



*Soul Matters*

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# Choosing Hope

RE Sesources  
One Room Schoolhouse  
December 2025

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## Notes About Packet Design & Usage

To get the most out of our RE packets, we encourage users/leaders to periodically review the key components of our design and approach to our elementary age RE packets:

- **2025-26 Enhancements:** Read about all of the enhancements to this year’s packets by clicking [here](#).
- **Three Packets to Meet You Where You Are:** This year, 3 different packets come with your elementary RE subscription: One to support lower elementary programming, one to support upper elementary programming, and a third to support one-room schoolhouse RE models.
- **Theme Connection Support:** We are committed to experiential learning, so we don’t just suggest stories, games and hands-on activities; we also provide “Set It Up,” “Sum It Up,” and “Discuss It” components that help group leaders clearly explain how the story, game or activity illustrates or explores the session topic/focus.
- **Bullet Points for Longer Introductions:** Sometimes components of the packet require longer setup wording, such as the wonderbox wording. When this is the case, we provide bulleted talking points. We do this because subscribers told us this was more user-friendly than a fully written-out suggested script. As the year proceeds, please let us know if this change is serving you well.
- **UU Values and Inspiring UUs in Every Packet:** To support UU identity formation, we weave our UU values and stories about inspiring UUs into each month’s packet. We’ve created two important tools to guide us, which also could be used by you if you want to create your own material: a chart that pairs [our monthly themes with the UU values](#) and a chart that pairs [our monthly themes with inspiring UUs](#).
- **User-Friendly, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale “Story Sheets”:** To save you time and support you as storytellers, our packets list the recommended wisdom tales and a bit about them, but then provide a hyperlink that takes you to a ready-to-tell and ready-to-print Google doc version of the story.
- **Leader Notes:** Throughout the packet, we offer tips and reminders to support and guide leaders. We identify these leader notes using *purple font and italics*.

## Notes About Our Unique Session Sections

Each of our session sections have been designed with care and intentionality. Below, we explain our approach to each session section with some suggestions about how to engage them.

- **Light It! - Chalice Lighting**

The chalice lightings we include in the packet are centered in our [UU core value of love](#), lift up the monthly themes, and tap into the power and fun of body movements. If you'd like an alternative chalice lighting, [HERE](#) is a document with other options.

- **Tell or Read It! - Stories to Inspire Us**

Stories are a wonderful way to bring our monthly themes to life and help us build our identities and bond with one another. This packet offers both picture books and wisdom stories, allowing you to choose the one that best fits the developmental stage of your one-room schoolhouse group.

Some one-room schoolhouse models place the story in worship and use it as the time for all ages. Other models place the story at the beginning of the RE time to introduce the session or in the middle of the RE time to explore that session's theme. To support all three of these approaches, we include story take aways ("Sum it Up") and discussion questions.

- **Wonder Box - Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity**

The activities in the wonder box sections can be used at the beginning of a session to name and introduce that session's theme, or they can be used later in a session as an "[object lesson](#)" to explore the session theme in more depth. Whether or not you use the wonderbox activity depends on the ages and developmental stage of your group.

- **Engage It! - Hands On Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning**

Our Engage It section offers a variety of experiential options for exploring each weekly session's theme angle. All of them are offered as "building blocks," meaning we don't intend for you to use them all, but instead we offer them to you as *optional* components to choose from to create your own unique experience/session.

When it comes to implementing a one-room schoolhouse model, the activities in this section can be used *in three different ways*:

- The first way is what might be called a "whole group approach." For this, choose *one or two* of the options that best fit the ages and interests of your particular group (as well as the time you have available). Then have *the entire group of children* do those activities together.
- The second way is a "stations approach." For this, choose two to four of the options and set them up as stations, with each child choosing the station that most interests them. Please know that with this approach some kids may choose to stay at one station the whole time, whereas others may rotate, so plan for some flexibility. For the station model to be the most successful, we suggest having a leader at each one to explain the activity.
- The third way is a "combination approach." For this, choose one activity for the entire group to do together. Then choose two other activities and set them up as stations that kids can self-select into.

