** Who in your congregation has held a memorial service for a loved one, or participated in a service of remembrance? Perhaps this is a staff person who conducts memorial services or an officiant. Invite them to share how memories of loved ones who have died keep alive in their heart.

# Tell It and Talk About It!

## (Story)

### Suggested Introductory Words

“A great way to explore death and love is by sharing this book [**hold it up**]. And guess what? It’s about how some friends remember someone who has died. In this story, the friends remember Badger. They hug his memory and stories close. And as they do, they tell us that one of the ways we hold on to history is by remembering the ones we love. By remembering that love, the world can seem right again.

### Badger’s Parting Gifts

Book: [HERE](#)

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

### Reflection Prompts

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- Have you ever had something or someone die?
- Do you have a memory or story about someone who died?
- Did you feel sad like Badger’s friends?
- Did you feel happier when you remembered nice things about the person who died?

### Online Permission Note

*Harper Collins 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 “Harper Collins”*

# 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 an activity doesn't work for both in person and online, we offer an online adaptation or alternative and highlight it in purple.*

### Leader Background for talking about death with preschoolers:

Sesame Street <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/24/716702066/death-talking-with-kids-about-the-end>

### Explore It with Songs

#### [Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star](#)

Sometimes we look at the stars when we wonder about death and love.

#### [Skidamarink](#)

Simple song about love to reassure and reinforce the idea of loving support.

### Explore It with a Walk in Nature

Badger's friends play in nature. Being in the natural world reminds all of us that there is a cycle of life and death, that death is natural. We are soothed by nature.

### Explore It with Puppets

Use puppets for asking the children about death and what they know. Give a puppet or stuffie to each child and have them engage in a talk about death. "What does lion puppet know about death?" "What stories does the frog puppet remember about his grandfather who died?" "Who died in bear's family?"

### Explore It with an Interview

#### Congregational Visitor

In the spirit of cultivating multigenerational relationships, invite a person (a minister or officiant) who has held a memorial service at the church or participated in the service of remembrance to share more about the service and the meaning it held for them.

### Explore It with a Memory Tree Ritual

*The powerful part of this activity is the sight of a leafless and "lifeless" tree on the table in front of the children at first. Then as the children finish and hang their "leaves," the tree slowly takes on color and life, just as bringing the memories of our loved ones brings color and life into our lives.*

#### Suggested Script

"We are going to make a Memory Tree. A Memory Tree is a way to remember those we have loved and lost to death. First, we will draw a picture of your loved one (person or pet) on a leaf, (usually made of different colors of construction paper). Then we draw on the opposite side of the "leaf" the gift(s) they gave you. These would be some of the things you remember the most. Especially

during our month of Holding History, these “leaves” remind us of the gifts loved ones gave us that we want to “hold on to.”

## Details: How to do it & Tips

- **Setting Things Up:** For a larger group, use a 3-5 five-gallon bucket, fill it with sand, and put it on a table or floor. For a smaller group, use a #10 can and a smaller branch and place it on a table. Cut a bare tree branch large enough to mimic a tree when placed into the bucket. Create leaves from construction paper or use [pre-made leaf cut outs](#), then take a hole punch and make a small hole near the stem of the leaf. Tie a loop of yarn through the hole, large enough that the loop can serve as a “hook” to hang the leaves on one of the tree branches. Invite the children to draw the name of the loved one and their gift with markers and colored pencils.
- **Ritual Process:** Have reflective music playing during the time when the children are writing and drawing. For instance, [Autumn Leaves](#), by Eva Cassidy. Hang the leaves when they are finished. Invite children, if they are finished early, to make another.  
Finish with a short blessing:

We’ve hung our leaves on the Memory Tree.  
The tree has taken on color and life,  
just as the memories of our loved ones bring color and life into our lives.  
Amen, Blessed be.

Note: If you wish to explore offering the Memory Tree as a Multigenerational Ritual as part of a Worship Service, see the [Memory Tree Ritual Google Doc](#) for a description.

# Lesson B: Standing on the Shoulders of Those Who Came Before (Story: The Undefeated\*\*)

## Theme Angle

An important part of holding history is the understanding that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. It's a special phrase, [made famous by Isaac Newton](#).

Even very famous people learned and grew from people who came before. For instance, one author describes how Former President Obama liked Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s quote, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." King paraphrased it from the Unitarian minister Theodore Parker. In his sermon given in the 1850's, Parker said: "I do not pretend to understand the moral universe. The arc is a long one. My eye reaches but little ways. I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by experience of sight. I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends toward justice." Each person learns and grows from the people who came before. Over 167 years, from 1853 to 2017, Obama stood on the shoulders of King, who stood on the shoulders of Parker.

