



Soul Matters

Renewing Faith

RE Resources
Second - Fifth Grade

March 2022

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Welcome to Renewing Faith

Welcome to the Soul Matters Multi-Platform Packet for Second through Fifth Grades for the month of March. This year our monthly themes invite us to think about not only what values our UU faith calls us to but also the actions and skills that *our times* require of us. Pandemic time, along with our racial, political and environmental challenges, exposes the need for humanity to change and adjust in key ways. So each month we will explore a different skill that we need to lean into as we make our way through these challenging and complex days.

With this in mind, this month we explore four ways in which our times call us to “Renew Faith”:

Lesson A: Renewing Faith in Promises - The Practice of Covenanting

Lesson B: Renewing Faith in Ourselves - The Practice of Trusting Our Gifts

Lesson C: Renewing Faith in Each Other - The Practice of Joining Forces for the Common Good

Lesson D: Renewing Faith in Simple Things - The Practice of Noticing the Richness We Already and Always Possess.

I’m especially excited about renewing faith in promises through covenanting. I hope that the children will be able to visit or revisit the creation of covenants in the spring as a reminder of work that many RE classes and groups do together in the fall. Returning to this pivotal concept in our faith is one way to offer religious education about Unitarian Universalism.

Additionally, I love the chant “[What we need is here](#)” by Rev. Amy McCreath, as it is so beautiful and so evocative of the theme. We renew faith in life’s joys by practicing gratitude and trust. I especially hope that you will find a way to use it. The chant is simple and easy to learn for all ages.

Last but not least, we have a variety of great “For All Ages” elements this month, found in the last section of this packet. I especially want to lift up a Prayer Bead Practice combined with a reading of Sandy Sasso’s book *God’s Paintbrush*. April Rosario, DRE of First Parish Church of Taunton, MA has kindly shared how she created this moving moment for her congregation, which was very popular and highlighted the way to renew faith by trusting in life’s gifts and joys.

In the spirit of trusting life’s gifts, may you find emerging gifts this month which renew your faith and uplift your spirit.

Katie, on behalf of the [entire Soul Matters Team](#)

DRE for Soul Matters, soulmattersre@gmail.com

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

Legend:

1. *Purple Font* = online adaptations and alternatives
2. Double asterisks (“**”) = books recommended by the Widening the Circle Research Team

Calendar Connections

March 2022

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

Interfaith:

- [Ash Wednesday](#) (Christian) - March 2, 2022 (more [here](#))
- [Lent](#) (Christian) - March 2 - April 14, 2022 (A [humorous take](#))
- [Purim](#) begins (Jewish) - March 16 - 17, 2022 (more [here](#) & [here](#))
- [Holi](#) (Hindu) - March 18 - 19, 2022 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Ostara](#)/ Spring or the Vernal Equinox (Wicca/Pagan) - March 20 (more [here](#))
- [The Annunciation](#) (Christian) - March 25

Unitarian Universalist:

- [James Reeb](#) dies (1965) - March 11 (more [here](#) and [here](#).)
- [Susan B. Anthony's](#) Death - March 13
- [Climate Justice](#) Month - March 22 to April 22
- [Viola Liuzzo](#) dies (1965) - March 25

National & Cultural:

- [Women's History Month](#)
- Irish American Heritage Month
- Mardi Gras - March 1
- [Peace Corps Established](#) - March 1 (1961)
- [Season for Nonviolence](#) - Jan. 30 - April 4
- Dred Scott Case - March 6 (1857)
- [International Women's Day](#) - March 8
- [St. Patrick's Day](#) - March 17
- [World Water Day](#) - March 22
- Archbishop [Oscar Romero](#) dies - March 24 (1980)
- [Selma–Montgomery march](#) - March 21-25 (1965) (more [here](#))
- [International Transgender Day of Visibility](#) - March 31 (more [here](#))

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [National Day of Unplugging](#) - first Friday of March / Mar. 2
- [Pi Day](#) - March 14
- Everything You Think is Wrong [Day](#) - March 15
- [Tolkien Reading Day](#) - March 25

Lesson A:

Renewing Faith in Promises

The Practice of Covenanting

(Core Stories: The Golden Rule/The Promise/ The Treehouse Rules)

Theme Angle

Our theme this month is “Renewing Faith.” In this lesson, we reflect on how UUism uses covenanting to renew our faith. We trust and hope that our actions will be governed by the promises we make in our covenants. Often, we make promises in the beginning of the academic year, in September. This month invites us to revisit and renew those promises and commitments we made. It’s all a way of celebrating how our faith reminds us, “It is our promises that make us feel safe, connected and strong.”

Light It!

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

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

Extinguish It!

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

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

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

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

Introduce It!

(Wonder Box)

A Rainbow Means a Promise

Reflection Object: a rainbow image

Suggested Script

“Here is a rainbow. It is part of a story from the Bible. Do you know the story of Noah’s Ark? It is a flood story from the Jewish Scriptures, also known as the Old Testament of the Bible. [Review the story if needed, with [this version from Tapestry of Faith Love Connects Us.](#)] At the end of this story God makes a covenant with Noah and all the people of the earth. God says, “I will make a deal with you, a promise—a covenant. My covenant is with all the beings of the earth, not just the people. You go forth and populate the earth and fill it again with all your kind. And I promise never to flood the earth again. And as a sign of my covenant with you I will put a rainbow in the clouds. And every time you see a rainbow it will remind you of our covenant to create and preserve life.”

