



Soul Matters

Nurturing Beauty



**RE Resources
Second - Fifth Grade**

May 2022

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Welcome to Nurturing Beauty

Welcome to the Soul Matters Multi-Platform Packet for Second through Fifth Grades for the month of May. 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 "Nurture Beauty." Here are the five ways we will explore:

Lesson A: Nurturing Beauty - Appreciate It: Celebrating Beauty in Others

Lesson B: Nurturing Beauty- Create It: Celebrating Our Power to Bring Beauty into the World

Lesson C: Nurturing Beauty - Experience It: Honoring All the Ways We Take Beauty In

Lesson D: Nurturing Beauty - Own It: Celebrating the Beauty That is Us

Lesson E: Nurturing Beauty - Share It: Memorial Day

And before we jump in, let me introduce myself. My name is April Rosario, and I'm so excited to have the opportunity to help Katie out a second time and write the Pre-K and 2-5 grade RE packets on Nurturing Beauty. I again had so much fun with this process and found it incredibly grounding. 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 packet is how we explore nurturing beauty in the first lesson. For this lesson, we have chosen to explore how we appreciate beauty in all its forms, including the ones that we can "see." This lesson is full of fun activities that help build understanding and empathy around what it may be like to go through life being differently-abled and neurodiverse.

Additionally, I enjoyed finding activities that created an opening for exploring all the sensory ways we can take in the beauty. So often, beauty is talked about as if it is only something to experience through sight, but that is just not the case. Our world is full of beauty sounding, smelling, feeling things. We just have to take the time to notice and experience them!

Last but not least, I enjoyed bringing one of my lifelong passions, baking, into our lesson on creating beauty! Using your hands to create something for someone else is always a beautiful thing, and the fact that these heart-shaped jam cookies are both beautiful in taste and appearance doesn't hurt either!

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

May 2022

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

Interfaith:

- [Beltane](#) (Wiccan) - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Ramadan](#) (Islam) - April 2 - May 2, 2022 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Ascension Day](#) (Christian) - May 26, 2022 (more [here](#))
- [Eid al Fitr](#) (Islam) - May 2, 2022 at sunset (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](#))

Unitarian Universalist:

- Anniversary of [William Ellery Channing's Baltimore Sermon](#), "[Unitarian Christianity](#)" - May 5th (1819)
- [UUA Founding Day](#) (1961) - May 12
- [Emerson's birthday](#) - May 25 (1803)
- American Unitarian Association founded May 25 (1825)

National & Cultural:

- Jewish American Heritage Month
- Asian/ Pacific American Heritage Month
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- [May Day](#)/International Workers Day - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Cinco de Mayo](#) - May 5
- [Mother's Day](#) (US & Canada) - May 8, 2022
- First HIV/AIDS death in North America - May 15 (1969)
- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia - May 17
- [Brown v. Board of Education](#) - May 17 (1954)
- [Agender Pride Day](#) - May 19
- Birthday of [Malcolm X](#) (May 19, 1925)
- [Victoria Day](#) (Canada) May 23, 2022
- Harvey Milk, gay rights activist, born - May 22, 1930
- [Pansexual and Panromantic Awareness and Visibility Day](#) - May 24
- Memorial Day (US) - May 30, 2022

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [World Press Freedom Day](#) - May 3
- [Star Wars Day](#) - May 4
- [World Laughter Day](#) - First Sunday in May
- Debut of "Rosie the Riveter" famous picture by Norman Rockwell, appears on the cover of Saturday Evening Post - May 29, 1943

Lesson A:

Appreciate It

Celebrating the Beauty in Others

(Core Story: Animal School)

Theme Angle

Our theme this month is “Nurturing Beauty.” In this lesson, we reflect on how important it is to understand and celebrate that we are all different, including the way our bodies and brains work. This lesson holds up and explores how we can appreciate the beauty in others and celebrates it in all its forms. We will also explore the concept that we don’t need to conform or act as others do to be beautiful. This lesson also helps us to remember that another way we appreciate and celebrate beauty is by remembering that there is no such thing as normal, and no settled definition of what beauty is!

Our faith reminds us, when it comes to nurturing beauty, we need to “Appreciate It” in all its many forms, and that celebrating the beauty of others comes from understanding, awareness, and empathy.

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*

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- *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)

Difference is Beautiful

Reflection Object: a book, a mirror, and a picture of a window

Suggested Script

“Here is a book, a mirror, and a picture of a window (hold them up)! Can anyone tell me when they might have in common?”