So when it comes to holding history, our faith clearly tells us, "Honor those upon whose shoulders you stand."

## Translating This for Young Children

We honor people who came before us. They are a part of us.

## Light It!

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## Extinguish 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)

### A Tower of Blocks or a Matryoshka Doll

**Reflection Object:** manipulatives, like blocks, to make a tower or a [Matryoshka Doll](#)

#### **Suggested Script**

“Here are some blocks. I stack them up and make a tower. One on top of the other, making a stack. [Or if you are lucky enough to have a Matryoshka Doll, adapt to show how each small doll is part of the bigger doll.]

That’s how it is when we hold history. We stand on the shoulders of others who come before. That’s a special phrase we use to describe how we learn and grow from the people who came before us. We are a part of all of the people who came before us.

So today we’re going to explore a bunch of ways in which we stand on the shoulders of those who came before. Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

# Tell It and Talk About It!

## (Story)

### Suggested Introductory Words

“Today’s story is a great way to explore how we stand on the shoulders of those who came before. It’s a story about the people who persevered. It’s a story about the African Americans who by their example help us keep on going. We hold history by standing on the shoulders of those who came before us. Let’s listen to the story together!”

### **The Undefeated\*\* by Kwame Alexander, illustrated by Kadir Nelson**

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHIWtI8PNk>

Book: [HERE](#)

### Reflection Prompts

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- When did an adult (family, friend, or neighbor) help you?
- When have you felt like you were able to do something because of those who came before you?

### Notes on the Book

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

The WTC team chose this book because of its appropriateness for the theme of Holding History. History is often recorded by those in power in the dominant culture. When listening to this story as adults we might realize how many of these names we do not recognize, yet we don’t question why we don’t know them. If given a white counterpart in history, we could probably easily think of several. Accountability means revisiting history, looking at the stories that aren’t told and questioning why. Learning and sharing what we learn along the way. Adrienne Summerlot created for use in her congregation a [companion piece](#) from the footnotes of the book *The Undefeated*. Real images and difficult topics are included, we recommend you view this companion file on your own before looking through it with your class or child.

#### **Online Permission Note**

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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 an activity doesn't work for both in person and online, we offer an online adaptation or alternative and **highlight it in purple**.*

### Explore It with Blocks and Manipulatives

Make a tower of blocks or LEGO's to represent standing on the shoulders of those who came before. Who would make up the tower you stand on top of?

### Explore It with Sculpture

Give pieces of tin foil to each child. Invite them to [sculpt a figure](#). After they form it, make another who can stand on its shoulders. Make a chain of figures, standing on each other's shoulders.

### Explore It with a Matryoshka Doll

If you are lucky enough to have one of these dolls, invite the children to gently play with it.

### Explore It with Songs by the Greats in the Book

Listen to some smooth jazz from some of the greats mentioned in today's book!

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3BLcIya15glSHuM5wwcbAj?si=6LWNOpUTRUWYB3-Nd9cBOA&nd=1>

How do they make you feel? Does your body want to move in a certain way?

### Explore it with an Interview

#### **Congregational Visitor (online or in person)**

In the spirit of cultivating multigenerational relationships, invite someone who has accomplished something in their life and can share the story of who inspired them, guided them, and supported them.

## Explore it with a Mindful Moment

### A Creative Visualization about Standing on the Shoulders of Those Who Came Before

#### 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:

Now close your eyes if you are comfortable. Imagine your body is very tense then relaxed.

First tense your toes, feet and calves. [Pause] Say ahh while you relax them. [Pause]

Tense your knees, thighs and hips. Say ahh while you relax them. [Pause]

Tense your chest, arms and shoulders. Say ahh while you relax them. [Pause]

Tense your mouth, eyes and whole face. Say ahh while you relax them. [Pause]

Now your body is relaxed, feeling calm and strong. [Pause]

Now imagine you are becoming lighter and lighter until you are floating among clouds. [Pause]

Imagine looking around and seeing all of the people who have helped you, below, floating with you.

[Pause]

Each person is gently standing on the shoulders of the next person. [Pause]

They are holding the ankles of the person above them and balancing delicately together in a long line.

