



Soul Matters

Awakening



**RE Resources
PreK - First Grade**

April 2022

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Welcome to Awakening

Welcome to the Soul Matters Multi-Platform Packet for Pre-K through First Grades for the month of April. 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 so that we don't just return to normal after the pandemic is over, but actually bring about a "new normal."

This month we explore the ways in which our times call us to "Awakening" There are four ways we will explore the ways we can widen the circle. Here they are:

Lesson A: Waking up to What Really Matters: Weighing things thoughtfully

Lesson B: Waking up to Wonder and Beauty: Being present

Lesson C: Waking up to the Pain and Struggle of Others: The power to help heal

Lesson D: Waking up to the Interconnected Web: Earth Day

A Welcome from Our Guest Packet Writer

Hello everyone, my name is April Rosario, and I'm so excited to have the opportunity to help Katie out and write this month's Pre-K and 2-5 grade RE packets. I had so much fun with this process and found it incredibly grounding. It became my own version of spiritual practice, if you will. I hope you and your RE kids enjoy and have as much fun participating in each of these lessons as I did writing them.

One of my favorite parts of this process was writing the suggested scripts to go along with the wonder box reflection objects. The wonder box is one of my favorite portions of Sunday morning with my own congregation as it helps shape all that is to come. I so enjoy hearing my church kids wrestle with the wondering questions and trying to come up with answers that make sense to them.

Additionally, I enjoyed adding a few science and S.T.E.M activities to our theme of Awakening. I have found that a hands-on approach to faith formation gets lots of laughs and smiles, which is always a plus in my book. I invite leaders to further lean into the science and S.T.E.M activities by holding up our 6 Sources of wisdom and maybe mentioning some of our UU, Unitarian, or Universalist scientists' ancestors.

I also enjoyed this year's approach to Easter in lesson C. After doing some brainstorming with both Katie and Rev. Scott, we decided to invite kids and teachers to explore Easter as part of a wider and explicit UU lens instead of centering the lesson on Easter alone.

And on that note, I hope you and all your RE kids have as much fun exploring this packet as I had writing it!!

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

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

April 2022

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

Interfaith:

- [Lent](#) (Christian) - March 2 - April 14, 2022
- [Ramadan](#) (Islam) - April 2 - May 2, 2022 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Vesak](#) - Celebration of Buddha's Birthday (Buddhist) - celebrated on April 8, 2021 in [some countries](#) and on various rotating dates in May by [other countries](#). (more [here](#), [here](#), & [here](#))
- [Palm Sunday](#) (Christian) - April 10, 2022
- [Maundy Thursday](#)/Holy Thursday (Christian) - April 14, 2022
- [Good Friday](#) - (Christian) April 15, 2022
- [Passover](#) (Jewish) - April 15 - 23, 2022 (more [here](#))
- [Easter](#) (Christian) - April 17, 2022
- Yom HaShoah - begins April 27 at sunset

Unitarian Universalist:

- [William Ellery Channing's](#) Birthday - April 7 (1780)
- Death of [Sophia Lyon Fahs](#) - April 14 (1978)
- [Hosea Ballou's](#) Birthday - April 30 (1771) (more [here](#))
- [Climate Justice Month](#) - March 22 to April 22

National & Cultural:

- Arab American Heritage Month
- [Jazz Appreciation Month](#) (more [here](#))
- [National Poetry Month](#) (more [here](#))
- [Dr. Carter G. Woodson](#), the founder of Black History Week, dies - April 3 (1950)
- Martin Luther King Jr gives his "mountaintop speech" - April 3 (1968)
- Martin Luther King Jr Assassinated - April 4 (1968)
- [U.S. declares war on Germany](#) - April 6 (1917)
- [Day of Silence](#) (LGBTQ) - April 8, 2022 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Vimy Ridge Day](#) (Canada) - April 9
- [Fair Housing Act passed](#) - April 11 (1968)
- [Richard Allen and Absalom Jones](#) organized the [Free African Society](#) - April 12 (1787)
- [Freddie Gray is arrested in Baltimore and dies](#) after sustaining injuries in police custody - April 12 (2015)
- [Earth Day](#) - April 22
- Lesbian Visibility Day - April 26
- [Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day](#) - April 26 (more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#))
- First day of [LA riots](#), sparked by acquittal of four white cops in the beating of Rodney King - April 29 (1992)