- **Extinguish It!**

In each session, we offer chalice extinguishing words for you to bring your time to an end. We design these chalice-extinguishings to echo the chalice lighting's call to love, as well as reiterate that session's takeaway and invitation to action. Like our suggested chalice lightings, these tap into the power and fun of body movements. If you'd like alternative chalice extinguishing words, [HERE](#) is a document with other options.

# Welcome to Choosing Hope

Hello Friends!

Welcome to the December Soul Matters **One Room School House RE Packet** for kids in grades K-5, and the theme of Choosing Hope.

As winter approaches, days grow shorter, and the world around us changes. This month is a wonderful time to notice the light that shines in ourselves and in others, even when the days feel dark. In Unitarian Universalism, we believe hope is a choice we can make, a choice that helps us act with courage, kindness, and curiosity, and helps us stay connected to each other and the world around us.

Our packet this month celebrates this power we have to choose hope, with each session exploring a different way that choice transforms our life and the lives of others. It's a reminder that even when the world around us seems cold and dark, we can bring warmth and light.

With that in mind, here are the four sessions included in this month's packet:

**Session One: Hope and Choosing to Create the Light for Each Other**

**Session Two: Hope and Choosing to Trust That it Will Work Out**

**Session Three: Hope and Choosing to Look in Unexpected Places**

**(Christmas All Ages Worship & All Ages Winter Solstice RE Session)**

**Session Four: Hope and Choosing to Begin Again**

I really enjoyed the opportunity this packet created to live into our UU practice of finding wisdom in the world's religions—especially by lifting up and being inspired by the Hanukkah story and the Winter Solstice message that hope can be found in the dark.

It also gave us a chance to highlight our UU value of [Transformation](#), which calls us to “adapt to the changing world.” Additionally, the theme made space to celebrate and remember two inspiring UU ancestors: Lewis Latimer, who literally created light for us, and Charles Dickens, who wrote A Christmas Carol, a story of finding hope in the unexpected place of a cold-hearted man named Scrooge.

Personally, I was moved by the opportunity to revisit and lift up the beloved UU quote by Albert Schweitzer: “At times when our own light goes out, it is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

So dear friends, I hope this month also helps you reconnect with your gratitude for those who have accompanied you in the dark and, by doing so, reignited hope in your heart.

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

# Calendar Connections

## December 2025

*Click on the hyperlinked names of each event for more information or inspiration.*

### Interfaith

- [Advent](#) (Christian) Nov. 30 - Dec. 24, 2025 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Hanukkah](#) (Jewish) - Dec. 14-22, 2025 (more [here](#))
- [Bodhi Day](#) (Buddha's Enlightenment) - [Dec. 8](#) (more [here](#) & [here](#))
- [Chalica](#) (UU) Starts Dec. 1, 2025, first Monday in December and lasts seven days (more [here](#) & [here](#))
- [Yule](#), [Solstice](#) (Pagan/Wiccan) - Dec. 21
- Christmas Eve - Dec. 24, 2025 (Wednesday)
- Christmas Day - Dec. 25, 2025 (Thursday)
- [Holy Innocents Day](#) (Christian) - Dec. 28
- [Watch Night](#)/Freedom's Eve (Christian) - Dec. 31
- [Kwanzaa](#) - Dec. 26 - Jan. 1 (more [here](#))

### National & Cultural

- [Drunk](#) and [Drugged](#) Driving Prevention Month
- [Seasonal Depression](#) Awareness Month
- [World AIDS Day](#) - Dec. 1 (more [here](#))
- [Rosa Parks](#) Arrested - Dec. 1 (1955)
- International Day of [Persons with Disabilities](#) - Dec. 3
- [The Montgomery Bus Boycott](#) - Dec. 5, 1955 - Dec. 20, 1956
- [Human Rights Day](#) - Dec. 10
- Anniversary of [Sandy Hook](#) Shootings - Dec. 14 (2012)
- [Montgomery's buses](#) are desegregated - Dec. 21 (1956)
- [Boxing Day](#) (Canada) Dec. 26 (more [here](#))

### For Fun and On the Fringe

- [Nobel Prize](#) Day - Dec. 10
- How [the Grinch](#) Stole Christmas shown for first time - Dec. 18, 1966
- [Festivus](#) for [the rest of us](#) – Dec. 23

