



Soul Matters

Crossing Paths

**Walking the Path
of Unitarian Universalism**

2021-22 Multiplatform

CONTENTS

<u>Welcome</u>	Page 2
<u>Map Sunday</u> Getting a view of the terrain - A world of “many mountains” What is “religious pluralism” and how will it guide us?	Page 3
<u>Tack Sunday</u> Exploring UUism Introducing the Sunday structure, the Eight Practices of Welcoming What’s special about UU theology	Page 13
<u>Summit Sunday & Lake Sunday</u> (combined) Exploring our church home	Page 24
<u>Handouts</u> #1 8 Practices of Welcome #2 8 Practices Token Suggestions #3 Paths for Pin the Religion on the Mountain Game #4 Guest Interview #5 Scavenger Hunt Appendix #1 Crossing Paths Multiple Choice Game Chart	Page 31

Welcome

Welcome to the Crossing Paths multi-platform packet for September. We begin by focusing on our own faith: Unitarian Universalism. We offer Multiplatform Crossing Paths, written primarily as an in-person packet with online adaptations and alternatives.

While many congregations will use Crossing Paths in-person, we know some will need virtual and online alternatives. For instance, a resurgence of Covid may make in-person activities and visits unwise. Or some congregations may not have a particular house of faith in their town. And there's also the challenge of what to do when a youth can't make a visit. To help you with these various challenges, we've built in numerous multi-platform strategies, such as:

- **Virtual Visit Options:** We provide the tools and ideas to visit each house of faith virtually, including:
 - Exploring that faith community's website.
 - Watching videos of that faith tradition's worship and/or core spiritual practice.
 - Interviewing a leader from that faith community or a person who practices that religion.
- **Games Designed for Online:** For those times when you can't meet together in-person, we include great online games for your youth to play on Zoom.
- **Color Coded:** Multiplatform means a variety of options: You may be offering Crossing Paths solely online, or solely in-person or starting online then moving to in-person or including participants who Zoom into the in-person session or making Zoom virtual visits or virtual interviews. The options have expanded! This packet is written with these options in mind. So, we have color-coded the options:
 - **Activities for In-Person sessions - Black**
 - **Activities for Online Adaptations and Alternatives - Purple**
 - **Activities which may be used for both or either: Green**

Supporting you as a leader is a priority. So we've woven leader instructions and suggestions throughout the packet, as we do with all packets. For instance, the purpose and takeaways of each session are listed at the start of the session. Preparation tips and leader notes are at the beginning of each lesson. Additionally, we've included a number of suggested scripts throughout to help you present the material and introduce the activities in your own words.

The kick-off month is always a challenge. There is a lot of information to cover. We hope the details and leader notes in this guide help you navigate it all. By spending a little extra time carefully reviewing the leader notes and overall structure, you will save time later.

Mostly, we hope this startup packet leaves you excited. You are about to go on a great adventure and offer your congregation's youth a precious gift. Along the way, we hope - and know - you will find yourself the recipient of many gifts as well.

Katie & Scott, on behalf of the entire Soul Matters team

Katie Covey, Soul Matters Director of Religious Education
Rev. Scott Tayler, Soul Matters Team Lead

Session One

Map Sunday

(Religious Pluralism & Water Service)

Purpose

- Introduce the Crossing Paths approach of religious pluralism: “Many Mountains; Many Paths”
- Provide opportunities to participate, directly or in parallel, with the wider congregation’s celebration of Homecoming and Water Communion.

Preparation & Leader Notes

Leader Background

Each month, we will suggest resources for you, as a leader, to deepen your knowledge of the religions we are focusing on. This month, we suggest you educate yourself on the philosophy of religious pluralism:

- A short talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cGZfUmbuOg>
- A longer talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25LyjRW73Zc>

Coordinating with Water Communion and Homecoming Sunday

This session is designed to take place on the first Sunday after Labor Day. While UU congregations differ, most offer an intergenerational Water Ceremony or Water Communion Service, or some sort of intergenerational Homecoming Service. You will need to think ahead of time about how to handle this. Here are three options to consider, depending on your congregational structure.

Option A: For congregations without an intergenerational service:

Do the session as designed.

Option B: For congregations with an intergenerational service, and who can make room for Crossing Paths in the service:

Attend the service and participate in the Water Communion ritual. Work with the minister and/or worship team to create a 5-minute part of the service where the minister explains that while today’s service focuses on the journeys we have been on, our youth are getting ready to go on a special journey of their own this year. The minister then calls the youth forward and tells everyone they will be exploring various faiths this year and visiting local faith communities. Then the minister offers a blessing for that journey and gives them a symbolic gift to remind them that the whole congregation is with them in spirit. We suggest using a carabiner as the gift.

After participation in the service is over, youth go to their meeting room and do the session as designed below. If you have time, do the worship. If time is tight, you can skip it or just do the chalice lighting.

Option C: For congregations with an intergenerational service, and who do not make room for Crossing Paths in the service:

After participation in the service is over, youth go to their meeting room and do the session as designed below. If you have time, do the worship within the session. If time is tight, you can skip it or just do the chalice lighting.

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

Before: Remind your youth about finding water to bring in for the water communion ritual this week. In our session this week, we will ask the youth to think about how the water represents something from their summer or from life in general that “restores and replenishes” them. We will connect this to our “third UU lifeline” - the connection to life’s gifts and joy. Consider having a conversation with them about what replenishes you and keeps you connected to life’s gifts and joy.

This Sunday is the Taco Bar if you are bringing or helping.

After: Ask your youth about religious pluralism and the Crossing Paths approach of “many mountains; many paths.” To talk about the uniqueness of each religion, we will explore the story of *The Blind Men and the Elephant* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vn9BUfUCL4I>) and watch the scholar, Stephen Prothero (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKji2aLauxQ>). Check out both links and then ask your youth what they think about the balance between religions’ differences and similarities.

For You:

1. Spend some time thinking about your own understanding of religious diversity by watching one or both of these videos featuring religious scholar Stephen Prothero:

- A short talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cGZfUmbuOg>
- A longer talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25LvjRW73Zc>.

2. Even though *Crossing Paths* honors the distinctiveness of each religion, it is also true that religions share important values. There is both uniqueness and similarity. To reflect on some of these shared values, watch the video of *The Interfaith Amigos: TEDx talk*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPnZArtsG_c

What struck you as you watched? When have you experienced people from different religions expressing and acting on common values? How is it helpful (and respectful) to honor each religion as addressing a different or unique “problem of the world”? In your experience, have you perceived religious values uniting or dividing people?