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [April Fool's Day](#) - April 1 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Star Trek Day](#) - April 5 (more [here](#))
- [National Tell a Story Day](#) - April 27
- [National Superhero Day](#) - April 28 (more [here](#))

Lesson A:

Waking Up To What Really Matters

Weighing Things Thoughtfully

(Core Story: **Ada Twist, Scientist)

Theme Angle

Our theme this month is “Awakening.” In this lesson, we reflect on waking up to what really matters and the importance of weighing things thoughtfully. It is often very easy – especially in our status and Tik-Tok centered culture – to just pay attention to the surface things and not look any deeper. But when we do that, we risk falling to shallow living. This lesson invites kids to practice and explore ways of deep living, a calling found in our fourth principle about searching for meaning. It’s all a way of reminding ourselves that our faith challenges us to “wake up to what really matters”!

Translating This for Young Children

Some things in our lives are very important and some things are not as important. It’s our job to make sure we balance the attention we give to both types of things.

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)

Balancing very important and less important things

Reflection Object: A scale

Suggested Script

“Here is a scale. Scales are used to weigh and measure things. Has anyone ever been on a scale?”

The first scale worked a bit differently than ones you may have stepped on at home or at a doctor’s office. The first scales had two plates or bowls suspended at equal distances from a **fulcrum** or the center lever. To work a scale, an object of unknown weight is put on one of the plates, while objects of known weights are added to the other plate. This continues until both plates are balanced. Once the plates are balanced, then you have found the weight of the original object. The oldest evidence of weighing scales dates to c. 2400–1800 BC, so it is safe to say that people have been weighing things for a very long time!”

Our theme this month is “Awakening.” In this lesson, we reflect on waking up to what really matters or what is really important and weighing things thoughtfully. It is often very easy to just pay attention to the surface things and not look any deeper. But when we do that, it is very possible that we will miss out on the truly important things of life.

For example, has anyone ever seen a duck on a pond? On the surface, the duck may look very calm and relaxed, but if we look deeper, underneath the surface of the water, the duck's feet are often moving quickly. Part of our jobs as people and Unitarian Universalists is to make sure we are balancing or weighing how much attention we pay to the shallow and surface things and how much attention we pay to the deeper things, like our values and our search for truth and meaning.

- Use Zoom screen and audio share to share this YouTube video of a duck on water:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXrOdyRKoF4>

It’s all a reminder that our faith wants us to “Wake up to what really matters!”

So today we’re going to explore the importance of weighing what truly matters. Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Our Story: ** Ada Twist, Scientist)

Suggested Introductory Words

“A great way to explore weight, measurement, and balance is through science! In the story Ada Twist, Scientist, a young girl takes the time to ask the question why, what, how, and when, and often times those questions lead to more questions. It is a wonderful story about the importance of asking our questions, staying curious, and continuing on our search for truth and meaning.” Here we go!

Ada Twist, Scientist by Andrea Beaty

Video Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNNHJNMEFMwA>

Book: [HERE](#)

Reflection Prompts

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- Have you ever wondered or been curious about something?
- What kind of questions do you like to ask?
- Have you ever done a science project or experiment?
- What do you do if you can't figure out the answer to a question?

Notes on the Book

**ARAOMC Context from the Widening the Circle Research Team

The WTC team chose this book because of its appropriateness for the theme of Awakening and the lens of weighing what matters. The main character, who is a Person of Color, and a scientist, shows how important it is to question, ask and discover. She does not take something at surface value or accept something because that is the way it has always been.

Online Permission Note: *Abrams Books has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#).*

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...