Now, we have rainbows in our church and they are a symbol of a covenant or promise too.

Does anyone know what the rainbows mean in our church?

Our rainbow signs at church are a promise that no matter whom you are or who you love, we accept and love you. The rainbow is a message especially for those of us who are LGBTQ+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning or Queer. [“The “+” represents those who are part of the community, but for whom LGBTQ does not accurately capture or reflect their identity.”](#) The message lets us know that all are welcomed at our church. Our religion tells us to accept, love and respect one another and the rainbow is one of the symbols we use to announce that we are committed to that.

This month, the theme is renewing faith. This session is about renewing faith in promises. We call the promises we make in our faith a covenant, just like in the Noah’s Ark bible story. [We made a covenant at the beginning of the year and this is a time to visit it again.]

A covenant is “... a promise to each other about what we are going to do, and how we are going to behave. They can be made by people in families and by students and teachers in schools. They can be made in religions too. Our Unitarian Universalist religion has a covenant....” - from [Making Promises, Making Covenants In Tapestry of Faith, Wonderful Welcomes, The Gift of Covenant](#)

A covenant is a way of saying we trust each other and make promises to each other. It’s a way of renewing faith. Let’s explore renewing faith with promises and the practice of covenanting. Ready? Let’s begin. “

Tell It and Talk About It!

Our Story Options: The Golden Rule/The Promise/The Treehouse Rules

Option #1 The Golden Rule by Ilene Cooper and Gabi Swiatkowska

Suggested Introductory Words

“A boy and his grandfather discuss the Golden Rule. Simple words yet not simple to apply. The Golden Rule is an example of a promise or a covenant that faiths ask people to make.”

Online read aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40lbDlo1WoM>

Book: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts

- Do you remember what religions had a version of the golden rule?
- Do Unitarian Universalists have a version of the golden rule?
 - (Inherent Worth and dignity of every person/ All people are important.)
- Do you find it easy or hard to follow the Golden Rule?
- Is there anything wrong with the golden rule?
 - Example: What if I love to be tickled and my sibling does not. Is it ok to tickle my sibling?

Online Permission Note: Abrams Book Publishers 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 “Abrams Book Publishers.”

Option #2 The Promise by Nicola Davis

Suggested Introductory Words

A story about a promise to plant acorns in a city that transforms the neighborhoods as well as the planter. Our promises and covenants transform us as well.” Here we go!

Video of book read by the author: <https://vimeo.com/73026206>

Book: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts

- Have you ever felt ugly?
- Would you have planted the seeds if you were the girl?
- What happened to the girl and her promise?
- What promise could you make to help the earth and all living things?
- What things can you do with your heart and hands to make the world a better place?

Online Permission Note: Candlewick Book Publishers 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 “Candlewick Book Publishers.”

Option #3 The Treehouse Rules

Suggested Introductory Words

“Here is a story about a Unitarian Universalist congregation and how a conflict was solved by renewing faith in promises and covenants. Covenants are powerful. Sometimes people think rules are more important, but a covenant honors the best way of working with each other. Are you ready? Let’s begin.”

From Tapestry of Faith, Love Connects Us, We are Active Creators of our Faith

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session16/162186.shtml>

“...The adults were humbled. Some sheepishly glanced at their church covenant, framed on the wall—hanging there and mostly forgotten. The congregational meeting was adjourned. The adults went on their way, reminded of the power of covenants, working together to find a solution and the commitment of people in right relationship with one another—all because of the treehouse rules.” - from the story

Reflection Prompts

- How did the kids come to reach a compromise in this story?
- Why were the children able to do so, when the adults were not?
- How were the children active creators of their faith?
- How do people in our congregation (or religious education group) reach compromises?
- Does our congregation have a covenant? What does it say? Who created it? What might be missing from it-something that ought to be mentioned, yet isn't? (You may wish to read the congregational covenant to the group.)
- How do covenants help us live in right relationship with one another?
- When might covenants not be able to help us keep right relationship with one another?

Online Permission Note: *Tapestry of Faith material has been authorized for online use. See*

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/downloading>

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. We also offer an online adaptation or alternative and *highlight it in purple*.

Explore It with...

Building or Rebuilding a Covenant

Suggested Script

“Today we are going to talk about what agreements we need to have to feel safe and have fun together. [We wrote one covenant together at the beginning of the RE year. It’s important to revisit it to see if it still reflects the promises we want to make to each other.] When we make an agreement on how we are going to be together we call that a covenant. I have a few things to start our covenant and then I am going to ask you what things you want to add to the covenant. So be thinking about what things you need to feel safe and have fun.”

Take a few minutes to explain each agreement and ask the children for examples of each and if they have any questions. Using puppets to demonstrate each concept can really hold the attention at this age level.

1. Mutual Respect

Treat others the way they want to be treated. Respect our church, the materials, & all people.