Pre-Session To Do List:

- Decide about participation in the Sunday service. See the section above.
- Make sure to remind the youth to bring their water for water communion. If your congregation doesn't do an intergenerational water communion, you will need to explain it at the orientation session and possibly follow it up with an email about it. Be sure to explain that the water should represent something from their summer or from life in general that "restores and replenishes" them. Let them know they will be invited to share what that is in the Sunday session.
- Send out the Dinner and Drive Time Tip. See above.
- Create this week's graffiti board. Core question: What is something unique about me?
- Find a bowl to serve as the container for the water communion ritual.
- Prep materials for the "pin the path on the mountain" game - see [Handout #3](#)
- Make sure you have the technology needed to play the YouTube videos that are part of this session. If you don't have such technology, consider having the youth pull up and watch the videos together, in pairs, on their phones.
- Prepare a laptop if you choose to offer a Zoom option for class members who can't attend and/ or wish to record the session.
- Decide well in advance whether the parents or the youth will prepare the taco lunch planned for this session. If the session is happening after the Sunday worship service (i.e. the youth are joining the entire church for the water communion), then the parents will be available to prepare all the various taco options. If the youth are not attending the service and the session is happening at the same time as the parents are in worship, then plan on having the kids and parents prepare the taco lunch together after the worship and session.
- Work with the parents to buy and bring all the ingredients for the taco bar. Remember the goal is to have multiple choices for each component of the taco.

Session

Getting a View of the Terrain - A World of Many Mountains

Entering - Graffiti Board Writing

As youth enter the room, introduce them to the graffiti board, explaining you will use it each session as a way of capturing first impressions of each religion and also learnings about those religions as you proceed through the month.

Since this is the first meeting, instead of putting up first impressions of the religions you are exploring, use it to put up first impressions of the youth themselves, as a way of helping the youth get to know each other. Invite the youth to add a drawing or symbol that represents something unique about themselves. Something that will allow everyone to get a first impression of them.

This Week's Core Question: What is something unique about me?

Reflecting - Graffiti Board Sharing (5 min)

Invite youth to share what they drew on the graffiti board and what it represents about them.

Centering (10 min)

Centering Sound

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

Lighting the Chalice

*See [this video](#) for a demonstration of the hand signs. We encourage the addition of the hand signs to better remember and engrain this opening which contains our UU theology in a nutshell.

We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that calls us to:

listen to our deepest selves, [HAND SIGN - hands on heart]

open to life's gifts, [HAND SIGN - spread arms wide open]

And serve needs greater than our own. [HAND SIGN - cupped hands together in front of you]

Music for Centering

Talking points:

- Each month we are going to explore a different religion.
- But first we are going to ground ourselves in our own faith tradition, UUism.
- One of the things that makes us unique as a faith is our rituals and one of our most widely celebrated rituals is [Water Communion](#).
- It is a time when we all share things that "fill us up" and "replenish us" just like water replenishes people by drinking it or by visiting bodies of water to feel better.

FOR IN-PERSON CROSSING PATHS:

- So today we're going to have our own water communion experience so we can celebrate what we did this summer to replenish us and make us feel good.
- First, let's each fill up or dixie cups with water
- Next, let's take a minute to think of one or two things you did this summer that filled you up with joy, things that filled you up like water fills you up when you are thirsty. As you think, I'm going to play this wonderful song related to water by a group called Sweet Honey in the Rock:

Wade in the Water

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRpzEng14Hs>

- Now let's share the things you thought of. While you share, pour the water from your cup into this common bowl. For UUs, this represents the way church is all about each of us bringing our unique experiences and joys and combining them into a greater whole that nourishes us all.

FOR ONLINE GROUPS:

- To help center us and think about that, we're going to listen to a song by a musical group called Sweet Honey in the Rock. The song is called Wade in the Water.
- As you listen to the song, think about the things you did this summer to feel good, things that filled you up like water fills you up when you are thirsty. As your answers come to mind, type them into the Zoom chat box. [REMINDE THE YOUTH TO MAKE THEIR CHAT BOX VISIBLE BY CLICKING THE "CHAT" ICON ON THE CONTROL PANEL AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR ZOOM SCREEN]
- Read and reflect on what others are typing in. This may lead you to thinking about other things you did. When those new ideas come up, type them in the box too.

PLAY THE SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRpzEng14Hs>

Closing Words

In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead,

May we listen to our deepest selves [hands on heart].

May we be open to life's gifts [wide arms].

And may we be moved to serve needs greater than our own. [cupped hands]

Blessed be, Amen

Extinguish the chalice.

Session Activity #1

A Favorite Story that Captures Our UU Belief in “Many Mountains, Many Paths” (15 min)

Talking Points

- This week’s focus is on what makes us unique as UUs.
- One of those things is how we think about other religions.
- Some religious people believe that their religion is the only “true religion.” They think their beliefs are the only way to think about life and that other religions are wrong or misguided. This is NOT what UUs believe.
- We believe that religions are not right or wrong, but instead that every religion just notices and focuses on a different piece of what is important about being human. Kind of like how you and your friends can look at clouds in the sky and each notice a different image in them. Each person sees something different depending on their different perspective.
- We UUs teach this lesson by sharing a favorite story called The Blind Men and the Elephant.
- You probably have heard it before but let’s listen to it again...

Story

The Blind Men and the Elephant

Tell or play the video of the story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vn9BUfUCL4I>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20071013094305/http://www.spiritual-education.org/blindmenelephants.pdf>

Discuss. Here are some reflection questions to choose from:

- What do you think the story means?
- How would you put the moral of the story in your own words?
- Have you ever gotten into an argument about something like the three blind wise men did?
- Did you think you were right, and your friends or family were wrong?
- How did you resolve the argument?
- How would you handle the argument now if you had the chance to did it all over again?

Sum up the discussion by telling the youth that “religious pluralism” is a fancy word scholars use to talk about this idea of “Many Mountains, Many Paths.” You can then tease that out in your own words by using the suggested script from the parent orientation or by playing the short video of Stephen Prothero. (“One of those scholars who talk about religious pluralism is named Stephen Prothero. here’s a video of him explaining this Many Mountains approach”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKji2aLauxQ>)

Session Activity #2

“Pin the Paths on the Mountains” Game: A game to celebrate and name the many mountains

“Having talked about and listened to others talk about the Many Mountains idea, now let’s play with this idea!”

Pin the Path on the Mountain

Pull out the paper paths you cut out ahead of time from Handout #3. Invite the youth to draw 11 mountains (or however many religions you are visiting) on a chalkboard, whiteboard, or paper and label them with the names of the religions you will explore

- Unitarian Universalism
- Christianity
- Christian Evangelicalism (Mega Church)
- Catholicism
- Quakerism
- Judaism
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Paganism
- Humanism

Pick youth or ask for volunteers and then give each one of the slips of paper (“the paths”).

Have them line up opposite to the pictures of the mountains, but not directly across from the mountain that matches their sheet of paper. Explain that the goal is to pin the path on the correct mountain. Then, blindfold them, twirl them around 3 times, move them around a bit, and set them off on their journey as they try to pin (or tape) the path they are holding on the correct mountain. Invite the other group members to help by shouting out directions.