Fingerplay

Humpty Dumpty

<https://nancymusic.com/Humptyplay.htm>

An Active Meditation

Lots of people use yoga as a form of meditation. A big part of yoga is balance; balancing your body and your breathing is similar to balancing and weighing things that are important and less important. Explore the art of balance by quieting your mind and practicing these kids Balance Yoga poses from Cosmic Yoga.

5 Kids Yoga Poses for Brilliant Balance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMH0gzFTPSg>

Weighing things Thoughtfully: Which is the heaviest

Have kids participate in this science investigation as a way of introducing the conversation about weighing things thoughtfully.

Which is the heaviest?

<https://www.science-sparks.com/which-is-the-heaviest-and-fun-sparks/>

Below the Surface Art

Explore the theme of waking up to what really matters by creating invisible to the eye art. This project helps illustrate that if we look beyond the surface and dig a little deeper, we can often find so much more.

Supplies Needed: A white crayon; White paper; Watercolor paint + brush + water

Directions

- Ask each child to draw a picture on white paper using only a white crayon. Be sure to remind them to press down with the crayon firmly so they get enough wax on the paper.
- When they are done drawing, ask them to swap papers or have the class leader collect all the papers and then redistribute them.
- Next, have children brush watercolor over the drawing.
- The watercolor will stick to the paper, but not the white crayon. Their designs will then *magically* appear, reinforcing what really matters is often below the surface.

DIY Balance Scale

Explore weighing things thoughtfully by creating your own scale and weighing nearby objects.

Balance Scale

<https://jdaniel4smom.com/2018/05/make-homemade-balance-scale-to-weigh-chickens-activity.html>

Games

These games help kids explore what really matters by living into our fourth UU Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning. These games also highlight the idea that the community is the curriculum, as it lifts up the importance of kids getting to know each other on a deeper level and helps create bonds that are more than surface level.

Balance Games

<https://www.primroseschools.com/blog/3-balancing-games-to-practice-with-your-preschooler/>

****Connection Fruit Basket**

This game serves as a way for kids to explore ways they connect with one another.

- Set up a circle of chairs for the number of participants, minus one.
- To play “regular” Fruit Basket, invite the group to sit in chairs in a circle, except for one person who will be “It” and stand in the center. “It” calls out a word or a phrase that applies to “It,” (EX “It has on red”), and everybody else to whom the word or phrase applies jumps up and scrambles, along with “It,” to sit in an empty chair. The person left standing becomes the new “It” and calls out a new word or phrase. Anybody leaving a chair must find a new one to sit in.
- In Connection Fruit Basket, “It” must choose a word or phrase **showing** how two or more people in the game may connect with each other. For example, “It” might say “I live on Bridge Street,” “I go to X school,” “I Like....”, “I play....”, or “I have.....” and all others who live on Bridge Street or attend the same school respond. This helps youth discover connections among them. “I like” phrases are good because they reveal similar interests that individuals share but may not know about. Connection fruit basket is particularly good for groups whose participants do not know each other well or are trying to get to know each other on a deeper level

After playing, ask youth if they discovered connections they did not previously know existed. How does this make them feel?

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

Our UU Principles call us to ask questions and grow in faith, among other things. Asking questions and learning about one another can grow compassion and connection, the foundation of combating racism.

Lesson B:

Waking up to Wonder and Beauty Being Present

(Core Story: Have You Ever Seen a Flower?)

Theme Angle

The theme this month is Awakening. This lesson is about waking up to wonder and beauty. It can be so easy to rush about our lives and not stop and take the time to “smell the roses.” In this lesson, we will explore doing the work of being appreciative of life's wonder and beauty and staying present to it. This work of paying attention to beauty honors our long-held UU belief that this world is not “fallen” but beautiful and a great gift.

Translating This for Young Children

Wonder and beauty are all around us.

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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)

Reflection Object: a rose

Suggested Script

“Here is a flower. Has anyone ever heard the expression “stop and smell the roses”?