2. Attentive Listening

Listen with your eyes, ears, mind and heart.

3. Use Appreciations & No Put Downs

Talk to people in a nice way.

4. Right to Pass

You can choose to pass when called upon-just say pass.

Say in your own words:

What other things do you need to feel safe and have fun here at church?

Since we made this covenant together we can each make our mark on it.

Have the children add their thumbprints/handprints onto the Covenant. (Names can also be added).

Variation: Make a Paper Chain covenant

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session2/118145.shtml>

Using a Covenant to Make Something Together

Now that we have a covenant on how we want to be together, we can try making something together. Before we start, what will we do if someone breaks the covenant? Discuss follow ups that you use in your congregation. Include: Adult reminders, peer to peer reminders, time outs, involving parents.

LEGOS

Invite the children to partner with one other person. Ask them to build something with the LEGOS together. Go around and have each group share their building. Now partner two groups together and ask them to build something together. Keep this going until all the children are building together.

Other Building Options

- Spaghetti & Marshmallow Tower- Work together to build the tallest tower. One example [HERE](#).
- Puzzle - Assemble a puzzle together.
- Stick Explosion (for older children) <https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/stick-bombs-experimenting-with-kinetic-energy>

Reflection Questions

Did it help to have a covenant?

Why is a covenant important?

If you have a church covenant this would be a good thing to include in the discussion.

Hand Art Promise Poster

Explore the theme tangibly while making drawings illustrating either the Golden Rule or the Class Covenant

Trace your hand and write or draw your promise on it. We will put all our hands together to make art that shows our promises. These hands can be combined to make a poster. See one example [HERE](#).

Create Rainbow Art

"The spectrum of colors in a rainbow is really just a set of different reflections of the same light. Communities, such as our Unitarian Universalist congregation, sometimes use a rainbow as a symbol that we belong together. A rainbow says "We are connected. We share the same humanity, although we may look different from one another." - from <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session1/161645.shtml>

Invite the children to create rainbows with watercolors or markers using the acronym ROY G. BIV to remember the order of the colors.

Make a Pinky Swear and Making a Promise in Other Cultures

In the US kids pinky swear by interlocking their pinkies to show that they seriously intend to keep a promise. Invite the group to learn or share how they pinky swear.

How to Pinky Swear: 1) Two people entwine their pinkies 2) While pinkies are entwined, touch thumbs together 3) Release pinkies but keep thumbs touching and rotate hands to form a heart.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinky_swear

Try these promise swears from other countries:

- In Sweden it's touching your thumbs together.
- I swear on me mum (NW United Kingdom)
- Cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in your eye. (UK)
- "Versprochen ist versprochen und wird auch nicht gebrochen." (What's promised is promised and won't be broken) (Austria)
- Ik zweer het - then make a V with your fingers (like a peace sign) and spit through it on the ground. (Netherlands)
- Shouting "swear down mate" and "spit down" while spitting on the ground. - Glasgow, Scotland.
- During the act, you're supposed to hold your index and middle finger upraised and to not have got any part of your body or clothes crossed. When you cross something, the promise is invalid. You can trick someone into a false promise by crossing fingers behind your back or crossing your legs. When someone swears, and you doubt the validity, you ask them to show what they crossed. - Czech Republic
- When two people swear on something, usually a bet, they shake their hands and need the third one, a witness, who "cuts it apart". It means the witness says: "Jelito, kopyto, platí to." [A jelito, a hoof, it's valid.] and while reciting the phrase, he touches with a knife hand the first participant's hand ("jelito"), then the second one ("kopyto") and then cuts their handshake apart ("platí to"). Czech Republic

From

https://www.reddit.com/r/AskEurope/comments/3kisd5/pinky_swear_tummies_or_something_else_how_do_you/

An Interview

Congregational Special Guest

Who in your congregation has helped create a covenant or participated in an artistic expression of the congregation's covenant or mission statement? Invite them to share how they were moved by creating the covenant.

Lesson B:

Renewing Faith in Ourselves

The Practice of Trusting Our Gifts

(Core Story: Nothando's Journey/ The Magical Yet)

Theme Angle

The theme this month is renewing faith. In this session we explore how we renew faith in ourselves by trusting our gifts. Each person has gifts inside of themselves. Some have the gift of making people laugh. Others have the gift of being a good listener. Still others have the gifts of working hard or persistence. These are gifts which you can trust because they are in you. They enable you to renew faith in yourself. They remind you that you can rely on yourself in challenging times.

Our religion reminds us that we have inherent worth. Part of what this means is that we have the strength and gifts within us to help others and help ourselves.

So when it comes to renewing faith, our faith clearly tells us, "Practice trusting our gifts."

Light It!

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- *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.
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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)

Our Gifts

Reflection Object: a small, wrapped present

Suggested Script

“The theme this month is renewing faith. In this session we explore how we can renew faith in ourselves by trusting our gifts. Each person has gifts inside of themselves (hold up the wrapped present.) If this were the box which held the gifts of you, what would be inside? Do you have the gift of making people laugh? Of being a good listener? Of being kind or working hard? Of understanding others? Of being very strong or being able to figure things out? These are gifts which you can trust because they are in you. They enable you to renew faith in yourself. They remind you that you can rely on yourself in challenging times.