A mirror reflects us. Just like a mirror reflects us, books can be mirrors and reflect things we know and experience. A window lets us see outside. Just like a window lets us see and learn about what is outside, a book can act as a window so we can see and learn about something outside of our own life and experience.”

- Ask kids to share an example of a book they’ve read that was a window or mirror.

Our theme this month is “Nurturing Beauty.” In this lesson, we reflect on how important it is to learn about, understand, and celebrate that we are all different and all beautiful! Just like the window, mirror and book are different and beautiful. We will hold up and explore that beauty comes in many forms, we will also celebrate that we can be different in many ways - faith, ability, the way our brains work, the things we like to do, the foods we like to eat, and so much more.

Our faith reminds us when it comes to nurturing beauty, we need to “Appreciate It” in all its many forms.

Are you ready?! Let’s begin!”

Tell It and Talk About It!

Our Story: Animal School

Suggested Introductory Words

“We are all different, and that makes us all the more beautiful! Can you imagine how boring the world would be if we were all exactly the same? Animal School is a wonderful story that reminds us to embrace the things we are good at and understand that it is OK to do things differently.

Can you imagine what would happen if we expected a fish to behave like an eagle? We are all beautifully different individuals, and it is important to celebrate that. Are you ready? Here we go!”

Animal School: A Parable

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JccLYKqm0jA>

Parable: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/oaar/animal-school.html>

Reflection Prompts

- What part of the story will you remember most?
- If you were an animal, what would you be and what would you be good at?
- What are some things you have a difficult time doing?
- How do you think the animals felt when they couldn't do something because it's not how their bodies were designed?
- What would you have done to help make the animals feel better?
- Have you ever known someone whose body or brain worked in a different way than yours?

Online Permission Note: *There are numerous sources for this parable based on the fable by George Reavis; 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!

(Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

Here are a variety of suggestions for digging deeper into this week's angle of 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...

Games & Activities

Disability awareness activities can increase knowledge of disabilities and help teach kids to be sensitive toward others who are different.

Neurodiversity Activity

This activity is designed to hold up that we should not judge someone because of a difference or limitation they may have. It also holds up that we all have limitations that make some things harder for us and that it is unkind to make fun of someone who is struggling because we do not know what they are experiencing or how hard they are working to overcome their challenges. This activity also serves as a great conversation opener that allows kids to share some of the things they are good at and some of the things they struggle with

From [Neurodiversity Celebration Week](#)

<https://www.docdroid.com/TEiVTZ7/neurodiversity-activity-pdf>

Sculpting Activity

<https://classroom.synonym.com/disability-awareness-games-children-7854679.html>

- This activity teaches kids to accept others and allows them to be creative as well.
- Give each child some clay, a paper plate, and craft sticks and instruct them to sculpt something, such as a person or a dog.
- After they have sculpted for a couple of minutes, ask them to use only one hand to sculpt.
- After they're finished, ask them how much more difficult it was to sculpt with just one hand. Explain to them that some people don't have both of their arms or legs & have to face many challenges every day.

A Lot of Socks

<https://classroom.synonym.com/disability-awareness-games-children-7854679.html>

- For this activity, ask one of the kids to put two pairs of socks on each hand.
- Instruct them to remove one raisin at a time from a box and eat it.
- At the end of the activity, ask them how difficult it was to eat their snack with socks on their hands. Explain that people with a muscular mobility disability deal with these types of challenges every day.

Disability Awareness Activity Packet

“This booklet gives you some ideas for helping students understand different disabilities. Keep in mind that two people can have the same disability and still be very different. You may also have students who have some of the disabilities described here but are not at all similar to what is described. That is not uncommon. Not all blonde 4th graders are alike either!” taken from the packet

<https://www.dvusd.org/cms/lib011/az01901092/centricity/domain/1318/disability%20awareness%20packet%202.pdf>

Conversation & Crafts

Have kids color [these coloring sheets](#) from poppingwheelies.com as you have a discussion about understanding empathy.

Finding the Beautiful by Understanding Empathy

“When we put ourselves in another person’s shoes, we are often more sensitive to what that person is experiencing and are less likely to tease or bully them. By explicitly teaching students to be more conscious of other people’s feelings, we can create a more accepting and respectful ... community.” - from the overview

From Teaching Tolerance, What is Empathy?