What do you think it means? When people say stop and smell the roses, what they are doing is reminding us to slow down and notice the things around us. They are reminding us just as our faith does to be present in every moment and not take things for granted.

Our theme this month is Awakening. How many of you have ever seen someone raise their arms high into the air and stretch just as they wake up?

When roses and flowers bloom, they too look like they are stretching and awakening.

- [Share this Time-Lapse Flowers Bloom video from YouTube - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjCzPp-MK48](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjCzPp-MK48)

For today’s lesson, we are reflecting on waking up to wonder and beauty and exploring what it means to be present in each moment.

Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

Special Guest Strategy

Who in your congregation is a gardener? Invite them to share how they got into gardening, why they continue to garden now, and photos of their gardens.

Tell It and Talk About It!

Our Story: Have You Ever Seen a Flower?

Suggested Introductory Words

“Today, we are focusing on being present in each moment and waking up to the wonder and beauty around us. This story asks us if we have ever really seen a flower. I mean really seen a flower. Do you think you have? Let’s find out. Are you ready? Good, Here we go!

Have You Ever Seen a Flower?

Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQIgdqKQDz4>

Book: [Have You Ever Seen a Flower?: Harris, Shawn: 9781452182704: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Online Permission Note: Chronicle Books has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#).

Reflection Prompts

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- What’s your favorite flower?
- What do you think this story teaches us?
- What will you do the next time you see a flower?

Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into the theme. Choose the one(s) just right for your group! In many cases, these will work as well online as in-person. When an activity doesn't work for both in person and online, we offer an online adaptation or alternative and highlight it in purple.

Explore It with...

A Meditation

Bubble Meditation

Locate some bubble mixture and a wand.

Say something like, "I am going to blow some quiet bubbles. Watch them emerge. Watch them come out." Invite the children to sit and watch them float away. As you blow the bubbles, wave and say something like "Bubbles are quiet," "Bubbles come out," "Fly away bubbles," or "Calm like the bubbles floating." This simple gesture connects the bubble blowing with a sense of letting go.

Fingerplay

This is My Garden

<https://www.letsplaykidsmusic.com/this-is-my-garden-finger-rhyme-song/>

Learn a Song

Find a Little Seed

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=da_LbBewte8

Candy and Ice Experiment

This activity helps put into perspective how when we are not living in the present moment and appreciating what we have, we can miss out on so much wonder, beauty, and joy!

Supplies Needed:

- Small candies like M&M's
- Ice cubes

Directions:

- Give everyone a piece of candy and ask them to eat it on the count of 3.
- Ask everyone what it tasted like.
- Now give everyone an ice cube and a second piece of candy. Ask them to keep it in their mouth without crushing it for as long as they can.
- Immediately after they remove the ice, have them replace it with the second piece of candy.

- Ask everyone again what the candy tastes like? (Because the ice has numbed their tongues, they should not be able to taste the candy.)

Ask how they would feel if they now had to go through life without being able to taste anything again. Explain that we never know what is going to happen, and that is why it is so important to appreciate the things we have in the moment. Ask if they had known they would not have been able to taste the second piece if they would have done things or eaten the first piece differently.

Sensory Play

Explore the theme of awakening with sensory play. When we are fully present, all of our senses are activated.

Oobleck

From <https://www.uua.org/youth/library/adults-ministry/deepfun/bond-building>

Materials: Cornstarch, water, food coloring, measuring cups, and a large bowl.

Measure out 1/4 cup of cornstarch for each person in the group. Add five tablespoons of water per 1/4 cup and mix. Add more water little by little until the concoction is malleable. Add some food coloring. This is some crazy stuff to make and play with. When you squeeze it, it's dry and hard, but release it, and it melts into a puddle. Dive in! Make sculptures and watch them melt. Talk about metaphors for emergence. Think of new names for the stuff. Read Bartholomew and the Oobleck by Dr. Seuss aloud while the group is playing.