Our religion reminds us that we have inherent worth. Part of what this means is that we have the strength and gifts within us to help others and help ourselves.

So when it comes to renewing faith, our faith clearly tells us, “Practice trusting our gifts.” Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

Tell It and Talk About It!

Our Story Options: Nothando’s Journey/The Magical Yet

Option #1 Nothando’s Journey by Jill Apperson Manly (Author), Alyssa Casey (Illustrator)

Suggested Introductory Words

“Today’s story is an example of the way we can renew our faith in ourselves. “[Our story] is a journey in self-discovery, told through the eyes of a young girl named Nothando. The book tells of the Reed Festival, an important celebration in Nothando's country of Swaziland in Southern Africa.

Nothando and her brother venture into the unknown hills, in order to get to the festival on time. As Nothando explores the hills of Swaziland, she visits with various animals--Nothando moves freely with the animals and begins to become comfortable with who she is.” - Amazon.”

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-ZWfw2kknA>

Reflection Prompts

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- How did you feel when Nothando saw all the animals?
- How do you renew your faith in yourself?

Online Permission Note: *Jabu Kids Book Publishing has not publicly shared direction about online use, so you will need to make your own judgment call about use of this story. For help thinking through that see our Soul Matters document: [Copyright Guidance for Online Story Reading](#).*

Option #2 The Magical Yet by Angela DiTerlizzi (Author), Lorena Alvarez (Ill.)

Suggested Introductory Words

“Today’s story is an example of the way we can renew our faith in ourselves. We don’t have to be perfect and know how to do everything at once. The magical yet is a game changer. With this magic you can be comfortable not knowing how to do something YET. It gives you a chance and some hope as you warm up, fix things, and make mistakes. Ready? Here we go...”

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-owlWJcDXY>

Reflection Prompts

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- How did you feel when the character tried and tried? Did it feel familiar?
- How do you renew your faith in yourself?

Notes on the Book

**ARAOMC Context

The Widening the Circle Research Team chose this book because it shows diverse characters succeeding (decentering whiteness/representation), moving away from White Supremacy Culture characteristics of perfectionism and toward a growth mindset.

Online Permission Note: *Little, Brown Publishers 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 “Little Brown 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 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...

Playing a Rock Game

“On night hikes I used to have a wide assortment of rocks, small, medium, smooth, rough... I'd pass one to each child as we sat close together in the dark. They'd spend a couple minutes holding their rock as I guided them through really getting to know it... then I'd collect them all, and would slowly pass them to one person, slowly one at a time they would get handed around the circle. When yours came to you, you kept it (while still passing the others to your neighbor. Eventually everyone has their rock back and is excited to have found it again! It takes trusting that you really DO know your rock well. This might be played in the daylight with blindfolds or an invitation to close their eyes as they pass the rocks.” as suggested by Liza Earle-Center, Director of Spiritual Exploration, UU Church of Montpelier, VT

Exercising Your Intuition

Invite a person to go out of the room. Hide something of theirs. Have them picture the item in their mind and see if they can “locate it” with their intuition. Play “I Spy” or “Hotter/Colder” to locate the item.

Renewing Faith in Yourself to Try

What might the group try that takes a little courage but that you think you can do it? Here are a few suggestions:

- Swinging on a rope across a pretend “Canyon” outside
- Carrying heavy buckets of water
- Trying a new sport
- Climbing a tree
- Running a race

What might you try with your family?

- Ordering for yourself at a restaurant.
- Figuring out a way to solve a problem.
- Being in charge of having a pizza delivered.

Download a free library book from the library for your town and teach your parent/s how to do it.
Setting up a job which pays.
Take the Red Cross Babysitting Class online.

Offer to help with a job around the congregation after the service which would be a way of trusting yourself to use your gifts. You might offer to take care of a little one whose parents are trying to talk in coffee hour, show a person who is visiting how to get coffee, help untangle wires from the sound system, put away the minister's microphone, serve coffee, start a game on the playground. How can you use your gifts?

An Interview

Congregational Visitor (online or in person)

In the spirit of cultivating multigenerational relationships, invite a special guest from the congregation who renewed their faith in themselves in some way. Perhaps it was in an Outward Bound or other wilderness setting when they climbed a cliff. Perhaps it was when they reached out to do something completely out of their comfort zone. Invite them to share how it made them renew faith in themselves.

Lesson C:

Renewing Faith in Each Other

The Practice of Joining Forces for the Common Good

(Core Stories: The Fish and the Loaves/ Parable of the Long Spoons)

Theme Angle

The theme this month is Renewing Faith. This lesson is about renewing faith in each other by joining forces for the common good. Our faith teaches us that, together, we have the ability to change the world. Remembering this power that arises when we unite in common cause is a great source of hope. It is comforting to remember that we don't have to go it alone. But looking to those beside us and those who have gone before us, we gain confidence that "yes, we can!"

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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 Bundle of Sticks

Reflection Object: a bundle of sticks or two sticks for each child attending. (There are instructions for giving sticks to the children in the Tapestry of Faith version of the fable.)