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/what-is-empathy>

Diversity Awareness Coloring Sheets

<https://poppingwheelies.weebly.com/>

An Interview

Congregational Special Guest

Invite someone in your congregation who has a **track record of being open and talkative about their disability** to share their experience and how it makes them feel when other people who don’t have their particular struggle “see” and celebrate them.

Lesson B: Create It

Celebrating Our Power to Bring Beauty into The World (Core Story: The Big Orange Splot)

Theme Angle

The theme of the month is Nurturing Beauty. For this lesson, we reflect on how we can nurture beauty by creating it. Kids will get to explore the fact we all have the power to create beautiful things and bring beauty into the world. This lesson helps kids explore the concept that beauty can be made, created, and flow through us while stretching their skills to express themselves. The lesson also touches on the concept of our thoughts and ideas being beautiful things. We look at how a group of people had the beautiful idea of moving away from the idea of a Mother's Day that only celebrated one type of family or "mother" and used their power to create "Mama's Day," a day to celebrate all those who "mother."

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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)

We have the power to create beauty!

Reflection Object: Mother's Day Card

Suggested Script

"Here is a card (hold the card up), this one happens to be a card for Mother's Day, which also happens to be today. Let's take a look at the art on the cover, it's beautiful, isn't it!! Someone took the time to create this image.

Our theme this month is Nurturing Beauty. For this lesson, we reflect on how we can nurture beauty by creating it. In fact, we all have the power to create beautiful things and bring beauty into the world.

While this card is beautiful to look at, it does not tell the whole beautiful story of what a family can be. In fact, it often seems like there is only one way to be a family on Mother's Day, according to many of the cards.

However, as we just talked about we all have the power to create and bring beautiful things into the world. Such is the case with a group of people who began using their power in 2011 and working to make Mother's Day fairer and more fit for more than just one kind of family. They are calling Mother's Day - Mama's Day.

"Mamas Day is a celebration of all mamas, everywhere! We know that mamahood is not one size fits all. But most popular images of mothers exclude mamas based on their sexual orientation, race, income, immigration status, and more. And Mother's Day, one of the biggest commercial holidays in the United States, often reinforces traditional ideas of family and motherhood that there's only one way to be a family.

That's why we created "Mamas Day" in 2011 to highlight the contributions of the many mamas around us, and to work for recognition, rights, and resources for our mamas and families.

Each year, we commission artists to create original art that reflects the various ways our mamas and families look. The result is a collection of beautiful and unique cards that better reflect the families we know and love." - <https://mamasday.org/about/>

So when it comes to nurturing beauty, our faith clearly tells us, "Create it, and use our power to bring beauty, beautiful things, and beautiful ideas into the world."

Are you ready?! Let's begin!"

Special Guest Strategy

Who in your congregation is an artist or musician? Invite them to share their art and how the inspiration to create beauty comes to them.

Tell It and Talk About It!

Our Story: The Big Orange Splot

Suggested Introductory Words

“Today’s story is an example of someone using their power to create and bring beauty into the world, even when those around him were not in favor of it at first.”

The Big Orange Splot by Daniel Manus Pinkwater

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Big-Orange-Splot-Manus-Pinkwater/dp/0590445103>

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

Online Permission Note: *Scholastic Publishers, 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?
- Why do you think Mr. Plumbean waited till there was an orange splot on his house to change/paint it?
- Why do you think the neighbors were upset that Mr. Plumbean painted his house?
- What can we learn from this story about beauty?
- What are some of the ways you create beauty?

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

Kids drawing meditation

A wonderful way to add some beauty to your mindfulness practice.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w59SAIVZtMg>

Food Art

Food is often referred to as edible art. Try creating these beautiful cookies as a way to honor our power to bring beauty into the world and then give them as a gift for some who has “mothered” or shown you love.

***This is a wonderful activity to do over zoom as the cooking time is only 10-12 minutes, and the dough does not need to be refrigerated.*

Heart-Shaped Jam Cookies

<http://wannacomewith.com/2017/02/heart-shaped-jam-thumbprint-cookies/>

Notes on this activity

****Teacher Note:** before doing any baking always be aware of food allergies and sensitivities and adapt the recipe accordingly.

****ARAOMC Context from the Widening the Circle Research Team:** To make it an accessible activity, and not allow ingredient cost to be a barrier for families, consider creating ingredients kits for families to pick up ahead of time.