Playing with Bubbles

If online and kids are in their own homes, send home bubbles or invite them to create a DIY bubble solution and play around with blowing bubbles. Have them focus on the beauty of each bubble they blow, what colors appear in it as it catches the light. Be present, watch and take note of how each bubble floats and where it lands.

(<https://www.homesciencetools.com/article/how-to-make-super-bubbles-science-project/>)

Planting Seeds

<https://teaching2and3yearolds.com/easy-kids-gardening-activity/#:~:text=I%20like%20to%20plant%20a,them%20in%20like%20a%20blanket>

Craft Projects

Making tissue paper flowers is a fantastic way for kids to explore and experience some of the wonder and beauty in the world. This project is also a multiple-step project, point this out and remind kids that by taking the time to do each step, they are practicing being present in the moment. For if they skip ahead or rush through a step, they will not end up with their desired results.

Tissue Paper Flowers

<https://www.mommalew.com/diy-tissue-paper-flowers/>

Lesson C:

Waking Up to the Pain and Suffering of Others

The power to help heal

(Core Story: Rechenka's Eggs**)

Theme Angle

The theme this month is Awakening, and for this lesson, we are exploring our theme through the lens of waking up to the pain and suffering of Others. As we explore this theme in connection to Easter, we are also highlighting the wisdom we gain from one of our 6 Sources - "Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves." In other words, our faith calls us to wake up to the pain and suffering of others, as we would our own.

But a question we may ask ourselves is once we have woken up to that pain and suffering, what do we do? We, in fact, all have the power and ability to help heal the hurt of others, and our faith calls us to wake up to that power. Today's lesson helps us explore just that, waking up to the pain and suffering of others and using our own superpower to help heal others.

Translating This for Young Children

We have the power to help heal some of the pain that other people feel.

Light It!

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- *Katie's Words*

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Back into the world of do and say
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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)

Reflection Object: Easter Egg

Suggested Script:

Does anyone know someone who might have had easter eggs waiting for them when they woke up this morning?

Our theme this month is Awakening, and all month long, we have been exploring ways and things that Unitarian Universalism calls us to wake up to. In many places right now, people celebrate the reawakening of spring from winter. Lots of people are also celebrating Easter.

For folks who are Christians, Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus after his death. While it's true the UU's often have different beliefs about Jesus, one thing we lift up through our 6 Sources is the wisdom we can gain from Jewish and Christian teachings. These teachings call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves. This is something Christians especially celebrate during Easter as it is a time of them remembering how Jesus was so awake to the pain of suffering of people that gave his life to help them.

Or in other words, our faith calls us to wake up to the pain and suffering of others, as we would our own.

But once we have woken up to that pain and suffering, what do we do? We, in fact, all have a superpower, and that superpower is the ability to help heal the hurt of others. So today, we are going to explore just that, waking up to the pain and suffering of others and using our own superpower to help heal others. Are you ready? Let's begin!

Tell It and Talk About It

Our Story: Rechenka's Eggs**

Suggested Introductory Words

"This book is about a Babushka (an old woman or grandmother) who is known throughout all of Moskva for her beautifully painted eggs. One day she notices an injured goose and takes her in. Let's see what happens as a result of Babushka waking up to the pain and suffering of the goose. Here we go!"

Rechenka's Eggs by Patricia Polacco

Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZJYCQBDU>

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Rechenkas-Eggs-Paperstar-Patricia-Polacco/dp/0698113853>

Reflection Prompts

- What part of the story do you remember the most?
- What did you like about the story?
- How would you describe Babushka? What kind of a person is she?
- Babushka notices miracles throughout the story. What do you think are some of the miracles in life?
- What do you think this story teaches us?

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Notes on the Book

**ARAOMC Notes from the Widening the Circle Research Team

This is a beautiful story that lifts up the "MC " or multicultural portion of ARAOMC by highlighting Russian culture. The illustrations show the eggs painted in old Ukrainian styles, and the story itself is told around Old Moscow and its cultures and festival traditions. A note for non-Russian speaking readers: the correct way of pronouncing Babushka is "bAbushka" not "babUshka" (stressing the first syllable, not the second, will make you sound like native Russian!)