Suggested Script:

“Here is a bundle of sticks. There’s a story that features a bundle of sticks. It’s about strength in unity. [Tell the story about the Bundle of Sticks, either directly from [Aesop’s fable](#) or from an adapted version used in [Tapestry of Faith’s Moral Tales](#).]”

Our theme this month is renewing faith. This session is about the practice of joining forces for the common good. When we join forces, we are stronger, just like the difference between a single stick and a bundle of sticks. When we are stronger, we can renew our faith in the possibility of change. Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

Tell It and Talk About It

Our Stories: The Fish and the Loaves/The Parable of the Spoons

Option #1 - The Fish and the Loaves

Suggested Introductory Words

“Here’s a story about what all of us need and all of us have to do in the world. We have to believe that renewing our faith in each other is the first step to doing anything. Jesus had faith that the people would share, even though at first there didn’t seem to be enough. Here we go.”

Preview of Video and Song by Lea Morris: <https://youtu.be/o6IKW4O0n6o>

Online Story from Tapestry of Faith:

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-6/loaves-fishes>

Reflection Prompts

- What part of the story do you remember the most?
- What did you like about the story?
- Why do you think it was the child who was first willing to share?
- What do you think this story teaches us?
- Have you ever trusted that people will rise up and help until something really happens?

Option #2 - The Parable of the Spoons

Suggested Introductory Words

“It’s not easy to place your trust in others. We want to be self-sufficient, but the story reminds us that true safety and “heaven” rests in trusting and relying on others. Ready, let’s begin.”

Preview of Video and Song by Lea Morris:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hE5m3iYRBB0>

Online story from Tapestry of Faith:

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/session1/heaven-hell>

More about our video story and song project with Lea Morris...

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As with all ten of the videos Lea is creating, the purchase price per video is \$20.

With your purchase comes the **following usage rights:**

- *Playing the video in online and in-person worship services (including recorded services)*
- *Playing the video in online and in-person children’s religious education programs/presentations (including ones that are recorded and posted online)*
- *Sending out a link to the video to parents so they can watch it with their children at home as part of their family spiritual life activities*

Purchase all ten at a lower price: Follow this link to purchase all ten of Lea’s story/song videos on all ten of our Soul Matters themes at: <https://www.hopesingseternal.me/stories/alltenstorysongs>

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...

View and Reflect on these Videos: The Children's March of 1963

Mighty Times The Children's March Video Trailer (5 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5c113fq3vhQ&t=94s>

Children's Crusade of 1963 | American Freedom Stories | Biography (4:12 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WV0k-3Hkjsw>

From May 2 to May 5, 1963, thousands of children left their schools in Birmingham, Alabama, to march for civil rights. Police officers responded by using water cannons and dogs to attack and then arrest the children. The march is thought by many to have renewed faith in the Civil Rights Movement and the power of joining forces for the common good.

Reflection Prompts

- How did these videos make you feel?
- How do you imagine the children who were taken to jail felt?
- Would you have participated if you had been there?

Consider showing the entire video of 40 minutes as a family series from Learning for Justice as a film kit

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/film-kits/mighty-times-the-childrens-march>

Play Trust Games to Renew Faith in the Power of Joining Forces for a Common Good

The games below from [Healthline](#) are recommended. However, we do not recommend any of the "catching a body" games for elementary aged children unless there are adults or teens to supervise and help.

Rush Hour

Zipper

Trust the Leader

Draw a Twin

Human Knot (if COVID and vaccinations allow)

Helium Stick

Buddy Walk

Generosity Dance or Game: Renew Faith in Each Other during the Stewardship Campaign

Stewardship campaigns often start in March. Involve the children by inviting them to reflect on our strengths of time, talent and treasure.

Time, Talent, Treasure Generosity Dance from Signs of Our Faith, Tapestry of Faith
<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session12/287963.shtml>

Other Games

Three-Legged Race From Tapestry of Faith, Love Connects Us, Kindness is the Key

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session9/161942.shtml>

“This game "ties together participants in a literal way and provides a fun way for them to experience competition and cooperation. The general idea is that of a three-legged race, in which two people stand side by side, tie their adjacent legs together, and race against other pairs. In this game, however, participants will race several times: first on their own, then tied to one other person, and then tied together with more people, and finally, tied together as an entire group.” - from the instructions

Land Mines Blindfold Walk

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

Adapt this for those with mobility issues by creating fewer landmines, further apart from each other.

Feed Each Other with Long Handled Spoons

Role play the story “The Difference Between Heaven and Hell” with some long-handled spoons (dowels taped to cooking spoons.) Feed each other corn or other easily manipulated food to find out how we renew faith in each other.

Lesson D:

Renewing Faith in Simple Things

The Practice of Noticing the Richness We Already and Always Possess

(Core Stories: Love/The Table Where Rich People Sit)

Theme Angle

Our theme this month is Renewing Faith. This session is about how we can renew our trust in life's goodness and simple gifts. Consumer society and social media tell us we are not enough and don't have enough. Our faith disagrees. It calls us to notice the many everyday joys and gifts that we already and always possess. Our faith reminds us we are already "rich" and life is already abundant!