After they are done, take the blindfolds off and ask the group to reflect on what this game has to say about the adventure of learning about other religions. Have fun with this and work creatively with the takeaways they offer. Try to tease out the following key takeaways:

- *We need to have humility as we learn. As with our efforts to pin the paths on the mountains, our understandings of other religions are never perfectly “on target” or “on the mark.” We always have blind spots and there are always more things to learn. Share how you are excited about that journey of learning.*
- *Shouting doesn’t help! When everyone was shouting directions at each other it didn’t really bring clarity. We will learn next week that quiet, and listening is the place to start instead.*
- *Things go a lot better when we pay attention to those around us instead of just running straight to our path. Have them notice how easy it was to “bump into each other.” Like the game, we will bump into each other as we cross paths with those we visit. Let’s expect those bumps, mistakes and awkwardness. And let’s be gentle with each other and ourselves when it happens.*
- *Learning goes better when we do it together! Just as in the game, we need each other to help us navigate our way. Only by listening to the ideas and advice of others do our own ideas become clear.*

After making the last point about learning going better when we do it together, have all the youth work together to place the paper paths on the correct mountain and in the correct position.

Session Activity #3, option #1 (15 min)

“There’s More Than One Way to Look at Something” Game

**Can be used for in-person or online*

- Using [this Google slide deck](#), show the youth a variety of “ambiguous images” on the screen.
- Turn it into a non-competitive game by first having everyone say what they first saw when they looked at it.
- Then have those who saw one image help guide the others in seeing what they saw. And then reverse it and have the other half guide the first group in seeing what they saw.
- Use this mutual helping activity to illustrate what it’s like when we assume we all have different but equally valid perspectives rather than assuming we hold “the one right view.” When we assume we are right, we end up arguing or demeaning the other. When we assume everyone has different perspectives, we naturally work to explain our perspective and work to understand the perspectives of others.
- Consider tying this activity to #2, #3 and #5 of our 8 Practices of Welcoming (See [Handout #1](#) for the entire list):
 - #2 - Be curious
 - #3 - Be open to being changed
 - #5 - Be an appreciative listener

Session Activity #3, Option #2 (15 min)

Many Mountains Multiple Choice Game -

A game to celebrate and name the many mountains we will explore

**Can be used for in-person or online*

Instructions: This is a multiple-choice game that brings home the idea that each religion has its very unique focus and path. It invites the youth to try their best to match each religion to its distinct understanding of the human problem and solution to that problem. During each round of the game, a clue is read. The clue is the problem or solution of one of the religions we are exploring. Then all the youth vote (by raising their “Zoom Hand”) when they think the correct answer (religion) has been named.

For instance: Clue: This faith believes that the Problem in the World is SEPARATION.
Answer: Unitarian Universalism

Here are the steps to use for each round:

- Read the clue to the group.
- Then read the list of faiths one by one. Use the list of faiths you will be visiting. See the entire list of faiths covered in Crossing Paths in Appendix #1.
- Invite the group to raise their hands or [raise their Zoom hands](#) when they hear the faith name which they think is associated with the clue. Encourage wild guesses!
- Count the hands for each faith.
- Award a point to each person that correctly paired the religion with its problem or solution.
- Take a moment to explain a bit more about each correct pairing.

Add up everyone’s points along the way. Celebrate the one with the most points as the “Royalty of the Religious Mountains.” A fun take on “King of the mountain.” Get it! :)

Here is the list of clues and answers we recommend. If you want to add more or develop your own, see Appendix #1 for a chart that lays out each religion and its unique problem statement, solution statement, key figure and symbol:

Round One:

Clue: This faith believes that the Solution of the World is NIRVANA.

Answer: Buddhism

Round Two:

Clue: This faith believes that the Problem of the World is DISCONNECTION FROM YOUR INNER LIGHT.

Answer: The Quakers

Round Three:

Clue: This faith believes that the Solution of the World is SUBMISSION TO GOD.

Answer: Islam

Round Four:

Clue: This faith believes that the Problem of the World is WANDERING.

Answer: Hinduism

Round Five:

Clue: This faith believes that the Problem in the World is SALVATION BY FAITH & WORKS.

Answer: Catholicism

Round Six (bonus round worth 2 points):

Clue: This faith's main symbol is OM.

Answer: Hinduism

Session Activity #5, optional

Eating! - “Many Mountains, Many Paths, Many Tacos!”

Explain that it is now time for the group to “eat our way up the mountains!” Playfully compare tacos to our approach to religions. Tacos have many parts; so do religions. But those components differ radically depending on the one building the taco. For instance, there are many kinds of shells (hard, soft, flat) and many kinds of filling (beef, chicken, beans, tofu). In a similar way, all religions share basic components (a view of the divine, sacred stories, founders, rituals), but each of those components radically differ. All of it reminds us that every taco - and every religion - is incredibly unique when we get down to the specifics.

Head to the kitchen to either prepare the tacos or eat the tacos that the parents have prepared.

Here are some additional notes to help you play with the idea of tacos representing religious pluralism. Have fun with it! But be careful not to do too much teaching. Make the general point and then let this mostly be a time of fun and connection.

Shells = Play with each religion’s understanding of the problem and the path.

- Just as there are a variety of shells (hard, soft, corn tortillas, chips), there are a variety of views about the problems in the world and the solutions to those problems. Separation/Connection for UU; Self-sufficiency/Submission for Islam; Sin/Salvation for Christianity; Suffering/Nirvana for Buddhists; Wandering/Liberation for Hinduism; Exile/Return for Judaism; Separateness/Harmony for Wiccan.

Fillings = Divinity

- Multiple types of filling (beef, chicken, veggie, tofu). Also many views of divinity: One God for Muslims, Jews and Christians; No God for Buddhists; Many Gods and Goddesses for Hindus; Your Choice for UU’s.

Toppings = Sacred Texts, Rituals, Clothing, Etc.

- UU’s -many texts; Hindu’s - Vedas and Upanishads; Christians - Bible; Jews - Torah; Muslims - Quran and Hadith; Buddhists - Tripitaka (Pali Canon), Mahayana Sutras and the Tibetan Book of the Dead
- Buddhist - saffron robes for monks; yarmulkes for Jews; Hijab for some Muslim women; sari for some Hindu women; Casual for many UU’s

Sauces = Key People, Founders, Exemplars

- Buddha for Buddhists, Jesus Christ for Christians, Muhammad for Muslims, no one founder for UU’s and Hindus, Abraham for Jews.

Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (3 min)

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

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

Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice (2 min)

In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead,

May we listen to our deepest selves [hands on heart].

May we be open to life’s gifts [wide arms].

And may we be moved to serve needs greater than our own. [cupped hands]

Blessed be, Amen

Extinguish the chalice.

Session Two

Tack Sunday

The UU “Lifelines” Theology & The 8 Practices of Welcoming to our Backpacks

Purpose

- Further explore the Unitarian Universalist theology of connection
- Introduce the “Eight Practices of Welcome,” explaining them not only as skills we will use on our visits, but also distinctive UU practices/skills for engaging life in general.