Arts & Crafts

Finger Paint Mama's Day Cards

Read/say:

One of the ways we show the world the beauty we create is to allow beauty to flow through us. Creating art is an especially good example of how we can let beauty flow through us, as we can find art in our fingers, as we create something beautiful. This is true of sculptors, painters, musicians, and composers.

Today we will indulge in our own artistic expression with some finger painting. It's something you might have done when you were in preschool, but often it is left behind. It's a great way to practice creating something beautiful because it is the process of finger painting that is important, not so much the finished product. Invite kids to share when they are finished

Cereal Box Houses

From creatingreallyawesomefunthings.com

- Cereal boxes (1 per house)
- Glue gun
- Scissors
- Elmer's glue
- Other random craft/trash supplies (Paint, magazines, scrap paper, glitter, markers)

To make a cereal box house, use your finger to rip the seam of a cereal box open so that the box lays flat. Next, fold the box inside out so that the brown side is on the outside. Use a glue gun to reattach the seam on the side and the bottom of the box. Now, to make the box house-shaped, use scissors to cut the roof shape. Voila! Cereal box houses complete! Give the kids a bunch of random craft supplies and let them build a house that looks like all their dreams.

Homemade Musical Instruments

Creating music is a fun, energy-releasing way to bring beauty into the world. Choose one or a few of the DIY musical instrument projects found in the link below and then put on some music, let kids play their instruments, and have a dance party!

<https://zinginstruments.com/homemade-musical-instruments/>

Lesson C: Experience It Honoring All the Ways We Take Beauty In

(Core Story: Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature)

Theme Angle

The theme this month is Nurturing Beauty. As UU's our 7th Principle and our 6th Source remind us that we are interconnected to nature and the wider world. This lesson offers an opportunity to celebrate that connection and honor the many sensory ways we take in the beauty around us. This lesson asks the question "what are all the ways to notice beauty?" and gives kids a chance to explore and grow their skills of opening to all of the ways to notice and experience beauty.

While this lesson touches on the fact that many people have all five of the senses, smell, taste, touch, sound, and sight, it also holds up the importance of remembering that that is not true for everyone and offers sensory activities while still being sensitive to those who find beauty without one of the senses. Our faith reminds us that as people we are connected to nature and its beauty in many ways. Today we take the time to experience those interconnections and take all that beauty in!

Light It!

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Introduce It (Wonder Box)

Beauty in Nature

Reflection Object: some cinnamon in an envelope (or use a small shaker or cup)

Suggested Script:

What is in the Wonder Box today? An envelope. That's not very exciting. We can use our senses to try to find out what is inside. We look at it. It has a small bump of something. We hear it shaking. We touch it and feel something in there. We smell it....

Oh! There is something inside with a smell. Would anyone like to smell it? What does it smell like?

It's cinnamon. Does anyone think cinnamon is a beautiful smell?

When are some times you have smelled cinnamon before? (allow space for kids to answer) Those are some beautiful memories!

We used our senses to figure out what was inside. Does anyone know the names of the sense that we have? (allow space for kids to answer) Many people have all five of the senses, smell, taste, touch, sound, and sight, but it's super important to remember that that is not true for everyone. Sometimes our senses don't work. Then we learn other ways to know about and experience the world.

Our senses often help us experience the beauty of the world around us. As UU's our 7th Principle and our 6th Source remind us that we are interconnected to nature and the wider world. Today we are going to celebrate that connection and honor all the ways our senses help us take in the beauty around us.

Are you ready?! Let's begin!"

Tell It and Talk About It

Our Story: Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature

Suggested Introductory Words

“Here’s a story that explores and celebrates the beauty and value of spirals. What makes the tiny snail shell so beautiful? Why does that shape occur in nature over and over again—in rushing rivers, in a flower bud, even inside your ear? Here we go.”

Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature by Joyce Sidman

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

Book: <http://amzn.to/2jWtGiv>

Reflection Prompts

- What did you like about the story?
- Have you ever seen spirals in nature?
- What other patterns can we find or see in nature?
- What things in nature do you find beautiful?

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

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

Begin by asking kids if they have a favorite color and why that one is their favorite. Then remind them that all the beautiful colors we love and experience every day are found in nature. Invite them to sit comfortably and turn on some nature sounds music and lead them through the below meditation. This meditation was adapted from [Rainbow Meditation](#).