# Session One:

## Hope and Choosing to Create the Light for Each Other

### Theme Angle

This entire month, we are exploring some of the different ways we can choose hope. This week, we lift up how we choose hope when we create light for each other. This will give us an opportunity to celebrate the inspirational UU Lewis Latimer, who literally created light for us. It will also give us the chance to engage with the beloved UU quote by Albert Schweitzer: At times when our own light goes out, it is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

## Light It!

### Chalice Lighting

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives. (hands on heart)

As we light this chalice today, (cup your hands like a chalice)

May the flames (wiggle your fingers like flickering flames)

Remind us (tap the side of your head)

That we can choose to create the light for each other.

(cup hands into a chalice and then hold it out to the person on your left & right)

And that creates hope! (Sign hope in ASL)

# Tell or Read It!

## Stories to Inspire Us

### Wisdom Tale 1: The Light of Hope: The Story of Lewis Latimer (An Inspirational UU Wisdom Tale)

#### Theme Connection

This story introduces inspirational UU Lewis Latimer and explores the main messages of this month: that hope is not only found and that we have the ability to create light for each other.

#### Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pw1XKf7kky58kvpjl1O1MlcDax0QWU6w8ecPrFiskMA/edit?usp=sharing>

### Wisdom Tale 2: A Lamp in Every Corner. (A UU Wisdom Tale)

#### Theme Connection

This story explores the long history of our faith tradition has with stories about hope and light. It is also a chance to remember that hope is lifted up in our new UU Values and Covenant. In our Value of Generosity, we say: “We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope.” And in our Covenant, we promise: “We draw from our heritages of freedom, reason, hope, and courage, building on the foundation of love.”

#### Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/11fE\\_79kTRKkPF-OLEfJInt0skTPIT6V9\\_yqNOWeBn0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11fE_79kTRKkPF-OLEfJInt0skTPIT6V9_yqNOWeBn0/edit?usp=sharing)

*Leader Note: As [oral storytelling](#) has long been a means for religious traditions to pass down wisdom, we encourage storytellers to memorize the wisdom tales and tell them from memory. Click [HERE](#) for some storytelling guidance.*

### Picture Book: A Flicker of Hope by Julia Cook

#### Set It Up

“This story reminds us that it is okay to ask for help and also encourages readers to be hope builders for others.”

**Video Preview:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIB0eQj6Bk4>

#### Sum It Up

In your own words, remind the children of how the story is connected to the session's theme angle.

#### Discuss it: Reflection Questions to “[Build and Bond](#)”

- In the story, the candle was feeling very dim. How do you think the candle was feeling inside?
- Why do you think it’s important to have helpers when we feel sad, worried, or afraid?
- Has there ever been a time when you felt a little dim or sad? What helped your light shine brighter again? Who in your life helps you when you need hope or courage?
- What are some ways you can be a helper and share your light with other people?

# Wonder Box

## Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

### Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time:

- Index cards, each with one word from the quote written clearly:
- At / times / when / our / own / light / goes / out, / it / is / rekindled / by / a / spark / from / another / person.



### Introduction & Reveal

#### If using the wonderbox to introduce the session and session theme:

- Remind the children that each month we explore a different theme, and each week we explore the monthly theme in a unique way.
- Explain that the wonderbox will provide us with a clue about today's unique exploration of the monthly theme.
- **Reveal the Index cards only**

#### If using the wonderbox to help the children explore the session angle in more depth:

- Introduce the wonderbox with something like, "And now let's explore today's topic some more by finding out what is in our wonderbox."
- **Reveal the Index cards only**

### Wondering & Takeaway

- Hand each child one or two index cards.
- Tell them that they are each holding a piece of wisdom, but the pieces are all scrambled, and ask them to work together to see if they can put the words in the right order to reveal the whole saying. *Let them arrange themselves in order. (They may need to try a few times—encourage teamwork and hints if they get stuck!)*
- Once they succeed, read the sentence aloud together: "At times when our own light goes out, it is rekindled by a spark from another person."
- Ask the group what they think **the saying** has to do with our monthly theme of **Choosing Hope**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
  - Explain that it is the first line in a beloved UU quote by Albert Schweitzer: *At times when our own light goes out, it is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us*
  - Light the chalice and explain that the flame is a symbol of hope. Sometimes it gets dim, and we need someone else to share their spark with us.
  - Every holiday during the winter season includes some kind of light because light is a symbol of hope.
  - Our UU Values say we "cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope." That means we don't wait for hope—we choose it, and we share it, just like we did with these lights.