Preparation & Leader Notes

Length of Session

You will need to make some decisions about the length and size of this session. If you do every activity suggested in the session plan, you’ll exceed the usual hour-long meeting time. Here are two ways to handle this:

1. Announce a 1.5-hour session and invite parents to linger longer in the social hall.
2. Pick and choose which activities to delve deeper, and which to skim.

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

- **Before:** *We will discuss the UU core value of welcoming this week. Talk to your youth about how UUism has changed or enriched the way you view the world, other people or what’s most important about life. In short, how has UUism caused you to look at life differently?*
 - *In our meeting this week, we will discuss the three UU lifelines we introduced during our family orientation session:*
 - *listening to our deepest self*
 - *opening to life’s gifts and joy*
 - *serving needs greater than our own*
 - *Share with your youth which of these core UU practices is most central to your religious life right now. Invite your youth to reflect on which one fits where they are in their life right now.*
- **After:**
 - *Ask your youth about the games they did to learn about the Eight Practices. Ask them if they think any of the practices will help them with their relationships with friends or others outside of church.*
- **For You:**
 - *Spend some time exploring how other UUs frame and describe our UU beliefs by exploring this webpage: <https://www.uua.org/blueboat/faith/can-unitarian-universalists-really-believe-anything%3F>. While Crossing Paths uses the frame of the three lifelines, there’s a wonderful diversity of other frames out there.*
 - *Spend some time thinking about how the Eight Practices show up (or don’t show up) in your own life. Is there a practice you need to spend some time learning or developing?*

Pre-Session To Do List:

- Paper and pens/pencils/ markers for writing or drawing a time when they felt joy in the centering.
- Prepare for the lip sync context. You will need to find a fun song, be able to play it and have lyrics printed out ahead of time.
- Decide if you will be giving out a carabiner and paracord to each class member as part of the opening worship.
- Send out the Dinner and Drive Time Tip. See above.
- Create this week's graffiti board. Core question: What do you know about Unitarian Universalism?
- Review the Rope Activities. Locate the three ropes.
- Create the altar with a chalice, ropes and chime.
- Make sure you have the technology needed to play the YouTube videos that are part of this session. If you don't have such technology, consider having the youth pull up and watch the videos together, in pairs, on their phones.
- Copy [Handout #1](#) Eight Practices of Welcoming
- Use the suggestions in [Handout #2](#) to pick the class tokens and gather them ahead of time. Check tokens and Tack Bowl to make sure they are complete.

Session

Exploring UUism

Entering - Graffiti Board Writing (5 min)

This Week's Core Question: What is Unitarian Universalism?

As youth enter the room, direct them to engage the graffiti board. Encourage symbols, words, drawings. Also remind them about the various lenses/binoculars - tastes, smells, holy books, key figures, symbol, variety of chalices, favorite stories. These can be representations of UUism or feelings and experiences that youth have in relationship to our faith.

Remember to use a specific color for this Sunday when they are naming what they know. Then use a different color for Lake Sunday when they will add representations of what they learned. This contrast will allow youth to step back and more easily notice their growth in awareness and knowledge.

Centering - Worship (10 min)

Preparation

Large common paper and pens/pencils/ markers for writing or drawing a time when they felt joy. Or use the whiteboard or chalkboard.

Centering Sound

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

Lighting the Chalice

*See [this video](#) for a demonstration of the hand signs. We encourage the addition of the hand signs to better remember and engrain this opening which contains our UU theology in a nutshell.

We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that calls us to:

listen to our deepest selves, [HAND SIGN - hands on heart]

open to life's gifts, [HAND SIGN - spread arms wide open]

And serve needs greater than our own. [HAND SIGN - cupped hands together in front of you]

Introduction & Prompt Question

Talking points:

- Today, we're going to further explore the three UU lifelines we introduced during our family orientation session:
 - listening to our deepest self
 - opening to life's gifts and joy
 - serving needs greater than our own
- For today's centering and mindfulness time, let's focus on the second life line.
- We rarely have perfect days. There's always a problem or worry or stress that places a cloud over our day. It's all too easy to let that cloud take up our entire view and all our attention.

- That’s why the work of remembering and opening to life’s gifts and joy is so important. UUs believe that this is a central role of religious community: to help each other remember that the glass is never fully empty, but instead always is partially full.
- By focusing on these parts of our life that are joyful and full of gifts, we not only feel better, but we also “save” our days.
- To help center us and think about that, we’re going to listen to a song I suspect many of us know. It’s by the musician, Pharrell Williams. Yes, you can guess it: It’s “Happy”!

PROCESS NOTE: MAKE THIS REFLECTION INTERACTIVE WITH ONE OF THESE TWO OPTIONS:

- 1. LAY DOWN A LARGE PIECE OF PAPER - POSTER BOARD OR BUTCHER BLOCK PAPER - AND HAVE THEM WRITE THEIR RESPONSES ON IT**
 - 2. IF YOU HAVE A CHALK BOARD OR WHITE BOARD USE THAT.**
- As you listen to the song, bring to mind the activities and people that help you when you’re feeling down and make you happy again. As your answers come to mind, write them on the large sheet of paper/chalk board/white board. Read and reflect on what others write. This may lead you to thinking about other things you did. When those new ideas come up, write them on the large sheet of paper/chalk board/white board too.
 - Let’s begin by getting ourselves into a comfortable position. Straighten Your back. Relax your neck and shoulders. Soften your gaze. Finally, let’s take two deep breaths, breathing in through your mouth and exhaling through your nose. And now let’s begin...

[PLAY THE MUSIC]

Happy, by Pharrell Williams

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6Sxv-sUYtM>

Zoom/Online Alternative

- As your answers come to mind, type them into the Zoom chat box. [REMINDE THE YOUTH TO MAKE THEIR CHAT BOX VISIBLE BY CLICKING THE “CHAT” ICON ON THE CONTROL PANEL AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR ZOOM SCREEN]
- Also read and reflect on what others are typing in. This may lead you to thinking about other things that make you happy. When those new ideas come up, type them in the box too.

Sharing

Invite the youth to share all the activities and people that make us happy and help us “open to life’s gifts and joy.” Share what you have written down. Leave it on the altar or hang on a bulletin board.

Closing Words

In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead,
 May we listen to our deepest selves [hands on heart].
 May we be open to life’s gifts [wide arms].
 And may we be moved to serve needs greater than our own. [cupped hands]
 Blessed be, Amen

Extinguish the chalice.

Session Activity #1

Reviewing & Playing with Our Three UU Lifelines (15 min)

Start by briefly reviewing the three lifelines theology, referring to the lifelines' symbols on the worship table (spool of thread, jump rope and webbing).

In the orientation we talked about the three lifelines.