- Take a few moments to breathe together, take a few deep relaxing breaths.
- Imagine the color red takes over this room/sanctuary and surrounds you. Now, breathe in red and imagine that it warms your heart.
- Now imagine the color orange, orange is the color of one of our favorite citrus fruits. Imagine that the sweet smell of orange fills the room. Breathe-in the color orange and let sweetness fill your body.
- Yellow is bright and sunny, imagine the brightness of yellow fills the room, breathe-in yellow, and feel how bright and wise you are.
- Green is the color of our earth, imagine earth fills the room, breathe in green, and let it calm you.
- The color blue is seen in our sky and oceans, it is roomy and light, imagine that the blue of the sky fills this room. Breathe-in lightness and space.
- Indigo is the color of mystery. Imagine indigo fills this room. Breathe in indigo and let mystery fill your body and mind.
- Have you ever seen a violet or purple pansy. It is the color of beauty, breathe-in and see yourself as beautiful.
- Finally, all of the colors of the rainbow, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet fill the room and swirl around magically. Breathe-in all of the colors of the rainbow. You are a rainbow, too.

Poetry

"...We can all be inspired to compose when given the opportunity to handle a wonder of nature, such as a shell, a pinecone, a vivid fall leaf, or a maple seed pod."

Take kids outside if possible to find whatever is the "best thing" to them. Then invite your kids to write a poem about that thing using the below ["Best Thing" Poem Template](#) from Joyce Sidman's (the author of Swirl by Swirl) website. Encourage students to draw upon their senses as they write.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60b8eef7c66e5851afba5696/t/60db27668e562d593c32bfe6/1624975206172/PN+Best+Thing.pdf>

Labyrinths

Nature Labyrinth

Venture outside and let kids experience make a spiral using twigs, rocks, grass, and leaves. Make it large enough to walk around. Put something beautiful at the center to see when they reach the inside.

Finger Labyrinth

"Allow children to experiment with walking their fingers across the threshold into the labyrinth. Explain that if they follow the path of the labyrinth, they can walk their fingers in, around, and back out across the threshold. Invite children to use a cotton-tipped swab dipped in paint to trace the path into, around, and out of their labyrinths." - from the activity

From Tapestry of Faith, Creating Home, On the Threshold

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session1/58229.shtml>

Rain Circle

Kids can experience the beauty of the sound of rain with this interactive group activity!

<https://ec.gc.ca/meteoaloeil-skywatchers/3AEA7BCB-0D37-4EFD-8F04-5A8B6F2A073E/P5-IntroductoryActivity.pdf>

Exploring Patterns/Fibonacci Spirals

Props: Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature book, a pine cone, sunflower, and/or other examples of spirals in nature

Explain to kids that both math and nature often organize themselves in patterns, and that spirals are examples of patterns. One of the ways to think of the deep beauty of patterns in nature is to explore science and mathematics. Fibonacci numbers are spirals in nature. You can see them in a pinecone, in a pineapple, in a flower.

Show one or two of these videos about spirals

["Math in the World Around Us: Fibonacci Sequence" by Adventure Academy](#)
[Short Animations: Fibonacci Spiral](#)

Explain that once you notice the spirals in nature, other patterns in nature appear in their beautiful symmetry - like leaves, feathers, branches of trees, tiger and zebra stripes, pine needles, spider webs and butterfly wings.

Nature Beauty Scavenger Hunt

Can the children find beautiful objects and places for each sense?

Beautiful Smells - a smelly sewer, a flower?

Beautiful Sights - clouds, tree limbs, birds

Beautiful Sounds- sounds all around

Beautiful Textures - rough pavement, smooth stones

Beautiful Vibrations - a big truck driving by shaking the ground, ripples in a puddle

Beautiful Balance - on a rock or curb, stack rock or twigs

Beautiful Temperature - warmth from the sun or cool in the shade

Beautiful Patterns - leaves, pine cones, spider webs, flower petals

Taste - beware of berries unless you can identify them! Consider providing a taste of cool water

Lesson D: Own It Celebrating the Beauty That is Us (Core Story: Sulwe)

Theme Angle

Our theme this month is Nurturing Beauty. This lesson reflects on the importance of celebrating the beauty that is us, even if those around us can't or don't see it. This lesson gives kids a chance to unpack that sometimes we all have moments where we can get down on ourselves and may not love what we see when we look in the mirror. This lesson lifts up ways for kids to remind themselves of just how wonderful and beautiful they are!

Light It!