For a story that is not tied to Easter but explores waking up the superpower that is your voice ...

Say Something by Peter H Reynolds

Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4waMR24zsI>

Book: https://www.amazon.com/Say-Something-Peter-H-Reynolds/dp/0545865034/ref=sr_1_1?crd=2HFQYZ461UTZ&am&dchild=1&am&keywords=say+something+book&am&qid=1621460243&am&prefix=say+something%21+bo%2Cbaby-products%2C188&am&sr=8-1

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Notes on the Book

**ARAOMC Notes from the Widening the Circle Research Team

There are diverse characters throughout the book. The story talks about "saying something." when you see something that is wrong. It shows that there are many different types of ways to "say something" besides giving a speech or writing.

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...

Fingerplay

5 Little Easter Eggs (scroll to the bottom of the page)

<https://www.angelfire.com/la/kinderthemes/efingerplays.html>

Walk a Mile Game

This game opens the door to understanding that things may be difficult, hard, or a struggle for others that may be easy for us.

- **Note this game will not work for classes that have mobility-impaired participants and should be avoided as it will not be accessible to all.**

Supplies: bring in multiple pairs of adult size shoes

Open the game by asking if anyone has heard the expression Walk a Mile in someone else's shoes and ask if kids think they know what it means. Explain that is a way to understand how things that may seem easy to one person may be hard or a struggle for another.

- Have kids move back and forth across the space doing different things ex, walk, skip, hop, jump, etc.
- Now have each child put on a pair of adult shoes and again ask them to move across the space doing different things, walk, skip, hop, jump, etc.
- After having a conversation about how it felt to walk in another's shoes
- Ask kids if they have ever seen someone struggle in a way that they don't or haven't experienced.

For those on Zoom, ask kids to put on a pair of shoes that belong to someone with larger feet then send them on a superhero scavenger hunt (directions below) while wearing someone else's shoes. After, have a conversation about how it felt to walk in another's shoes. Ask kids if they have ever seen someone struggle in a way that they don't or haven't experienced.

Superhero Scavenger Hunt

- Spiderman – power to shoot sticky webs – go find something that is sticky.
- Super Man – power to fly - go find something that flies, floats, or goes in the air.
- Batman – has an awesome batmobile to get around – go find something with wheels.
- Wonder Woman – uses her bracelets to protect herself – go find something you wear.
- Flash – has the power of super speed – go find something that goes fast.
- Captain America – is known to always have his shield with him, and he often throws it to defend himself. – go find something that is meant to be thrown.
- Thor – is known for his strength – go find something that is strong.

Emoji Charades

This game helps kids explore the idea of waking up to the feelings of others.

Supplies: emoji emotions cut into individual pictures - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/206110120429292505/>

How to Play:

Each player picks an emoji emotion out of a bucket and then acts it out (without making any noise) while the rest of the group tries to guess what emotion they picked. Once someone gets it correct, they go next, and so on.

DIY First Aid Kits

Talk with kids about the ways in which they think people might experience pain and how they might be able to help. Highlight the fact that we all have the power to help and make people feel better and even heal others' pain (give the example of putting an ice pack on a bump). Then ask them to work cooperatively to put together first aid kits to keep at church or to give out to folks (depending on the budget you are working with)

DIY First Aid Kits

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/anatomy-of-a-first-aid-kit.html>

Easter “Can” Hunt (instead of an Egg Hunt)

**** Leader Notes - Preface the can hunt with a group discussion. Suggested Script to foster inclusivity and sensitivity around food insecurity.**

Opening Question:

Would anyone like to share what their family or maybe a friend's family does for dinner? (offer examples - parent(s) cook a big meal, heat up a frozen dinner, take out, fast food, go to a restaurant, eat in the car on the way to an activity, eat all together at the same time, kids eat then adults eat later, etc.)