# Engage It!

## Hands-On Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning

### Hands-On Activity: Rolled Beeswax Candles

This activity should take 20-40 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

#### Activity Prep

Gather and set out Sheets of beeswax (8" x 16" works well; available in natural or colored), Cotton wick (pre-cut about 1–2" longer than the width of the beeswax sheet), Hair dryer (optional, to soften wax if it's cold or stiff), Scissors, Ribbon or twine for tying finished candles, Small tags or slips of paper for writing a name or short message

#### Set It Up

"Today, we are exploring how we choose hope when we create light for each other. To help us do that, we are going to make Beeswax Candles. These kinds of candles are one of the oldest kinds of candles in the world. Bees make the wax themselves, and people have used it for centuries to bring light into dark times. Today, we're going to make our own rolled beeswax candles as a way to remember that we can choose hope when we create light for each other just as Lewis Latimer did."

#### Directions

- Lay the wick along the short edge of your beeswax sheet, leaving about ½" of wick sticking out at the top for lighting, and a little extra at the bottom.
- Fold the edge of the beeswax sheet over the wick and press gently but firmly to secure it.
- Slowly and tightly roll the beeswax sheet around the wick, keeping the edges as even as possible. If the wax feels stiff, gently warm it with your hands or a hair dryer until it softens.
- Press the final edge of the sheet down so it seals.
- Tie the candle with ribbon or twine. On a tag, invite kids to write the name of the person they're grateful for, or a word like "Hope," "Light," or "Gratitude." Attach it to the candle.

#### Sum It Up

"Let's remember this activity and its message that that hope is not just something we wait for; it's something we make. And when we share our light with others, we help their hope burn brighter too. Just like bees each add their work to make wax for the hive, we each bring our spark to make light for the world."

# Hands On Activity: Hands On Activity: Hope Lamps

This activity should take 20-30 minutes and can be done with any number of children

## Activity Prep

Gather and set out small clean jars, tissue paper, modge podge, and battery tea lights.

## Set It Up

"Today, we are exploring how we choose hope when we create light for each other. When I think about where light comes from, I often think of the lightbulb.

If you did not use the Lewis Latimer story as your time for all ages, tell it now:

Did you know that one of our UU ancestors helped invent the light bulb? His Name was Lewis Latimer and to begin this project, I want to tell you his story.

### Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pw1XKf7kky58kvpj101Mlcdax0QWU6w8ecPrFlskMA/edit?usp=sharing>

So with that in mind, we are going to make our own lamps so we can share our light with the world."

## Directions

- Invite kids to glue tissue paper pieces onto the outside of the cup/jar to make a colorful design.
- Place a battery tea light inside.

## Sum It Up

"Let's remember this activity and its message that when we make light, we also make hope. Latimer's story shows us that one person's spark can help light up the whole world. Every time we share kindness, love, or encouragement, we are creating light for each other."

# Game: Pin the Flame on the Candle

This activity should take 10 minutes and can be done with any number of kids

## Activity Prep

Gather and set out a large poster or drawing of a chalice with a candle (no flame), paper flames (cut out of yellow, orange, or red construction paper; 1 per child, with tape on the back) and a blindfold (scarf or bandana)

## Set It Up

"Today, we are exploring how we choose hope when we create light for each other. (show them the candle or chalice without a flame)

Our chalice isn't complete without its flame. Just like we create hope when we bring light to each other, you'll help bring the flame of hope to our candle!"

### **Directions**

- Invite kids to line up and take a flame from the basket.
- One at a time put on the blindfold, gently spin them around once or twice, and invite them to try and place the flame on the candle.
- After all the children have had a turn, admire the finished chalice—full of overlapping, colorful flames.

### **Discuss It**

- How did it feel to add your flame of hope to the chalice?
- What do you think happens when we all bring our light together?
- How can we be flames of hope for each other outside of this game?