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- *Our monthly Soul Matters worship packets*
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- *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)

I am Beautiful

Reflection Object: Mirror and [*multi colored skin tone markers*](#)

Suggested Script

“How many of you have a mirror of some kind at home? How often do you look in them? Has anyone ever looked in the mirror and not been 100% happy with what they see? Maybe you were having a bad hair day, or maybe you had a bit of breakfast or toothpaste on your cheek. Maybe you lost a tooth and now your smile looks different, maybe you are the only one you know who has freckles or a scar.

We can all have moments where we can get down on ourselves and may not love what we see when we look in the mirror, but it is so important to remember that we are all beautiful!

Everyone put their hands in the center of our circle. Let's take a look at all of the beautiful skin tones which are represented. (Even if everyone is White, there may be olive, beige, and peach tones present.) We are all radiating beauty!

For a long time, there was no way to capture all this beauty when drawing and coloring. But in 1992 these (hold up markers) beautiful skin tone markers were invented. Now there are skin tone markers, crayons, and colored pencils in up to 24 different skin tones. Companies created these because they know how important it is for all of us to be able to capture our beauty, own our beauty and celebrate all that makes us, us!

Tell It and Talk About It!

Our Story: *Sulwe* by Lupita Nyong'o

Suggested Introductory Words

"Here's a book entitled *Sulwe* (**Sool**-way), this is a story about a little girl who is unhappy with the way she looks and how she learns to appreciate and celebrate her skin tone and its beauty. Here we go."

Sulwe by Lupita Nyong'o

Book: [here](#)

Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vujbTOuzg2Q>

Reflection Prompts

- Why was *Sulwe* so sad?
- Do you have things that make you look different from people in your family, like *Sulwe* did?
- What name would you give your skin tone?
- If *Sulwe* was someone you knew, how would you help her feel better?
- What can we learn from this book?

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

"Sulwe is a beautiful story that holds up the struggle we can all sometimes face when it comes to loving, appreciating, and owning our own beauty. This story specifically shines a light on the issues of colorism and self-esteem and is based on author Lupita's Nyong'o's own life growing up as a dark-skinned girl.

Online Permission Note: *Penguin Random House 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 "Penguin Random House Publishers."*

Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

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

Explore It with...

A Meditation

Mirror Gazing from Rev. Jaelynn Scott, former Soul Matters Meditation Consultant

Prep: Gather as many small mirrors as you can (make sure they are safe for little ones).

- Let's all take a moment to breathe together.
- Take a look in your mirror. What do you see?
- Make a few funny faces at yourself if you'd like.
- Notice your eyes, nose, tongue, your hair. Do you like what you see?
- If you had a different nose, different eyes, or hair, would you, be you?
- Find one thing that you like on your face. Look at it for a few seconds. Thank it for making you, you.
- Find another thing that you like about your face. Repeat this at least 5 times.
- Now, look at your whole face again. Do you like what you see?

Games

Owning Your Beauty

Materials: A bag of treats

Pass around the bag saying, "Take only a few, and don't eat them yet" Once everyone has their treats, announce that they have to tell one thing that they find beautiful about themselves for every treat they took. Adapted from Be A Blessing to the World - Tell All

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

Crafts

Life-Size Portraits

Have kids trace their bodies and draw life-size self-portraits being sure to focus on the aspects that they love or make them feel beautiful (it does not have to be physical beauty). Invite kids to share their portraits if they wish.

Notes on the Activity

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

Give kids yarn (please be sure to offer different colors and textures of yarn) to use as hair on their portrait project.

[Virtual: Draw a self-portrait, being sure to focus on the aspects that they love or make them feel beautiful \(does not have to be physical beauty\)](#)

DIY Affirmation Jar

Part of owning our own beauty is being able to speak about ourselves in a positive way and having a healthy sense of self-esteem. One of the best ways to build these skills is with positive affirmations. "...Positive affirmations are words we speak or think to ourselves to encourage us and help fight negative and self-sabotaging emotions and thought patterns."

<https://thelittlemanor.net/diy-positive-affirmations-jar-for-kids-plus-free-printable-labels/>

Science, Conversation, and an Activity

The Beauty of Melanin

1- Have a conversation about what melanin is.

Read/Say

"Ever wonder where your [skin](#) gets its color? It comes from the magic "m" word: melanin (mel-uh-nun)! This natural pigment is what gives your skin its special hue. The darker your skin, the more melanin you have." - Kids Health

2- Understanding the science behind skin tone and color

Watch this TedEd YouTube video to learn more about melanin [The science of skin color - Angela Koine Flynn](#)

3- Solidarity Sticky Wall

<https://happytoddlerplaytime.com/solidarity-sticky-wall-an-anti-racism-learning-activity/>

Teacher note-

This activity will need to be adapted depending on age - for younger kids it could be done with shapes and colored scraps in a bowl. For 4 & 5th graders, it could be done with letters spelling out Melanin on colored paper could be hidden around the room.