The fact is we all need to eat, and often, how we eat, what we eat, and where we eat can be very different depending on what our family's needs are; there is no one correct way. But we do all need to eat!

How do you think someone might feel if there was no dinner? The truth is there are many families throughout the world that don't always have enough to eat. This is a type of pain and struggling that others can't always see. You can't always tell someone is hungry or didn't eat dinner just by looking or talking to them.

We must remember to wake up to the fact that there is always someone who could use help; in fact, they could be someone we know and see on a daily basis, but we may never know.

What are some things you could do to help or lessen this kind of pain and suffering? How could you use your “super” power to help?

This year we are going to do a special kind of Easter Hunt. Instead of hunting for plastic eggs, we are going to hunt for cans of food that will then be given to (insert where food will be donated to) as answer our faiths call to wake up to the pain and suffering of others.

Easter Can Hunt as done by Boulder Valley UU Fellowship, Lafayette, CO

- Collect cans and non-perishable foods in the weeks leading up to Easter.
- During the Easter Sunday service, have Youth Groups hide the cans and food outside.
- After service, invite preschoolers, then the older children to run out and hunt for the cans.

Tips:

- Use sturdy baskets for collecting since the cans get heavy.
- Have the person delivering the cans after the hunt, park close by the hunt grounds so all can load the car after the event.

Say Something Activity Guide

<https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/say-something-literature-guide>

Lesson D: Waking up to Interconnection Earth Day (Core Story: The Cracked Pot)

Theme Angle

Our theme this month is Awakening. This past Friday was Earth Day, so for this lesson, we will be exploring our relationship with the Earth. Our 7th UU principle calls us to “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”. but that can often be taken to mean we must save our Earth. In this lesson, we will go one step further and explore our interconnection with the Earth. We will unpack how by working to save Mother Earth, we are also working to save ourselves.

Our faith calls us to wake up to the idea that we are people of the earth rather than people over the Earth; we are interconnected and interdependent.

Translating This for Young Children

Helping to take care of the earth, takes care of us too!

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)

Reflection Object: A globe, picture of earth, a small blue or green marble

Suggested Script

What is in the Wonder Box today?

It's our planet Earth! Well, not really, it's a globe/marble/photo, but today it represents earth.

We live on this blue green planet with white clouds. It is our home.

Earth Day was Friday. Earth Day is a holiday that helps us remember that we all live on this planet and need to take care of it.

How do you take care of your own home? Sweep, dust, keep it clean, put away toys, wipe our feet, be gentle with the furniture.

We take care of our Earth home in the same way. We keep it clean; we recycle as much as we can, we water and take care of trees and plants, we live gently on our Earth.

Today we are exploring waking up to our relationship with the Earth. Our 7th UU principle asks us to care for and value our planet Earth, the home we share with all living things.

A lot of the time, people can think that caring for and valuing Earth is just about us protecting or saving the earth, but in today's lesson, we will go one step further and explore our interconnection with the Earth. We will unpack how by working to save Mother Earth, we are also working to save ourselves. Are you ready? Here we go!

Tell It and Talk About It!

(Our Story: The Cracked Pot)

Suggested Introductory Words

“Today’s story is a wisdom tale about a cracked pot. It is a beautiful story about how all things are connected even if they don’t realize it. Here we go.”

The Cracked Pot by author unknown

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9Z60Msvm3c>

Wisdom Tale: <http://www.inspirationpeak.com/cgi-bin/stories.cgi?record=20>

Reflection Prompts

- What do you think this story/video teaches us?
- Have you ever made something happen without realizing it?
- What are some of the things that you do that affect the Earth?
- Has nature ever made you feel better or happy?
- What is your favorite way to spend time in nature?

Wisdom Tale Notes:

When researching this story, some sources say this is a Chinese wisdom tale; however, the majority say it’s Indian folklore. In both cultures, the author is unknown. In the spirit of inclusivity, the video depicts Chinese culture and the written wisdom tale it Indian.