### **Sum It Up**

“Let’s remember this game and its message that when we make and share our light, we also make and share hope.”

## **Game: Light the Spark Freeze Tag**

**This activity should take 5-10 minutes and works best with 4+ kids**

### **Activity Prep**

Gather and set out 1 small battery tea lights or LED candles per child

### **Set It Up**

“Today, we are exploring how we choose hope when we create light for each other. To help us do that, we are going to play a special version of Freeze Tag that will remind us that hope and light grow when we share them and encourage us to help each other shine.”

### **Directions**

- Designate a play area with clear boundaries and give everyone a battery candle.
- Choose one child to be “It” and try to tag everyone else.
- When a child is tagged, they must “freeze” in place.
- The only way to be “unfrozen” is for another child to turn on their battery candle and touch the frozen player, symbolically “sharing light and hope.”
- After being unfrozen, children rejoin the game.
- The game continues with “It” trying to tag more players. Optionally, rotate who is “It” every few minutes.

### **Discuss It**

- How did it feel when someone helped “light” you again?
- Was it easier to get moving when hope was shared?
- How can we be sparks of light for people in our lives outside of this game?

### **Sum It Up**

“Let’s remember this game and its message that every time we encourage someone, lend a hand, or share kindness, we are turning on a light for them—and making our world brighter.”

## Game: Quick Spark Relay

This activity should take 5-10 minutes and games works best with 4+ kids

**Activity Prep:** Gather and set out 1–2 small soft balls, plush flames, or beanbags (sparks)

### Set It Up

“Today, we are exploring how we choose hope when we create light for each other. To help us do that, we are going to play a game that helps us experience how quickly hope can spread when we choose to share it, while reflecting on gratitude for those who have “lighted our flame.””

### Directions

*Leader Note : Keep energy high by counting seconds aloud: “Pass it fast! 1...2...3...go!”*

*Encourage giggles, dramatic gestures, or fun names for sparks to make it playful.*

*Emphasize that the spark represents hope, gratitude, and the light we share with each other.*

- Have kids stand in a circle or two lines facing each other.
- Hold up your soft items and explain that it represents your spark of hope. The goal is to see how quickly we can light up the whole room!
- Start with one spark. Kids pass it as fast as they can around the circle or across lines.
- Every time they catch it, they must say a word out loud that reminds them of hope or someone who has been a light for them (e.g., “Mom,” “Friend,” “Kindness,” “Courage”).
- Introduce a second spark halfway through to make it more challenging and exciting.
- 

### Discuss It

- How did it feel when the spark moved quickly?
- What happens if someone hesitates or doesn’t pass it?
- How can we be sparks for each other in real life?
- Optional Gratitude Wrap-Up:  
Invite kids to jot down on a slip of paper the name of someone who has “lighted the flame” in their life. Collect these in a bowl or hang them on a “Gratitude Wall.”

### Sum It Up

“Let’s remember this game and its message that just like the spark we passed, hope grows when we share it. Every kind word, every act of help, every smile is a spark. And when we remember those who have helped us shine, we carry their light forward to others.”

## Extinguish It!

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives (hands on heart)

As we extinguish our chalice (cup your hands like a chalice)

And as we go out into the world, (use finger to make a walking motion)

Let us remember (tap the side of you head)

That we can choose to create the light for each other.

(cup hands into a chalice and then hold it out to the person on your left & right)

And that creates hope! (Sign hope in ASL)

# Session Two:

## Hope and Choosing to Trust That it Will Work Out

### Theme Angle

This month, we are exploring some of the different ways we can choose hope. This week, we lift up how hope can be found when we make the choice to trust that it will work out. We all find ourselves in times where our well is drained, we have run out of steam, we have run into a dead end, and we can't see the path forward. In these seemingly hopeless moments, we can find hope by reminding ourselves that we can trust life to help us out. This session gives us a chance to live into our UU practice of finding wisdom in the world's religions, and in particular, lifting up and being inspired by the Hanukkah story.