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)

Life's Gifts and Joy

Reflection Object: a pile of coins or other money

Suggested Script

“The theme this month is Renewing Faith. In this session, we look at the practice of trusting in life’s abundance. Here is a pile of money. What do you think of when you hear the words “life's gifts?” Sometimes it means having a lot of something, often money or wealth. Here, in our Unitarian Universalist congregation, it means being rich in love and gratitude. It means having people who are or could be your friend. [set aside the coins] You don’t need money to feel rich in life’s gifts and joy. You can be rich in friends and family. It doesn’t take a lot of friends or family. It just takes love.

This session is about how we can renew our trust in life’s goodness and simple gifts. Consumer society and social media tell us we are not enough and don’t have enough. Our faith disagrees. It calls us to notice the many everyday joys and gifts that we already and always possess. Our faith reminds us we are already “rich” and life is already abundant!

Are you ready to explore that richness?! Let’s begin!”

Tell It and Talk About It!

Our Story Options: Love/The Table Where Rich People Sit

Option #1 Love by Matt de la Peña (Author), Loren Long (Illustrator)

Suggested Introductory Words

“Here’s a story about one of the greatest of all everyday gifts: love - and the diverse and powerful ways it connects us all as one of life’s gifts and joys. Here we go.”

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwrA4UHL9_0

Book: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts

- What part of the story do you remember most?
- What did you like about the story?
- What didn’t you like about the story?
- What do you think this story teaches us?
- What does love mean to you?

Online Permission Note: Penguin Random House Publishers, [which owns](#) GP Putman and Sons Publishing, 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 “Penguin Random House Publishers.”

Option #2 The Table Where Rich People Sit by Byrd Baylor (Author), Peter Parnall (Ill.)

Suggested Introductory Words: “As her family attempts to calculate the value of the desert hills, the colors of blooming cactus, and the calls of eagles and great horned owls, a young girl discovers that her impoverished family is rich in things that matter in life, especially being outdoors and experiencing nature. Here we go.”

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8Plzn1-WaQ>

Book: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts

- What part of the story do you remember most?
- What do you think this story teaches us?
- What does faith in life and nature mean to you?
- What can it mean to be rich?
- In an ideal world how would you like to live to be the most rich?
- What things would you put on your list?
- What things are important to you?
- What things are most important to your family?

Online Permission Note: Simon and Schuster, which owns Aladdin Publishers, 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 “Simon and Schuster.”

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...

Visit by a Tortoise or other Animal

Animals help us appreciate life's gifts and remind us that everyday joy and amazement is always in reach. So, find an animal to bring in to visit. a real tortoise or real rabbit. Ask if someone in your congregation has a pet tortoise, rabbit, chicken or even hermit crabs and invite it to visit. Invite a rescue donkey farm or other rescue organization to bring in an animal or two. Invite a friendly family dog to visit. Enjoy life's joy!

Sing A Chant: What We Need is Here

A Chant based on Wendell Berry's poem "Wild Geese."

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/music/what-we-need-here>

Meditation

Invite the children to move into a comfortable position. Ring the bell and listen until the sound can't be heard. Read the following poem and follow it with a moment of silence.

Poem Meditation

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright,

I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun more.

I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive,

I wish you enough pain so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger.

I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting,

I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.

I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye.

-anonymous

Spend some time thinking about the wishes you might wish for your friends and family. Return to the present when you are ready.

Community Time - feel the gift and joy of multigenerational community

Choose one or more of the topics below for some multigenerational sharing. Consider asking the blessing of the minister or worship leader to offer these on a Sunday morning in addition to the service.

Game Time - have fun together

Invite congregants of all ages to learn and play games together. Multigenerational favorites include Farkle, Apples to Apples and Jenga. One fantasy game, relatively quick to learn and a 30-minute play time is Carcassonne (note that it is played by only 2 - 5 players.)

Knitting/Crochet Time - learn a skill together

Another multigenerational session could be a time for the Knitters and Crocheters in the congregation to share their craft with children and youth.

Cooking Time - make a dish together

Invite a congregant to teach a cooking class to children and/or youth. Wear a toque, a chef's hat, and prepare something for the families or the congregation. It might be Ratatouille, from the movie of the same name. It might be simple like hard boiled eggs or making your own dip for chips.

Tech Time - upgrade your knowledge together

Offer a time for children and youth to teach elders about how to use their smartphones, or learn how to use Skype to talk to their grandchildren. What about posting on Facebook or using email?

Nature Time - gratitude for the gifts around us

Go outdoors and look for the gifts of Nature. leaves? grass? Have you ever expressed your thanks for the oxygen which is given to us by trees and plants? What about sunshine, or clouds, or rain? Did anyone see the eclipse? That was an abundance of cosmic experience! shadow! What else can you think of which makes us rich and abundant in nature? Dandelion seeds, a color of leaf, a squirrel chattering, a vine clinging to a brick wall.

Abun-Dance!

Try out three easy dance moves or make up your own. Put on some tunes and dance the abun-dance. Dance your gratitude for being alive.

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

Host an Abundance Fair!