[Pause]

Look down. Who do you see? Is it your family, your grandparents, a special teacher? [Pause]

You see a long chain of people, floating and gently standing on the shoulders of those who came before.

Each person is smiling at you, encouraging you as they look up. [Pause]

You feel their support and see the pride in their eyes. [Pause]

You smile back and nod your thanks to them for their support. [Pause]

Slowly, each person opens their arms wide and releases the ankles of the person above them. [Pause]

As the line gently floats apart, the people slowly spiral away and fade from view. [Pause]

You end up alone again, and smile, remembering that long line of shoulders to stand on. [Pause]

Your body becomes heavier, and it floats down to the here and now, where you land with a gentle touch. You stay relaxed, feeling the weight of your body against the chair or floor. When you are ready, open your eyes and rejoin us now.

# Lesson C:

## Freeing Healing and Beauty with Truthful Telling

(Core Stories: Stolen Words\*\*/ Grandpa's Drum\*\*)

### Theme Angle

The theme this month is Holding History. Our faith places truthful telling of history at the center of our principles. In our [first principle](#), we promise to value the worth and dignity of every person. In our [fourth principle](#), we value the search for what is true.

When we want to tell the real story, it's not just that we want to be honest and want to tell the full story. It's also because part of the story has been locked up. And by locking up the real story, we erase the people of color in the story, we not only cause pain, but we prevent their gifts from flowing out into the world. As part of our Unitarian Universalist faith, we want to resist and defy the racism in our country that wants to keep the truthful telling hidden. We want truthful tellings so that we can find the broken places and also let the beauty and healing emerge.

### Translating This for Young Children

When bad things happen, we want to help and heal the bad things. We want to be anti-racists.

## Light It!

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- *Katie's Words*

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Carry it forward into the dawning day.  
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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)

## Truthful Telling

**Reflection Object:** a book (another book, also used in Session A. If the children remember, emphasize that this is another way we hug stories close.)

**Suggested Script:**

“Here is a book. We love story books. We hug stories close. Can you hug the book? [Pass it around.]

We hug the stories about people who have been forgotten, whose stories aren’t told. We want these stories to be told, we want them to be told with the truth.

That’s what has happened to the history of this country when we forget and erase parts of our history because they were about people of color. It’s a story that should make us all feel cheated. And so we hug these stories close. It is one way of being anti-racists, being against the racism which has caused bad things to happen.

When we want to tell the real story, it's not just that we want to be honest and want to tell the full story. It’s also because part of the story has been locked up. And by locking up the real story, we erase the people of color in the story, we not only cause pain, but we prevent their gifts from flowing out into the world. We want to let the beauty and healing come out.

So today we’re going to explore what happens when a story comes out and healing can begin. Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

# Tell It and Talk About It (Story)

## Option #1 - Stolen Words\*\*

### Suggested Introductory Words

Today's story is all about telling the truth about something that happened to Native peoples across North America. It's about a grandfather who was sent to a residential school as a child and had his language, name and culture taken away. It's a good reminder how history needs to include the truthful stories of what happened to Native Peoples. By knowing the true story, all peoples can start to heal.

Let's listen to the story together!"

### Stolen Words by Melanie Florence

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4TA88cz7HU>

Book: [HERE](#)

### Reflection Prompts

- What part of the story will you remember the most?
- How did you feel when the grandfather described the residential school?
- Have you ever had something taken from you? How did it make you feel?
- What do you wish would happen for the people who were sent to such schools?

**Online Permission Note:** *Second Story Press has authorized the book "Stolen Words" for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#).*

## Option #2 - Video: Grandpa's Drum (Molly of Denali™/PBS LEARNING MEDIA)

### Suggested Introductory Words

"Here's a video clip from the show Molly of Denali called "Grandpa's Drum."

Molly's grandfather stopped singing his songs when the teachers at his boarding school demanded only English. Molly helps find her Grandfather's drum and bring back his songs.

It's a good reminder how history needs to include the truthful stories of what happened to Native Peoples. By knowing the true story, all peoples can start to heal.

Let's watch the show together!"

### Grandpa's Drum (Molly of Denali™/PBS LEARNING MEDIA) (start at 1 min - 12:05 min)

Video: <https://rmpbs.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/mod19-soc-grandpasdrum/grandpas-drum-molly-of-denali/>

### Reflection Prompts

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- How did you feel when Molly and Tooeey discovered why Grandpa didn't sing?
- Have you ever been told not to sing?
- When have you experienced a time when your own heritage is made to seem bad?