Leader Background: UU World Article - [Embracing "And": There's Room to Be Both Jewish and UU](#)

## Light It!

### Chalice Lighting

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives. (hands on heart)

As we light this chalice today, (cup your hands like a chalice)

May the flames (wiggle your fingers like flickering flames)

Remind us (tap the side of your head)

That when things are hard (bend down and knock on the hard floor)

Or sad, (put your index finger under eye and pull down like tears)

We can trust that Life and others will help us out. (Lock arms with person to your left and right to make the whole group interconnected & in it together)

# Tell or Read It!

## Stories to Inspire Us

### Wisdom Tale: The Hanukkah Story and the Light of Hope (A Jewish Wisdom Tale)

#### Theme Connection

All religions have stories that contain hope, courage, and guidance for us. This story explores Judaism and the hope found in the story of Hanukkah.

#### Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K0IHcl7qBwbvqD6zzNb638\\_H\\_Cl3VnU1PcyMwrwG0yl/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K0IHcl7qBwbvqD6zzNb638_H_Cl3VnU1PcyMwrwG0yl/edit?usp=sharing)

*Leader Note: As [oral storytelling](#) has long been a means for religious traditions to pass down wisdom, we encourage storytellers to memorize the wisdom tales and tell them from memory. Click [HERE](#) for some storytelling guidance.*

### Picture Book: Hanukkah Cookies with Sprinkles by David A. Adler

#### Set It Up

“This story reminds us that sometimes hope starts small, with a cookie, a smile, or a brave choice, and grows when we choose to believe things can get better.”

**Video Preview:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wa\\_D37HlzVk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wa_D37HlzVk)

#### Sum It Up

In your own words, remind the children of how the story is connected to the session's theme angle.

#### Discuss it: Reflection Questions to “[Build and Bond](#)”

- How did Sara’s kindness help bring hope to the man?
- When have you trusted that things would work out, even if you weren’t sure?
- Sara didn’t know if her cookies or friendship would make a difference, but she trusted that they might. Have you ever trusted that something you do will make a difference or create hope?
- How does helping others make *you* feel hopeful?
- What are little ways we can share “cookies with sprinkles” (acts of kindness) with people in our lives?

# Wonder Box

## Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

### Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time:

A glow stick (or several) and a Menorah



### Introduction & Reveal

#### If using the wonderbox to introduce the session and session theme:

- Remind the children that each month we explore a different theme, and each week we explore the monthly theme in a unique way.
- Explain that the wonderbox will provide us with a clue about today's unique exploration of the monthly theme.
- Reveal what is in the box.

#### If using the wonderbox to help the children explore the session angle in more depth:

- Introduce the wonderbox with something like, "And now let's explore today's topic some more by finding out what is in our wonderbox."
- Reveal what is in the box.

### Wondering & Takeaway

- Ask the group what they think **the glow stick and the Menorah** have to do with our monthly theme of **choosing hope**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
  - **Hold up the uncracked glow stick.** And highlight that right now, it looks like nothing is happening. Sometimes life feels like an uncracked glowstick—dark, stuck, or like nothing will ever change.
  - Lift up that we can choose to just accept life like this, a glow stick, dark and unlit. Or, we can hope and trust that things will get better.
  - **Bend and snap the glow stick.**
  - Hold it up glowing and explain that when we make that choice, sometimes hope shows up in surprising ways, just like this light.
  - **Hold up the menorah** and ask if anyone knows what it is. If kids don't explain that it is a special candle holder called a menorah that Jewish people use during Hanukkah, a holiday that celebrates hope, courage, and trust.
  - Lift up that just as the glow stick reminds us that light can shine when we trust and hope. The menorah reminds us of the same truth, but through a very old story.
  - **Tell the [Hanukkah story](#) if you have not already:**
  - The menorah and the glow stick both remind us that when times feel dark, we can choose to hope and trust that light will come. Sometimes it lasts longer, shines brighter, or shows up in ways we never expected."
  - Close with by reiterating that Hope is a choice we can make, and when we do—it can shine in amazing ways.