From Tapestry of Faith, Heeding the Call, Workshop 7. The Call for Abundance

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop7/172937.shtml>

Invite the families and congregation to bring in extras of what they have, perhaps toys, tools, or clothing. Organize a swap after a service.

Abundance Juicer Day

Locate a juicer to borrow, then invite everyone to contribute items to make into juice. Try out apple/orange juice, then branch out into cucumber/apple or bean/carrot juice! Make and serve at coffee hour.

Be Mindful with a Glitter Jar

Adapted from Mindfulness Activities for Children and Teens

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>

First, get a clear jar, like a Mason jar, and fill it almost all the way with water. Next, add a big spoonful of glitter glue or glue and dry glitter to the jar. Put the lid back on the jar and shake it to make the glitter swirl.

Finally, use the following script or take inspiration from it to form your own mini lesson:

“Going shopping is like this swirling glitter jar. All you can think of is buy, buy, buy, I want, I want, I want... See how they whirl around and make it really hard to see clearly? That’s why it’s so easy to make silly decisions when you’re in the middle of the shopping frenzy – because you’re not thinking clearly. Don’t worry this is normal and it happens in all of us (yep, grownups too).

[Now put the jar down in front of them.]

Now watch what happens when you’re still for a couple of moments. Keep watching.

See how the glitter starts to settle and the water clears? Your mind works the same way. When you’re calm for a little while, your thoughts start to settle and you start to see things much clearer.” This includes making decisions about needs and wants. Your mind can be clear to see what is important and to renew your faith in life’s gifts and joy.

Play a Gratitude Name Game

Make a circle. Each person thinks of something they are grateful for starting with the same letter as their first name. Say, “My name is ____ and I am grateful for _____. For example, My name is George, and I am grateful for grapes. The person next to them repeats the previous gratitude and adds their own. To make it harder for the first person, ask them to repeat everyone’s gratitude in the circle.

Children’s Chapel & Time for All Ages Suggestions

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

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

We also know that some congregations like to have stories in children’s chapel and multigenerational worship that complement but are different from those shared in RE classes. So we’ve also listed some suggestions not found in the sessions above. We hope both lists support whichever approach you use!

From This RE Packet

The Fish and the Loaves

Preview of Video and Song by Lea Morris: <https://youtu.be/o6lKW4O0n6o>

Online Story from Tapestry of Faith:

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-6/loaves-fishes>

The Parable of the Spoons

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Nothando’s Journey by Jill Apperson Manly (Author), Alyssa Casey (Illustrator)

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-ZWfw2kknA>

Online Permission Note: *Jabu Kids Book Publishing has not publicly shared direction about online use, so you will need to make your own judgment call about use of this story. For help thinking through that see our Soul Matters document: [Copyright Guidance for Online Story Reading](#).*

The Magical Yet by Angela DiTerlizzi (Author), Lorena Alvarez (Ill.)

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-owlWJcDXY>

Online Permission Note: *Little, Brown Publishers 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 “Little Brown Publishers.”*

The Golden Rule by Ilene Cooper and Gabi Swiatkowska

Online read aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40lbDlo1WoM>

Book: [HERE](#)

Online Permission Note: *Abrams Book Publishers 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 “Abrams Book Publishers.”*

The Promise by Nicola Davis

Video of book read by the author: <https://vimeo.com/73026206>

Book: [HERE](#)

Online Permission Note: *Candlewick Book Publishers 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 “Candlewick Book Publishers.”*

The Treehouse Rules

From Tapestry of Faith, Love Connects Us

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session16/162186.shtml>

Online Permission Note: *Tapestry of Faith material has been authorized for online use. See <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/downloading>*

Love by Matt de la Peña (Author), Loren Long (Illustrator)

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwrA4UHL9_0

Book: [HERE](#)

Online Permission Note: *Penguin Random House Publishers, [which owns](#) GP Putman and Sons Publishing, 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 “Penguin Random House Publishers.”*

The Table Where Rich People Sit by Byrd Baylor (Author), Peter Parnall (Ill.)

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Book: [HERE](#)

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Additional Wisdom Tales & Message Moments

[The Brave Little Parrot](#) as told in Tapestry of Faith, Moral Tales

Renew faith in oneself and one's purpose.

Online Permission Note: *Tapestry of Faith material has been authorized for online use. See <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/downloading>*

[The Wise Princess](#) a tale from Finland

Renew faith in life's gifts by always learning.

Online Permission Note: *author unknown/wisdom tale in the public domain*

[Rocks, Pebbles, Sand](#) a wisdom tale

Renew faith by paying attention to what is important.

Online Permission Note: *author unknown/wisdom tale in the public domain*

[The Elephant and the Rope](#), a wisdom tale

Renew faith by trusting in one's gifts.

Online Permission Note: *Permission secured by Soul Matters*

[Henry David Thoreau and the Still Small Voice](#) as told in Tapestry of Faith, Sing to the Power

Renew faith in life's joys and gifts.

Online Permission Note: *Tapestry of Faith material has been authorized for online use. See <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/downloading>*

Message Moment and For All Ages Ideas

God's Paintbrush All Ages Service by April Rosario, DRE, First Parish Church in Taunton, MA

Thanks to April Rosario for sharing her idea for celebrating life's gifts and joys with this "For All Ages" service!