To make it a game as well as an activity kids could be put in teams/groups to hold up working in relationship assigned a color and then work to gather to find their color and add it to the sticky wall.

Lesson E

Share It:

Honoring How We Share of Ourselves/Memorial Day (Core Story: The Hummingbird/The Perfect Heart)

Theme Angle

Our theme this month is Nurturing Beauty. This session is about how one of the ways to nurture beauty is by sharing it. More specifically how when we share of ourselves it is a beautiful thing and something that should be helped up and honored. As Memorial Day is Monday, the “Introduce It” portion of this lesson focuses on the beautiful sacrifices that so many soldiers have made to protect our country. The rest of the lesson, however, focuses on ways that we as UU’s can share of ourselves and how that sharing can help us live into our Principles and be the best version of ourselves.

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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)

Sharing of Ourselves

Reflection Object: A US Flag

Suggested Script

This weekend is Memorial Day Weekend when we have a 3-day holiday. Some people go camping, some have a picnic or BBQ. It marks the start of summer for many people. There's another reason it is a holiday. Does anyone know?

It is called Memorial Day because Monday is a day to remember the soldiers who have been killed in a war. We honor the beautiful sacrifice they have made by giving their lives to protect our country.

Other people often share of themselves too during Memorial Day Weekend by sharing their time to go visit cemeteries and place flags on the graves of those who served in a war and were killed.

Our faith is a living tradition. That means that we must live into or actively participate in our principles and spiritual themes. So today, let's explore how we can continue to nurture beauty by sharing of ourselves. Are you ready?! Let's begin!"

Tell It and Talk About It!

Our Story: The Hummingbird (aka The Brave Little Parrot)/The Perfect Heart

Suggested Introductory Words (can be used for both stories)

“Here is a story about how we can all nurture beauty by sharing and giving of ourselves. Doing the very best that we can to help and to give is beautiful, and it is important that we honor and lift up that beauty. This story will help us explore how others have shared of themselves and give us inspiration on how we may do the same. Are you ready...Here we go.”

Preview of Video and Song by Lea Morris: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqPMMcOIL-g>

Online story of the Brave Little Parrot:

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session15/123724.shtml>

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

The Soul Matters Team is thrilled about this year’s creative collaboration with Lea Morris. Each month Lea tells one of our selected & theme-based wisdom tales and then shares a reflection & song inspired by that story. It’s a beautiful blending of her wonderful story-telling skills, luminous songwriting and joy-filled singing.

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)*
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- *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>

Online story of The Perfect Heart: <https://paulocoelhoblog.com/2010/10/04/readers-story-the-perfect-heart/>

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.*

Reflection Prompts for both stories:

- What part of the story do you remember the most?
- What did you like about the story?
- What do you think this story teaches us?
- Have you ever stepped up to help or shared of yourself?

Explore It!

(Small Group Activities and Experiential Learning)

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

Explore It with...

A Meditation

One of the easiest and most powerful things to share is a smile.

Inner Smile Kids Meditation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcxqbAagd8Q>

Suggested Script

Have you ever been feeling down and then had someone smile at you, and maybe their smile made you feel a bit better? It probably didn't take away or fix the thing that was bothering you, but I bet it lifted your spirits just a bit. Offering a smile, a bit of kindness, with others and yourself is an easy and beautiful way of sharing of yourself!

Games

Get to Know You Jenga

One of the ways we can share of ourselves is by giving people the opportunity to get to know us better, and in turn, taking the time to hear their stories and getting to know them better.

<https://jenniferfindley.com/getting-to-know-you-activity-with-jenga/>

****Teacher Notes:** If your group has been together for a long time and knows each other, take this opportunity to ask questions that dig a little deeper and foster stronger bonds.

Story/Picture Building

Share of yourself by offering your thoughts and creativity in these two variations of story/picture building games

[Story Building](#)

[Picture Building](#)

As suggested by Lynnlee Lee, Topeka, KS

Each person starts with a blank paper, allow them to draw for 15-30 secs, then pass the paper to the next person. Keep passing for however many turns, then go around the room and allow each person to tell a story about the picture they ended with.