**Optional Takeaway:** Let each child hold a glow stick for a moment, bend it, and watch it glow.

# Engage It!

## Hands-On Activities, Crafts & Games for Experiential Learning

### Hands-On Activity: Cookies With Sprinkles of Kindness and Hope

*Leader Note: This activity is best paired with the story Cookies with Sprinkles*

This activity should take 20-30 minutes and can be done with any number of children

#### Activity Prep

Gather and set out

- Plain sugar cookies (store-bought or homemade)
- Small cups of frosting (white, blue, yellow, optional chocolate)
- Sprinkles (rainbow, blue, silver, stars, hearts, etc.)
- Plastic knives or craft sticks for spreading frosting
- Paper plates and napkins
- A large piece of chart paper or poster board and markers

#### Set It Up

“In our story, Sara shared cookies with sprinkles with someone who needed hope. We’re going to decorate our own cookies today, not just for fun, but as a way to practice thinking about kindness and hope.”

#### Directions

- Invite kids to choose sprinkles and colors that remind them of hope (bright, cheerful, shining) to decorate a few cookies with.
- As they decorate, prompt with discussion questions:
  - “What colors or designs make you think of hope?”
  - “If you could give this cookie to someone who needs kindness, who would it be?”
  - “How does it feel to make something with love and care?”
- Kids can eat one cookie and save another to give away (to a parent, sibling, friend, or even to leave as a surprise for someone at church).
- Remind them: “Sharing what we make is one way we spread hope and kindness, just like Sara did.”

### Hand-On Activity: Hope Bracelets

This activity should take 10-20 minutes and can be done with any number of kids

#### Activity Prep

Gather and set out

- Elastic cord (cut into 8–10-inch pieces)
- Beads in Hanukkah colors: Blue (faith, trust, peace), White (light, hope, new beginnings), Silver and Gold (miracles, unexpected blessings),
  - Optional star or flame beads (reminder of the menorah light/our UU chalice flame)
- Small bowls to sort the beads
- Tape for ends of cords (to keep beads from sliding off)
- Scissors

## Set It Up

“Today, we are getting a chance to live into our UU practice of finding wisdom in the world's religions, as we lift up and are inspired by the Hanukkah story. The Hanukkah story reminds us that even when it didn't look like things would work out, the people trusted, lit their lamp, and found hope in the light. So with that in mind for our next activity, we're going to make bracelets using Hanukkah colors to remind us that we, too, can choose hope and trust.”

## Directions

- Begin by explaining what the colors represent:
- Blue bead: faith, trust, peace /White bead: light, hope, new beginnings/ Silver & Gold bead: (miracles, unexpected blessings)
- Give each child a piece of elastic cord with tape on one end and invite them to string beads in any pattern, using all three colors.
- As they work, guide reflection:
  - What helps you keep hoping when things are hard?
  - When have you trusted that it would work out, even if you weren't sure?
  - How can we help each other find hope?

## Sum It Up

“Let's remember this activity and its message that each time you see your bracelet, let it remind you of the wisdom of Hanukkah: hope can be found when we trust that things will work out.

## Hands-On Activity: Candle Flame Jumping and Craft

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/make-a-candle-flame-jump/>

**This activity should take 10-20 minutes and can be done with any number of children.**

## Activity Prep

Gather and set out paper flame cutout and coloring supplies, several small birthday candles, matches or a lighter, bowl filled with wet sand, straws, water or a fire extinguisher.

## Set It Up

“During Hanukkah, light and candles are symbols of trust and hope. Today, we're going to see something amazing that candles can do. When one candle goes out, its flame can sometimes 'jump' back to life from another flame or even from its own smoke. Just like that, when we feel low or hopeless, our light can be rekindled by trusting and by being near others who care.”

## Directions

- Begin with a demonstration:
  - Stand one candle up in your wet sand
  - With an adult's help, light the candle. Watch the flame for a few seconds.
  - Blow the candle out. Notice the little trail of white smoke rising from the wick.
  - While the smoke is still there, bring a lit match close to the smoke (but not touching the wick). The flame should “jump” back down the smoke and relight the candle.

With Two Candles:

- Place two candles close together in the sand and light them both.
  - Use a straw to gently blow out just one candle. Watch what happens. Sometimes the flame from the burning candle will “jump” and relight the one that went out.
  - Try it a few times: Does it always work the same way?
- Explain that even with just a little flame, hope can spread. The Maccabees trusted the light they had — and it was enough. We, too, can choose to trust that even small sparks of hope can grow.