- UU's offer people three "lifelines." A lifeline back to:
 - their deepest self (self)
 - life's gifts and joy (life)
 - and needs greater than our own (others)
- To remember and keep these three lifelines of UUism in front of us, we will keep three symbols of the lifelines on our centering altar:
 - **a carabiner and small thin cord/spool of thread** to remind us of the fragile and sometimes hard to notice thread that tethers us to our deepest and most authentic self. Using thread also reminds us that our connection to self is one that needs constant care and "reweaving."
 - **tug of peace rope/netting** to remind us of the "interdependent web" and our relationships to each other. As our faith tells us, we are all bound up in "an inescapable and interdependent network of mutuality." This interconnectedness comes with a responsibility to care for one another, to serve not only our own needs, but also the needs of others and the world around us.
 - **a jump rope** that reminds us of the importance of staying connected to life's joys and gifts. Sometimes it's easy to focus on life's challenges and troubles. And so a central task of our faith is to remind us about and reconnect us to the joy and gifts that are always available to us.

Move through this informational part rather quickly and then explain that sometimes playing with ideas is more fun than just talking about them. So let's play some Three Lifelines games!

Game 1: Connecting to Our Inner Self - Carabiner and Rope

- Pick up the thin rope (parachute cord) that represents the lifeline to our inner selves. If you or the church gave the youth the gift of a carabiner, hand out small pieces of the thin rope and have the youth tie the rope to the carabiner for their backpack, pocket or other special place.
- Here is how to tie a bowline knot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9NqGd7464U>.
- Then, invite the group to share if they are willing, their answers to the following questions:
- *When do you feel "most you"? What quality or character trait captures something unique about yourself? Express it in one word. For instance: "I feel most me when I am... adventurous, kind, silly, questioning, quiet..."*

Game 2: Connection to Each Other - The Tug of Peace

<https://cooperativegames.com/fun-free/tug-of-peace/>

- Take the thick rope from the worship table. Make sure it is long enough to make a circle on which everyone can grip and pull themselves together.
- After doing the “Tug of Peace” exercise, invite the group to pause for a moment of quiet, then answer the following question: What is the name of someone who helped you get back on your feet after a difficult experience? Was it your Grandpa, your parent, a best friend, your pet?

[Invite the youth to answer]

Game 3: Connection to the Gifts & Joy of Life - Jump Rope & “Jumping into Life’s joy”

- This is about reminding the youth that church is here to help them see life as a gift, not a threat, open not closed, something to explore and play with, not something to survive or win. Take the long jump rope from the worship table and play with it as a group. To honor different abilities, use the rope to roll and twist over as well as a jump rope. Work on a progression from simple skills to more complicated, together. Roll or walk over the rope. Jump over the moving rope on the ground (snake); swing the rope back and forth and jump over it (not overhead). Then try some overhead jump rope.
- After the jump rope games, invite the group to pause for a moment of quiet, then invite them to share in one word, what makes them smile? It is a puppy, a sunset, a sport, the beach, reading a book, hanging out with friends?

[Invite the youth to answer]

Replace the ropes on the worship table or wherever you keep the chalice.

Online Alternatives for Lifeline Games:

Game 1: Connecting to Our Inner Self: Catching the Thread Game

- Use the virtual mime lifelines from the orientation and “toss” the symbol of the first lifeline (spool of thread) from screen to screen. Say “Here’s a lifeline to Sienna” as you imaginatively throw the spool of thread to the screen of one of the youths. Invite them to play along and mime catching it.
- Then after catching the imaginary spool of thread, invite the person to share, as they are comfortable, their answers to the following question: **When do you feel “most you”?**
- Invite the youth to express it in one word. For instance: “I feel most me when I am... adventurous, kind, silly, questioning, quiet...”
- Then have them toss the imaginary spool of thread to another youth, saying their name. Keep it up until every youth has had a chance to catch the spool and answer the question.

Game 2: Making the Web Real Game

- Invite all the youth to pull a shoelace from their shoe or go to their closet or parents closet to get a shoelace. Make sure the screen is in gallery view so everyone can see each other.
- Remind them about the third lifeline: serving needs greater than our own. Stress that UUs believe our commitment to serving and helping others is rooted in the idea that we are all tied together by an interdependent web of which we are all a part. (Reference the webbing symbol you keep on your centering “altar.”)
- Then challenge the group to “make our web of connection real” by working together to link everyone’s shoelace to the shoelaces of others on the screen. The goal is to have one end of your shoelace from your zoom screen connect to the end of someone else’s shoelace on their zoom screen until it looks as if one large shoelace is flowing from one screen to another, connecting them all.
- When the group succeeds, take a screenshot and send the picture to everyone by text or email.

Introducing The Eight Practices of Welcoming (5 min)

Suggested Script: What is a “practice”?

- Introduce the idea of “spiritual practices” with something like: Practice can be a confusing word. It helps to think about other ways we use the word, such as “soccer practice” or “practicing the piano.” That is one meaning of the word. We are going to use it in a different way.
- Just like we practice making ourselves better at a sport or at playing an instrument, religions invite people to do disciplined activities to better themselves, to continually improve *who* they are.
- For instance, prayer is a spiritual practice that helps people get better at listening for God’s voice or listening to that “still small voice within.” Yoga and meditation are other spiritual practices that help people get better at calming themselves or gaining control over those inner worried voices we often hear in our head.
- For Unitarian Universalists, welcoming and being open to different ideas is a key spiritual practice. We work hard to welcome in and be open to different opinions, human diversity and different religious beliefs. By being open to new ideas, people and experiences we grow as people. Or as UUs sometimes say, we become “more whole” by welcoming in new things.
- During the following months, we are going to be exploring a lot of new religious ideas, practices and stories. It’s not easy to do. So we’re going to “tack up” with eight very specific practices that will help us along our way.
- These practices will hopefully also help us with other parts of our lives. We are going to spend the rest of our time today learning about them. Are you ready?!”

The Practices - An Overview

Share [Handout #1: The Eight Practices of Welcoming](#) or write them on a large sheet on the wall.

1. Be fully present
2. Be curious
3. Be open to being changed
4. Be comfortable with discomfort
5. Be an appreciative listener.
6. Be light-hearted (remember this is fun and play not work)
7. Be gentle (mistakes will be made; forgiveness is possible)
8. Be yourself

Our Eight Practices - Delving Deeper (30 - 45 min)

Note to Leaders:

- Point out and use the bowl you have chosen as a Tack Bowl on the worship table.
- Gather the Tokens for your bowl that will be a part of your centerpiece (see suggestions in [Handout #2](#))
- Make sure the youth know you are keeping it on the table all year as a reminder of what we all commit to practicing.

1. Be Fully Present

Pull the symbol for this practice from the Tack Bowl on the worship table. Explain the practice using the symbol you've chosen.

Short Option (2 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words.

Longer Option (4 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words and then use this video - The Bad Listener - as a funny but spot on example of what NOT being fully present looks like and why being fully present matters!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=humfZQI4JU8>

2. Be Curious

Pull the token for this practice from the Tack Bowl. Explain the practice using the symbol you've chosen.