### Notes on the Book

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

The WTC Research Team chose these resources because both address Boarding (Reeducation) Schools and are own-voices stories. They address the realities of colonialism and white supremacy culture while decentering whiteness by showing the joy in reclaiming identities and telling the story from the point of view of the oppressed peoples.

The WTC Research Team also notes that leaders need to include talking about "What do we do now?" and "How do we start to heal?" Leaders should note that this is RECENT history. There are still people alive who lived through this.

- Loss of language - [Saving America's Endangered Languages](#)
- <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/04/13/pandemic-native-american-languages-481081>

Leaders may also want to talk about the current issues facing indigenous peoples, especially with the pandemic, and how their genocide and oppression has still not been addressed to this day. Depending on your location, leaders will want to research action steps and places to donate and support. Thanksgiving Sunday offering would be an ideal way.

#### **Online Permission Note**

*PBS Learning Media has authorized the video "Grandpa's Drum" for [online educational use as a stream-only source](#).*

# 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 an activity doesn't work for both in person and online, we offer an online adaptation or alternative and *highlight it in purple*.

### Explore It with a Discussion and Reflection

“Children may be curious about why Grandpa was sent away to school and why his traditions and way of life were forbidden. Explain that Alaska Native people, like other groups considered “different,” were not treated equally. Many people did not respect how Native Americans/Alaska Natives talked, sang, or dressed. Help children recall that Shyahtsoo’s dark-haired Native American doll was replaced by the school with a blonde, blue-eyed doll. Shyahtsoo remembers, “We were made to feel bad about who we were. Of the way our people did things.” Point out that Shyahtsoo’s granddaughter is shown playing with an Alaska Native doll, indicating that things have begun to change.

Children in your class may follow a wide variety of customs. After acknowledging that variety, discuss the idea of honoring your heritage or family traditions. How do Molly and Tooeey do that? How does your family do that? Examples might include serving special foods on holidays or birthdays, telling stories about the past, looking at old pictures, using naming customs, and so on. (Note: Some children may not know a lot about their families, or are adopted or in foster care; adapt this discussion as needed.)” - from Grandpa’s Drum [Teaching Tips](#)

### Explore It by learning Cree Vocabulary

[Stolen Words - Teacher's Guide](#) (pg. 5)

### Explore It with Sharing Foods from the Ethnic or Cultural Heritages of the Group

Invite children to describe and share the special foods which they share as a family, from their own ethnic or cultural heritage. What special breads do they make, or what special foods do they eat for holidays? In advance, invite families to share these foods if safe practices allow.

**Variation:** Share special music from their heritages. Invite the children to dance to the music.

### Explore It with a Thanksgiving Sunday Offering

Consider designating the Thanksgiving Sunday offering as a collection towards an organization which supports Indigenous Peoples as a way to help heal. Children can help collect the offering and donate to it themselves. Research your local First Nations organizations or check out these National ones:

- NCAI (National Congress of American Indians) <https://www.ncai.org/donate>
- Best Native Charities by Powwows.com <https://www.powwows.com/giving-tuesday/>

# Lesson D:

## Seven Generations - Looking Back & Looking Forward with Responsibility

(Core Story: I Sang You Down from the Stars)

### Theme Angle

There is a principle called [“Seven Generations,”](#) which talks about the importance of looking back in order to move forward in a deeper way. It is a principle passed down in history from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Iroquois), which is [one of the first and longest lasting participatory democracies in the world](#). The idea of the Seven Generations is to be in relationship with the three generations before you and the three generations that will come after you. The message for us is this: When you truly honor those who came before you, you can't help but feel a deeper responsibility to those who come after. This message of responsibility is captured well by a website called Indian Country Today.

“It is possible that many of us have known or will know our great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Even if we aren't fortunate enough to have been in the physical presence of those who came before us, we usually have stories, songs, and photos that have been shared so that we feel a connection. We also want to make sure our kids and grandkids are healthy, safe and aware of where they come from. [So, counting our own generation—ourselves, siblings, and cousins—we are accountable to those seven generations, ...](#)”

It's all a beautiful reminder that holding history inevitably involves holding responsibility or as [Ron \(Deganadus\) McLester](#) puts it:

“This means that our choices, our behaviors and our mistakes reverberate that far throughout history.”

### Translating This for Young Children

We have been taken care of by our grandparents. We will take care of the world for the children of the future.