Online Permission Note: *There are numerous sources for the parable; choose your favorite version to create a version of your own! Since the story itself is in the public domain, you are free to use and alter it. But be sure to credit a particular source if you use it verbatim or heavily draw on it.*

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...

Fingerplay and A Meditation

“I Wiggle” preparation

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]

I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]

I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]

I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]

Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]

So I'll be as still as still can be.

From Tapestry of Faith [Chalice Children](#)

Next, ring a bell or bowl, and invite the children to listen to it until they can't hear it anymore.

Meditation

We sit quietly and imagine we are lying gently on the Earth. We hear the wind. We breathe the Earth's air. We are a part of all that live upon the Earth. We share the warmth of the sun, the air and the water. We think of trees, cats, and flowers as our siblings. We all share this Earth. We feel the sharing love across the whole planet, across oceans and land, and ice. This is our blue green home. Now return, and find your friends here in the circle, and remember that they are part of the Earth, too.

Learning a Song

Put Trash in the Trash Can

(Tune: The Wheels on the Bus)

Litter is trash that wasn't put away,
Wasn't put away, wasn't put away,
Litter is trash that wasn't put away,
In the trash can.

I put my trash in the trash can,
The trash can, the trash can,
I put my trash in the trash can,
Right where it belongs!

Crafts

Explore how we can wake up to ways of protecting our Earth by making crafts that focus on reusability and highlight the “reduce, reuse, recycle” motto.

Reused Plastic Easter Egg Birdfeeders

<https://redeemyourground.com/easter-egg-birdseed-ornaments/>

Make a Reusable Lunch Bag of Duct Tape

<https://www.thegraciouswife.com/duck-tape-lunch-box/>

Science Activities

Go outside (or bring the outside in) and explore the circle of life and our connection to nature and living things in a hands-on way.

Explore Decomposing Wood

Find some rotting and decomposing wood for your class to explore. Talk about how yes, it may be gross, but it is all a part of the circle of life. As the wood breaks down, it provides nutrients for bugs and animals and creates habitats as well.

“... While dead trees may not be the most attractive part of a forest, they are essential to its health. As dead wood is decomposed (by fungi, bacteria, and other life forms), it aids new plant growth by returning important nutrients to the ecosystem.”

<https://fpdcc.com/did-you-know-dead-trees-play-an-important-role/>

The decomposing wood eventually turns into soil, which helps new trees grow. Those new trees then give off oxygen and help clean the air we breathe.

DIY Composter

Follow up your discussion with by making compost bins

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/make-a-composter>

Games

Deep Fun Games (<https://www.uua.org/files/documents/youthoffice/deepfun.pdf>)

- Rainstorm - page 12
- The Interconnected Web - page 21

Earth Day Scavenger Hunt

Find something that... (here are some ideas to get you started)

- Is green
- Is recyclable
- Is made of natural ingredients
- Is found in nature
- Is reusable
- Has a star, moon, or planet on it
- Is blue

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. Feb. 9, 2022, 1 p.m. ET for March's theme of Renewing Faith**
- **Wed. Mar. 9, 2022, 1 p.m. ET for April's theme of Awakening**
- **Wed. April 13, 2022, 1 p.m. ET for May's theme of Nurturing Beauty**
- **Wed. May 11, 2022, 1 p.m. ET for June's theme of Celebrating Blessings**

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.*

- **Feb. 2, 2022, for May's theme of Nurturing Beauty**
- **Mar. 2, 2022, for June's theme of Celebrating Blessings - Last Brainstorm Lab!**

End of Year Lab - Summing Up and Looking Forward.

- **April 6, 2022, 1 p.m. ET - General Meeting for Evaluation and Themes for Next Year.**

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: April Rosario

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.

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

Rev. Michelle Collins, Soul Matters Small Group & Special Projects Researcher

Rev. Scott Tayler, Soul Matters Team Lead



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