Short Option (2 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words.

Longer Option (4 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words and then use the A Cup of Tea from Tapestry of Faith, Building Bridges, Workshop 8 to dig deeper.

It is a story about making room for something besides your own ideas. Ask open ended questions.

Do not be afraid to ask others to clarify their comments or questions; we are all here to learn. Often, we respond before understanding.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-uSQvsC6x4>

Story: <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/bridges/workshop8/184231.shtml>

3. Be Open to Being Changed

Pull the token for this practice from the Tack Bowl. Explain the practice using the token you've chosen.

Short Option (2 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words.

Longer Option (7 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words and then play the game: "Darling if You Love Me Won't You Please Please Smile"

Play this game and see who can keep a straight face. Connect it to the idea of being willing to let others change you, for the better!

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session2/132192.shtml>

4. Be Comfortable with Discomfort

Try not to skim this one, as it is best understood viscerally. Wait to pull the token from the Tack Bowl until after the Mirroring Meditation.

Mirroring Exercise (7 min.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNe-QxsMvoM>

The mirroring exercise can be very uncomfortable for participants. Even experienced meditators giggle or look away. Encourage pairs to keep trying. Use a calm voice and encourage the pairs to come back to the exercise if they break off.

Break into pairs. Establish a leader who starts the moving. Have the pairs look over each other's shoulder. Then, when the time seems right, switch who is the leader and who is the follower. The point is to feel the discomfort, the embarrassment and the vulnerability, and recognize it. When we feel it, we can start to get comfortable with discomfort. The point is not to be able to do it forever, but to try to do it, fail, and keep on coming back, living with our discomfort. Rolling with it, trying different things like stepping away.

Pull the token for this practice from the Tack Bowl.

5. Be an Appreciative Listener

This is one of the most advanced practices and worth learning. Wait to pull the token from the Tack Bowl until after the Strong Opinions Exercise.

Strong Opinions Exercise (8 min.)

Divide up into partners. Choose a topic to debate, like which candy bar, movie or ice cream flavor is the best. You and your partner have one minute to convince the other that you are right.

So, what happened? Notice your first instinct - it is usually to argue and talk about your own preference.

Sometimes it gets worse, and you end up criticizing the person not just their opinions. No matter what, the conversations usually don't end up feeling good to either side.

Now try it using "appreciative inquiry" skills. In its most simple form, this is a matter of:

- Take a deep breath
- Resist talking and just listen
- Find something about what the other person is saying that you are genuinely curious about
- And then asking the other person to tell you more about that aspect of their opinion or tell them why you appreciate it. "I was curious when you said _____. Can you say more?"

Now pair up with your partner again, pick another opinion question and take turns being the "presenter" and the "listener," using this appreciative listening technique.

Pull the token for this practice from the Tack Bowl. End by asking 2-3 volunteers share how the second experience was better than the first.

6. Be Light-Hearted

Pull the token for this practice from the Tack Bowl. Explain the practice using the symbol you've chosen.

Short Option (2 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words.

Longer Option (5 min.): Game: Lip Sync Contest

Explain the practice in your own words and then have the youth divide up into two teams and give them 60 seconds of a song to lip sync to as a group. You will need to find a fun song, be able to play it and have lyrics printed out ahead of time. Have fun with it!

7. Be Gentle

Pull the token for this practice from the Tack Bowl. Explain the practice using the token you've chosen.

Short Option (2 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words.

Longer Option (7 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words and then play the game Knots (for about 10 participants)

<http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk/human-knot/>

Play the game and note how you must be gentle with each other in order to untangle the knot. Connect this to the idea of needing to be gentle to get out of a disagreement or mess. Also remind the group about the need to be kind to yourself because mistakes and unintentional offense will happen, but we can always give each other room to begin again.

8. Be Yourself

Pull the token for this practice from the Tack Bowl Explain the practice using the symbol you've chosen.

Short Option (2 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words.

Longer Option (4 min.):

Explain the practice in your own words and then offer this "Be a Chalice" Meditation - Adapted from Rev. Jaelyn Pema Scott, Order of Buddhist Ministers and used with permission.

- a. Invite the youth to sit quietly, close their eyes and breath quietly a few times.
- b. Speak the following as written or in your own words...
- c. Rest your mind on the chalice (minimal thinking, just notice its detail, rest your mind on the object)
- d. The chalice flame means the connection to your inner light. Feel your inner light in the light of the flame. Imagine that it gives off the heat of justice, the heat of peace, the heat of connection and the warmth of welcome and love. The chalice cup means connection to each other. Feel your connection to this group around you, to the congregation around you. See the group as a vessel holding you. Now imagine circles around the chalice. These mean the connection to the gifts of life. Feel the beauty, the adventure, the deep connection to all of life around you.
- e. Imagine yourself as the chalice. You have a luminous base, an internal wick, and a heat rising from your heart and through the top of your head.
- f. Concentrate on the light of the flame; what do you see, what do others see?
- g. Concentrate on the warmth, the warmth that soothingly and peacefully relaxes your body, the heat of justice that moves your energy, the warmth of peace that soothes your anxiety, the warmth that escapes your body and goes into the world, the warmth of welcome and love that they experience.
- h. Dissolve everything into a large bright flame, a warm glowing expanding flame that consumes all in its justice, peace, solidarity, welcome and love.

Zoom/Online Alternative: 8 Practices Treasure Hunt (25 min)

Use [Handout #2](#) as a guideline, invite the youth to find something in their home which symbolizes each of the 8 Practices of Welcoming.

Read each practice one at a time and give them 2 minutes to find something and bring it back. Then each person shares what they chose and why it represents the practice, i.e. this is my favorite stuffed bear and it represents “being gentle” because I cuddle him when I am sad.

Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (3 min)

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

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

Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice (2 min)

Closing Words

In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead,

May we listen to our deepest selves [hands on heart].

May we be open to life’s gifts [wide arms].

And may we be moved to serve needs greater than our own. [cupped hands]

Blessed be, Amen

Extinguish the chalice.

Session Three

Summit Sunday & Lake Sunday

Exploring Our Faith & Church Home

Purpose

- Explore the youth's own congregational home
- Ground youth in the values and distinctiveness of their church community
- Engage and use our Eight Practices of Welcoming

Preparation & Leader Notes

Combined Sessions

Because of Labor Day Weekend, there are only 3 Sundays available for curriculum offerings in September. So we are combining Summit and Lake Sundays and doing the Sunday tour of your facility plus reflections on the entire month.

Length of Session

Since we are combining our Summit and Lake session into one meeting, you will need to decide whether you want to streamline the activities or extend the length of your meeting.