# 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)

### Seven Generations and Sharing Cookies

**Reflection Object:** A bag of Cookies (or other food that is individually wrapped)

#### Suggested Script

Here is a bag of cookies (use pre-wrapped individual cookies to be COVID safe or other pre-wrapped food).  
[Ask for two volunteers from among the children.]

How might we share them? We divide up the cookies fairly, right?

I give two to [Name.] It is their responsibility to pass them on to [Name. Have them do so.] Now, will my two volunteers pass on cookies to the rest of the group? [Share the cookies, ideally in a way that invites each child to *pass on* the cookies.]

When we've been given something from someone else, it's our responsibility to pass it on.

Grandparents passed on their care and support to you. You can pass on your care and support to children who will come after you.

There is a principle called "[Seven Generations.](#)" It is an idea passed down in history from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Iroquois). The idea of the Seven Generations is to be in relationship with the grandparents of the world and the three generations of children that will come after you.

So today, we're going to explore how thinking of seven generations, the past and future, can help us feel responsible and connected. Are you ready?! Let's begin!"

#### Leader Background:

"It is possible that many of us have known or will know our great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Even if we aren't fortunate enough to have been in the physical presence of those who came before us, we usually have stories, songs, and photos that have been shared so that we feel a connection. We also want to make sure our kids and grandkids are healthy, safe and aware of where they come from. [So, counting our own generation—ourselves, siblings, and cousins—we are accountable to those seven generations, ...](#)"

It's all a beautiful reminder that holding history inevitably involves holding responsibility or as [Ron \(Deganadus\) McLester](#) puts it:

"This means that our choices, our behaviors and our mistakes reverberate that far throughout history."

# Tell It and Talk About It!

## (Story: I Sang You Down from the Stars)

**I Sang You Down from the Stars** by Tasha Spillett-Sumner (Author), Michaela Goade (Illustrator)

### Suggested Introductory Words

Taking care of each other is a way to hug the stories close to us. Feel how much this mother loves her baby to come.

### I Sang You Down from the Stars

**Video:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyFHRN1nJ\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyFHRN1nJ_Q)

**Book:** [HERE](#)

### Reflection Prompts

- What part of the story will you remember most?
- What are the stories about your birth?

### Online Permission Note

*Little, Brown Book Publishers has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#). Just scroll down the section titled "Little, Brown Book Publishers."*

# 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 a Song

#### [Rock a Bye Baby](#)

Take care of future children and sing this classic song while cradling a baby or pretend baby.

### Explore It with a Craft

#### **Make 7 Generation People Drawings**

Invite the children to draw the three generations before them (Great-Grandparents, Grandparents, Parents) then themselves, then the three generations after them (their children, their grandchildren, their great-grandchildren).

### Explore it with Games

*Try these three games with themes of backwards and forwards, just like the Seven Generations.*

#### **Forward and Backwards**

<https://ministrytoyouth.com/game-moving-forward-when-everything-seems-backwards/>

#### [Hopscotch](#)

Throw the rock forward through numbers 1 - 8, then backwards through numbers 8 - 1.

#### [Hide and Seek](#)

Another classic game with counting down as a part.

### Explore It by Sharing Family Names

Invite the children to learn and share the names from their past generations, if they know them. For instance, “my grandmother’s name was Thelma Engle Covey.” Do they know the full name of each parent? What is their own full name? What would they name their children? Middle names? Have some fun by imagining future names of great-grandchildren.

Be sensitive to children who don’t know their past generations and invite them to share chosen family names - people who they admire or beings (like pets) who lived in the past.

## Explore It with a Breath Cycle about the Seven Generations

*This meditation is a way to imagine the seven generations, those before and those after. The meditation is done in pairs so that there is a living breathing being accompanying you during the practice, similar to the presence of the generations. You may wish to play a [partner game](#) to divide into pairs before starting the meditation. The meditation starts and ends with the sound of a bell.*

### Centering:

#### [Ring the bell.]

Let's now get into our meditation positions.

First, find a partner.

Sitting or standing tall, with their back resting against their partner's back, begin mindful breathing

Focus your eyes in front of you or close them.

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: Back-to-Back Breathing with Breath Cycles

#### [Ring the bell.]

I invite you to imagine each of the seven generations in a cycle of breathing. Each breath cycle represents one generation. Each generation is a part of the breath. While you breathe imagine each generation breathing as you feel the breathing of your partner. They are there supporting you and you are supporting them.

**The first breath cycle** is for ourselves. Put both hands on your belly.

Take three slow deep breaths in and out to see if you can feel your hands being moved.