A few weeks before the all-ages service in RE, Coffee Hour, and on Social media, ask folks to answer the questions from the book, letting them know that their answer will shape an all-ages service to come. (I broke the 27 questions down and gave each age group a set to answer. It's important that each age group gets questions from the beginning, middle and end of the book to keep interest up.) See the list of questions and congregational answers in this [Soul Matters Shared Google Doc](#).

Once answers have been submitted, pick 3-5 for each question to use in your service.

For the service itself I used the "time for all ages" to talk about faith, that God can mean different things to all of us and our first source. At the beginning of the message of the service, I had teens hand out UU prayer bead packets (see photo below) and invited folks to make them as they heard a story. While they were being handed out I explained how they could be used as a UU spiritual practice.

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/practice/workshop2/59197.shtml>

My minister and I then each took turns reading pages of the book (with the pictures projected on the wall) and included the answers from the congregation.



Song for All Ages #1026 If Every Woman in the World

Here's a story about a courageous woman who followed her heart, renewing her faith in herself, in honor of Women's History Month.

Karen MacKay is a songwriter in West Virginia. She wrote this song from her deep connection to the living tradition of West Virginia women's music; a tradition that, in Karen's hands and voice, continues to be the means for perpetuating the simple ancient wisdom of mountain women.

In 1982, suffering harassment at work and unsure of her life's direction, Karen spent a weekend with "Aunt Jenny" and received the wisdom that has guided her life and music ever since. "Just git out there and play yer banjer. Git out there and play yer music and give 'em all you've got!" Two weeks later Karen had quit her job. A year later she had written and recorded the songs on her first album, "Annie Oakley Rides Again." The final song on that album was If Every Woman in the World.

Karen's strong belief in the power of women to influence global culture and bring peace to the world found a deep expression in this song, and women all over the world have responded by passing it on from woman to woman, country to country. It has been sung at the 1985 International Women's Conference in Nairobi, as well as at retreats and gatherings throughout Canada and the United States. It was included on the CD, *O Beautiful Gaia*, recorded by Carolyn McDade and the women of three different bioregions in Canada and the United States.

The song's current form incorporates three new verses written especially for its inclusion in this Unitarian Universalist (UU) hymnal supplement. If Every Woman in the World portrays a powerful dream of planetary peace that begins inside the heart of each person who sings it. The most important thing to remember in singing this music is to heed the simple wisdom of "Aunt Jenny" Wilson, "Just git out there...and give 'em all you've got!" "

<http://www.uua.org/worship/music/hymnals/journey/songinformation>

Here's the original article with some possible additions to a For All Ages Story

http://www.hotwirejournal.com/pdf/hw_v1_n3.pdf

Song for All Ages: What We Need is Here

A Chant based on Wendell Berry's poem "Wild Geese."

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/music/what-we-need-here>

The chant reminds all of us of life's gifts and joys present in our lives. It was created on a drive, while the author was thinking about the young college students away from home for Thanksgiving for the first time. May we send our thoughts to our UU young adults away from home for the first time, too. [This would be a good time to include a word about what, if any, ways your congregation remembers and serves its young adults.]

This chant came to Rev. Amy McCreath, an Episcopalian priest, as she was driving to MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, MA) on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. She writes in an email to Katie "The Lutheran Episcopal Ministry at MIT, where I served as chaplain, held a Thanksgiving-eve dinner Eucharist, and we had included in the liturgy Wendell Berry's poem, "Wild Geese." We sang the chant while we passed the blessed bread and wine. Many of those present were away from home for the first time, and I think the chant helped them find joy and peace in being present to the holy here and now."

Imagine the tender love of a minister who is moved to create this chant while letting her mind wander to those she will be serving. We UU's often celebrate a type of communion of our own. Communion in Latin means "sharing" and our potlucks and Sharing Circles, as well as service elements which include sharing can be our communions.

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. These meetings are recorded and posted on the [Soul Matters YouTube Channel](#).

- **Wed. Mar. 9, 2022, 1 p.m. ET for April's theme of Awakening**

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. Mar 2, 2022, 1 p.m. ET June theme of Celebrating Blessings**

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

Thanks to all the Soul Matters Religious Educators who send in suggestions for our monthly packets and participate in our monthly packet brainstorming calls. Special thanks to the Brainstorming Lab Regulars - Samantha Dickerson, DRE at Chalice UU Fellowship of the Conejo Valley, CA, Jenni Papp, DRE at the Southwest UU Church, North Royalton, OH and Katy Carpman, DRE at the Emerson UU Church, Houston, TX for their great suggestions each month.

In addition, we send gratitude to the [Soul Matters Widening the Circle Research Team](#) of April Rosario, DRE of First Parish Church in Taunton, MA, Christina Strong, Lifespan DRE at First Unitarian Church of Omaha, NE, Michele Capobianco, member of the UU Church of Lancaster, PA and Adrienne Summerlot, Consulting Director of Religious Exploration and Engagement for the UU Church of Champaign-Urbana, IL for their wisdom and continuing exploration of Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression Multicultural resources for the benefit of the Soul Matters Sharing Circle.

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
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