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

Before: *In our upcoming session, we will talk about some of the favorite things about our church community. As a way of getting your youth's thinking started, share a few of your favorite things about our church.*

After: *Ask your youth to share their favorite part of the scavenger hunt. Tell your youth what part of our church building you appreciate most and how it's connected to your faith and values. Be sure to ask your youth to show you the "Be Yourself Selfie" they took! Ask your youth to share their favorite part of the interview.*

For You: *Spend some time thinking about how our church community has changed and enriched your spiritual life. How might you offer thanks for that?*

Pre-Session To Do List:

- Optional, Prepare all the needed material for the scavenger hunt. Edit the scavenger handout as needed to fit your setting.
- Email the above Dinner and Drive Time Tips to the parents.
- Cue up the YouTube videos that are part of this session.
- Gather the items for your centerpiece altar, including a chalice and candle.
- Choose which Centering Music you will play.
- Pull up your congregation's website address so you can share it with the group.
- Recruit a parent or other congregant who has been a church member or UU for a number of years. Invite them to your meeting. Share Handout #4 with them and let them know the youth will be asking them the questions listed.
- Consider bringing in 2-3 laptops for the "Welcome of our Website".

Session

Entering - Graffiti Board Writing (5 min)

Using the same graffiti board from last week, invite those entering to add words and impressions about their own Unitarian Universalist congregation and building. Where are their favorite places? Who are their favorite people? What experiences, values and activities are unique to your particular church community? Save this board as a reminder of September's exploration of UUism.

If there's time, invite reflections about all of the additions to the graffiti board over the past weeks.

- What strikes them?
- What pops out?
- Is this a full picture of who we are as UU's?
- What would you add to complete the picture?

Centering (10 min)

Preparation

Paper, pens, pencils, markers for drawing a picture of their room at home.

Centering Sound

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

Lighting the Chalice

*See [this video](#) for a demonstration of the hand signs. We encourage the addition of the hand signs as a way to better remember and engrain this opening which contains our UU theology in a nutshell.

We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that calls us to:

listen to our deepest selves, [HAND SIGN - hands on heart]

open to life's gifts, [HAND SIGN - spread arms wide open]

And serve needs greater than our own. [HAND SIGN - cupped hands together in front of you]

Introduction & Prompt Question

- Today we are continuing our exploration of UUism by exploring and celebrating the things we value about our own UU church community.
- To get us in that frame of mind, let's listen to and watch this video made by another UU congregation that celebrates the ways their church community is home for them.
- As you watch and listen, think about and then draw a picture of a place or space in your own life that makes you feel "at home." It might be a picture of your bedroom, your favorite woods, or skateboard park. Maybe it is a room here at church. Or a room/space at school. For some of us, it might not be a room but a picture of yourself playing a guitar or piano, or you throwing a baseball with friends.
- Let's begin by getting ourselves into a comfortable position. Straighten Your back. Relax your neck and shoulders. Soften your gaze. Finally, let's take two deep breaths, breathing in through your mouth and exhaling through your nose. And now let's begin...
- [\[PLAY THE MUSIC\]](#)

Zoom/Online Alternative

As you listen to the song, think of a special place that makes you feel at home. As your answers come to mind, type them into the Zoom chat box. [REMIND THE YOUTH TO MAKE THEIR CHAT BOX VISIBLE BY CLICKING THE “CHAT” ICON ON THE CONTROL PANEL AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR ZOOM SCREEN]

- Read and reflect on what others are typing in. This may lead you to thinking about other things that make you happy. When those new ideas come up, type them in the box too.

Music for Centering

Coming Home

First Unitarian Church of Rochester, NY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbJ32h-YpQA>

or

Come, Come Whoever You Are

#188 Singing the Living Tradition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmMp0OKHgTA>

Sharing

Invite the youth to share their picture of the place/space that makes them feel “at home” then leave it on the altar or hang on a bulletin board.

Closing Words

In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead,

May we listen to our deepest selves [hands on heart].

May we be open to life’s gifts [wide arms].

And may we be moved to serve needs greater than our own. [cupped hands]

Blessed be, Amen

Extinguish the chalice.

Introduction to Summit Day

- Explain that Summit Day will be the time where we visit a faith community of the religion we are exploring that month. Two things will make up this visit:
 - Visiting the faith's place of worship
 - Interviewing a leader from that faith community or a person who practices that religion
- Since this month we are focusing on our own UU faith, explain that the group will replace the visit with an exploration of your congregation's website and an interview of a long-time member of your congregation.

Session Activity #1 (15 min) The Welcome of Our Website

Instructions

- Have the youth **pull up the church website** on their phones or on laptops.
- Have them imagine themselves as guests visiting the website for the first time. Encourage them to **imagine themselves as someone different from them**. A different age, ethnicity, social class, even religion.
- Ask them to search the site and find **one thing that would make them excited** about attending the church and checking it out. Consider making it into a race, with them sharing as soon as they find something.
- Ask them to search the site and find **one thing that would discourage them from attending the church and checking it out**. (Handle this with care and encourage them to do it in the spirit of trying to be more welcoming)
- Ask them to search the site and find **a sentence or phrase that best explains who Unitarian Universalists are or what we believe**.
- Consider sharing the major points about the website which the group has discovered, with someone who might take them into account and want to know.

Session Activity #2 (30 min) Interview a Longtime Church Member

Seeing Our Church Through the Lens of Experience & Deep Commitment!

- Recruit a congregant who has been a church member or UU for many years. Invite them to your meeting.
- Have the youth interview them using the interview questions in Handout #4.
- Consider having the interviewee ask the youth some questions. Here are some suggestions:
 - What do you miss most about church during COVID Quarantine?
 - What do you love most about being a UU?
 - How do you think UUism will change by the time you are my age?

Alternative Activities

Add to or replace the activities above with one of these activities:

Scavenger Hunt Tour

Finding meaning in your church home!

- Divide into teams of 2 or 3, depending on the size of your group.
- Pass around Handout #5 (Scavenger Hunt List), a clipboard, pen and a dry erase marker to each team.
- Announce a prize(optional). Consider making it something they can attach to their carabiner.
- Remind the group there is a service going on, so they need to be aware of windows which might face into the sanctuary, places where noise may disturb the service, etc.
- Tell them they only have 30 minutes to do the hunt. Name the time they need to return. Make sure everyone has a watch or phone to keep track.
- When everyone returns, go over the team answers.
- Whoever has the most answers wins the prize.

Don't forget to hand out dry erase markers!

Reflecting - Debrief the Scavenger Hunt

- Have each team add up how many "hunts" they successfully accomplished.
- Have each team member share the one that was most fun.
- Have each team member share the one that they think best captures the uniqueness of your church community.
- Hand out the prize (optional)

Parking Lot Theology Walk

- Have the youth divide into teams and take a stroll through the parking lot, noting the bumper stickers on congregants' vehicles. Write them down.
- Gather as a group and have the youth read their favorite one and then reflect on what it says about the values and vision of the church community.

Online Adaptations for a Virtual Summit Day

- Focus on the above Visit Your Website and Long-Time Member Interview activities

Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (3 min)

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

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

Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice (2 min)

Closing Words

In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead,

May we listen to our deepest selves [hands on heart].