Answer the following questions silently, in your mind.

- What is moving your hands? Is it the air filling your lungs?
- Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
- Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
- Can you hear your breath?
- Can you feel your partner breathing?

Imagine our generation. Of siblings, cousins and friends in the middle of the generations. **[PAUSE]**

**The second breath cycle** is for the breaths of the parents, those who are caregivers.

Answer the following questions silently, in your mind.

- Feel the air filling your lungs and belly.
- Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
- Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
- Can you hear your breath?
- Can you feel your partner breathing?

Imagine that is the breath of the parents and caregivers who are a part of the long line of seven generations. **[PAUSE]**

**The third breath cycle** is the breath of the grandparents.

Answer the following questions silently, in your mind.

- Feel the air filling your lungs and belly.
- Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
- Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
- Can you hear your breath?
- Can you feel your partner breathing?

Imagine that is the breath of the grandparents who are a part of the long line of seven generations, supporting and guiding you. **[PAUSE]**

**The fourth breath cycle** is the breath of the great grandparents.

Answer the following questions silently, in your mind.

- Feel the air filling your lungs and belly.
- Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
- Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
- Can you hear your breath?
- Can you feel your partner breathing?

Imagine that is the breath of the great grandparents who are a part of the long line of seven generations, supporting and guiding you. **[PAUSE]**

Now, we move forward. Each breath cycle represents one generation. Each generation is a part of the breath.

**The fifth breath cycle** is the breath of the children to come.

Answer the following questions silently, in your mind.

- Feel the air filling your lungs and belly.
- Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
- Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
- Can you hear your breath?
- Can you feel your partner breathing?

Imagine that is the breath of the children to come who will be a part of the long line of seven generations. They will need your support and care. **[PAUSE]**

**The sixth breath cycle** is the breath of the grandchildren to come.

Answer the following questions silently, in your mind.

- Feel the air filling your lungs and belly.
- Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
- Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
- Can you hear your breath?
- Can you feel your partner breathing?

Imagine that is the breath of the grandchildren who are a part of the long line of seven generations. They will need your support and care. **[PAUSE]**

**The seventh breath cycle** is the breath of the great-grandchildren to come.

Answer the following questions silently, in your mind.

- Feel the air filling your lungs and belly.
- Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
- Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
- Can you hear your breath?
- Can you feel your partner breathing?

Imagine that is the breath of the great-grandchildren who are a part of the long line of seven generations. They will need your support and care. **[PAUSE]**

Now you are connected to the seven generations through breath. Feel it. Take a final deep breath and let it out with a little noise.

Now say goodbye to the seven generations and return to the here and now. Separate from your partner and thank them for accompanying you on the breath cycles for the seven generations.

**[Ring the bell.]**

# Other Story Suggestions

## From 2nd - 5th RE Packet

### Grandad's Prayers of the Earth by Douglas Wood

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmBhQE2KITo>

*We hold history by remembering the ones we love in prayers.*

### God Loves Stories

Original story as told by Elie Wiesel found [HERE](#)

Lea Morris' Story and Song version:

- Preview the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYDIsXTEXBM>
- Purchase at <https://www.hopesingseternal.me/stories/stories>

*A story and song by Lea about how history is not finished being written yet, it's in the making. Our stories are important and are a part of history.*

## Seasonal Picture Books

### The Thanksgiving Door by Debbie Atwell

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQShTtvAVo0>

Book: [HERE](#)

*Unexpected events can turn into memories to be cherished, creating a new history.*

### We are Grateful: Otsaliheliga\*\*

Longer Video with the author: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=941819909710616>

(story starts at min. 2:50, activity times throughout, use this for pronunciation)

Shorter Video for familiarizing the story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKTeSViks7M>

(use this to get an idea of the book only)

Book: [HERE](#) (plus guide)

*Cherokee book celebrating the seasons with gratitude.*

# 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-pbkiF2m7rFOA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe2pmT_ATh-pbkiF2m7rFOA)*

- **Wed. Oct.13, 2021, 1 p.m. ET for November's theme of Holding History**
- **Wed. Nov. 10, 2021, 1 p.m. ET for December's theme of Opening to Joy**

### **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, Oct. 6, 2021, 1 p.m. ET Jan. theme of Living with Intention**
- **Wed. Nov. 3, 2021, 1 p.m. ET Feb. theme of Widening the Circle**

# 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](#).

## **“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 & 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 Taylor, Soul Matters Team Lead



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