Stewardship Game

*Explain to kids that we often talk about stewardship in church in terms of giving money. While that is a wonderful thing, is not the only kind of stewardship there is. There are a few ways to be stewards and give of ourselves: we can give of our time, talent, and/or money. We can also be stewards of the world. This means that we **hold up that humans are responsible for the world** and should take care and look after it.*

Game directions (adapted from Children’s Stewardship Games)

- Post labels around the room - **Time, Talent, Money, Word**
- Call out examples of stewardship such as making dinner for a sick friend, donating money to charity, recycling, teaching a friend how to paint.
- The children must run to the label they think matches how you gave of yourself or to the world.

Conversation - Memorial Day: Facts, Meaning & Traditions

<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/memorial-day-history>

“... “The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land,” he (General John A. Logan) proclaimed. “

Crafts

Make U.S. Flags

<http://www.coloring.ws/t.asp?t=http://www.coloring.ws/usa/map.gif>

Color the U.S. flag. Tape on a dowel, optional. Take your flags outside and fly them!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Vco2QZYeNI>

Popsicle Stick Flags

Invite the children to take their flags home to place in their window or on the grave of a fallen soldier.

Read Aloud

This story may be too long for a time for all ages but would work well being told during a craft.

A Day for Rememberin': Inspired by the True Events of the First Memorial Day

Nurturing Beauty by honoring the ultimate sacrifice soldiers make by giving of their lives for our country.

Read Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NsX_l2FgH8

Book: [HERE](#)

Online Permission Note: ABRAMS CHILDREN’S BOOKS has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#).

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

The WTC team chose this book because it lifts up and acts as a tribute to the little-known history behind the first Memorial Day. It focuses on a fictional community of former slaves as they honor the fallen heroes who made them free.

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

Animal School: A Parable

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JccLYKqm0jA>

Parable: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/oaar/animal-school.html>

Online Permission Note: *There are numerous sources for this parable based on the fable by George Reavis; 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.*

The Big Orange Splot by Daniel Manus Pinkwater

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Big-Orange-Splot-Manus-Pinkwater/dp/0590445103>

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

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

Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature by Joyce Sidman

Video Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0ZRdDPYgtU>

Book: <http://amzn.to/2iWtGiv>

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

Sulwe by Lupita Nyong’o

Book: [here](#)

Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vujbTOuzg2Q>

Online Permission Note: *Penguin Random House 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 “Penguin Random House Publishers.”*

The Hummingbird

Video and Song by Lea Morris: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqPMMcOiL-g>

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The Perfect Heart

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Additional Wisdom Tales & Message Moment

Sometimes You're a Caterpillar

As recommended by UUA Youth Office, Race and Identity Resources

*Snail and Caterpillar are besties, they live in a beautiful garden. When they try to go out to a party, they find out they are different. **Teacher note: This video does use the words "crap" and has a sentence that says "I'm trying to hook up with a cute ladybug" however the overall message is a great one.****

Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRiWgx4sHGg&list=PL8PINNxdxil6gcm6fxPDG9Yt_IMrMrluf&index=39&t=0s

Online Permission Note: *wisdom tale in the public domain*

The Dog at the Well, a Muslim Tale - From Tapestry of Faith, Gather the Spirit

Nurturing Beauty by sharing of ourselves

Online Story: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multi generational/gather/workshop7/149663.shtml>

Online Permission Note: *Tapestry of Faith material has been authorized for online use [here](#).*

The Starry Night by Neil Waldman

Nurturing Beauty by letting our imaginations run wild as we create art.

Book: https://www.amazon.com/Starry-Night-Neil-Waldman/dp/1590787803/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1518630137&sr=1-4&keywords=The+Starry+night

Read Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gug_nuqPbBA

Online Permission Note: *Boyd's Mills in an imprint of Penguin Random House, and has authorized its books for online use as long as you follow their specific use guidelines found [HERE](#).*

Flower Communion and Norbert Capek

Online Permission Note: *UUA files in the public domain*

Message Moment and Time for All Ages

Memorial Day

As UU's we hold up stewardship as a way to live into our Principles and faith. However, stewardship extends beyond just the giving of money. We can in fact be stewards of the world by giving of ourselves as well, our time, our talent, and sometimes of our lives. This is the case with those who have chosen to be soldiers and have made the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives for our country.

To honor this sacrifice General John A. Logan proclaimed in 1868 "...The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land,"

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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**
- **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.*

- **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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Rev. Scott Tayler, Soul Matters Team Lead



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