May we be open to life's gifts [wide arms].

And may we be moved to serve needs greater than our own. [cupped hands]

Blessed be, Amen

Extinguish the chalice.

Handouts

Handout #1

The Eight Practices of Welcoming

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

Handout #2

Eight Practices and Token Suggestions

- 1. Be fully present** – a tiny wrapped “present” or an object that calls people to awareness, like a [chime](#), a [ringing bowl](#) or [wind chimes](#). a Hershey’s kiss.
- 2. Be curious** – Curious George figurine; a light bulb; a magnifying glass; an empty tea cup, maybe from dollhouse (to go with “cup of tea” story), or a mysteriously flavored jelly bean.
- 3. Be open to being changed** – a butterfly; a phoenix; some change (coins); a giant jawbreaker with multiple colors.
- 4. Be comfortable with discomfort** – a piece of sandpaper; a pincushion; a clothespin (with spring); an “annoying sounding” whistle; a packet of really sour candy or Pop Rocks candy.
- 5. Be an appreciative listener** – a rubber ear; a small [word stone](#) with the word “wonder” on it; a whistle pop.
- 6. Be light-hearted** – a [smiley face](#); a can of [play-doh](#); (remember this is fun and play not work); smiley face candy.
- 7. Be gentle (allow and heal mistakes)** – a tiny soft stuffed animal; cotton balls; cotton candy.
- 8. Be yourself** – the letter “U” as a block or stencil; a “bee”; a pocket mirror; a tea light; (“This little light of mine; I’m gonna let it shine”); Nerds candy.

Handout #3

Pin the Paths on the Mountain - Paths

Use the wording below to make your own eleven larger strips of paper, one strip for each mountain/religion. The idea is for each strip of paper to contain the “problem,” “solution” and the symbol, with enough space on the top of the strip for tape so the strip can be stuck to the wall. Do not include the name of the religion on the strip. Make these “path strips” as simple or fancy as you like. You can make it even harder by not including the symbol.

Unitarian Universalism

Separation → Connection 

Judaism

Exile → Return 

Christianity

Sin → Salvation 

Catholicism

Sin → Salvation by Faith and Works 

Megachurch

Personal Sin → Become Born Again 

Quaker

Disconnected from Inner Light → Stillness & Silence 

Buddhism

Suffering → Enlightenment (Nirvana) 

Islam

Self-Sufficiency → Submission 

Hinduism

Wandering (Samsara) → Liberation (Moksha) 

Paganism

Disconnection From Nature → Harmony With Nature & Natural Cycles 

Humanism

Lack of Faith in Human Potential & → The use of reason & empathy 
a focus on the “Hereafter” rather
than the “Here & Now”

Handout #4 Interview Questions

Seeing Our Faith Through the Lens of Experience!

1. How has Unitarian Universalism helped enrich, heal or deepen your connection to your inner self, others or life's joy?
2. What does the chalice and the flame symbolize for you?
3. What is your understanding of "the divine"?
4. Who is your favorite UU historical figure?
5. What is your favorite service or time of the church year? What feels like a "UU Holy Day" to you?
6. What is your favorite "spiritual" book, poem or quote?
7. Do you have a spiritual practice? How does the church support your practice?
8. What sound or taste do you most associate with our church?
9. What was your favorite thing about church or your religious home when you were a teenager? if you didn't attend a religious community as a teenager, what did you think about other teenagers who did?
10. What advice do you have for us as we get ready to visit all these other religions?

Handout #5

Scavenger Hunt List

Practice our practices! Explore our church home!

Be fully present (pick one)

- A. Stand quietly near a door to your sanctuary. Listen. Then list two “meaningful things” you hear going on in the service:
 - 1.

 - 2.

- B. Go to your church’s fellowship hall or foyer. List 2 “meaningful things” you never noticed before:
 - 1.

 - 2.

Be curious (pick two)

- A. Visit a place in your facility where you have never been before.
List it here:

- B. Find a symbol of a different faith. The ones in your room don’t count!

- C. I found the symbol here:

- D. What “meaningful words” can be seen when you stand outside and look at the front of your church?
Write them here:

- E. How many containers of milk are in the church refrigerator? _____

Be open to change (do both)

- A. Find something outdated or in need of change somewhere in your church.
List what it is and where you found it:

- B. Find a person who will give you a penny or nickel (“some change”).
List who it was.

Be comfortable with discomfort (do both)

- A. Identify a good smell in the facility. List it here or where you smelled it:

- B. Identify a bad smell in the facility. List it here or where you smelled it:

Be an appreciative listener (pick one)

- A. Find a person who is preparing coffee or doing something in the kitchen. Ask them if they prefer coffee or tea, and why. Tell them one thing you appreciate about their reasoning. List it here:

- B. Ask one of your Crossing Paths Group Leaders what the best breakfast food is and why. Tell them one thing you appreciate about their reasoning. List it here:

Be light-hearted

Tell a joke to someone, not your teammate. Have them initial here and give you a Star rating of 1 to 4 stars!

Be gentle (“Allow and heal mistakes”)

Locate a safety device (fire extinguisher, AED, First Aid Kit) List the location:

Be yourself

Go to the bathroom. Stand in front of the mirror. Write a word or image on the mirror with a dry erase marker that captures something unique about yourself. Take a picture of yourself and the word/image with your phone or a group member’s. Be ready to share when you return to the group. Or, if you don’t have a phone, invite a friend to take the photo or invite a group member to be a “checker” and tell the “checker” what word you wrote on the mirror, so they can go and check to see if it is there.

Appendix #1

Crossing Paths Multiple Choice Game Chart

Problem	Solution	Key Figure/Symbol	Answer
SEPARATION	CONNECTION	Flaming Chalice	Unitarian Universalism
EXILE	RETURN	Torah	Judaism
SIN	SALVATION	Jesus	Christianity
SUFFERING	NIRVANA (ENLIGHTENMENT)	Buddha	Buddhism
WANDERING (SAMARA)	LIBERATION (MOKSHA)	Om	Hinduism
DISCONNECTION FROM ONE'S INNER LIGHT	STILLNESS	Cross	Quaker
PERSONAL SIN	BECOME BORN AGAIN	Jesus	Megachurch/Evangelical
SELF_SUFFICIENCY	SUBMISSION	Mohammed	Islam
SIN	SALVATION BY FAITH & WORKS	Crucifix	Catholicism
DISCONNECTION FROM NATURE	HARMONY WITH NATURE AND NATURAL CYCLES	Wheel of the Year	Pagan
DIMINISHMENT OF HUMAN POTENTIAL & THIS LIFE	USE OF REASON & COMPASSION	A Human Figure	Humanism

Crossing Paths Authors:

Katie Covey, Soul Matters Director of Religious Education

Rev. Scott Tayler, Soul Matters Team Lead



© 2021-22 Soul Matters ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Packets are for use by congregations who have purchased from Soul Matters.

Learn how to purchase our resources and join at <http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com>

Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>