### Optional Add-On Craft

- Give each child a paper flame cutout.
- On it, have them write one small thing they can choose to trust when life feels uncertain (e.g., “My family will help me,” “I can start again tomorrow,” “Kindness is real”).
- Collect the flames onto a poster to make a big “Menorah of Hope.”

### Discuss It

- How does it feel knowing you can send hope to others?
- How does it feel to know that our friends hope can jump over to us when we are feeling hopeless?
- What does this remind us about the Maccabees’ choice to light the menorah, even when it seemed like it wouldn’t work?

### Sum It Up

“Let’s remember this activity and its message that even when our own light feels dim or blown out, we can borrow light from each other. By listening, encouraging, or simply showing up, we help one another’s flames burn again.

## Game: Chanukah Memory Match

**This activity should take 10 -20 minutes and can be done with any number of kids. However, if you have more than 6 kids you may want to purchase a second game**

### Activity Prep

Purchase and set out the game [Chanukah Memory Match Game](#)

### Set It Up

Today we are going to celebrate the joy of Chanukah with a fun memory match game!

### Directions

- Shuffle all cards and lay them face down in a grid.
- On each child’s turn, invite them to flip over two cards.
- If the cards are a matching pair, keep the pair and take another turn.
- If they don't match, flip them back face down in their original spots, and play passes to the next person.
- The goal is to remember where cards are located to make matches.
- The game ends when all cards are matched, and the player with the most pairs wins.

# Game: Dreidel

This activity should take 20 -30 minutes and is best done with at least 3+ kids

## Activity Prep

Gather and set out game pieces (chocolates, pennies, candies or other treats) and a dreidel

*Leader Note: If you have lots of kids, you might want a second dreidel to have two games going at a time*

*Leader Background: [The Surprising Origin of the Dreidel](#)*

## Set It Up

“Does anyone know what this is? (hold up a dreidel) It’s a dreidel!

I know many of us think of this as a Hanukkah game, but did you know that originally this game had nothing to do with Hanukkah?

Legend says that during the time when the Greeks had taken over the Holy Land (a special place where their faith began over 3,000 years ago, where they believe God promised them a home, and us considered the heart of Judaism) which led to the rebellion from which we get our Hanukkah origins. So Jewish children learned in secret and would pull out a spinning top if a Greek soldier passed by, to give the illusion of simply playing.

They had hope that someday the Torah would not be outlawed and wanted to be able to read it, so they created a way to study even when things seemed hopeless. The dreidel has been a classic game played to this day.

So today we are going to play dreidel as a reminder that sometimes we need to use our smarts to find a way to create hope in the midst of hopelessness.

## Directions

- Each player begins with an equal number of game pieces (usually 10–15).
- At the start of the game, every player puts one game piece into the center "pot".
- Each player spins the dreidel once during their turn. Depending on which side is facing up when it stops spinning, the player gives or takes game pieces from the pot:
- נ (nun): do nothing
- ג (gimel): take everything in the pot
- ה (hei): take half the pieces in the pot (if there is an odd number of pieces, round up to the nearest whole number)
- ש (shin) or פ (pey): add one game piece to the pot (or in some variations, 3 pieces for each of the 3 stems in the letter shin)
- Once a player is out of pieces, they're "out" or can ask another player for a "loan." The last player standing wins!

## Sum It Up

“Let’s remember this game and its message that sometimes we need to use our smarts to find a way to create hope in the midst of hopelessness.”

# Extinguish It!

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives (hands on heart)

As we extinguish our chalice (cup your hands like a chalice)

And as we go out into the world, (use finger to make a walking motion)

Let us remember that when things are hard (bend down & knock on the hard floor)

Or sad, (put your index finger under eye and pull down like tears)

We can trust that Life and others will help us out. (Lock arms with person to your left and right to make the whole group interconnected & in it together)

# Session Three:

## Hope and Choosing to Look in the Unexpected Places

### Christmas All Ages Worship & A Winter Solstice RE Session

#### Theme Angle

This month, we are exploring some of the different ways we can choose hope. This week, we lift up how we choose hope when we look in the unexpected places. This session allows us to explore the Winter Solstices surprising message that hope can be found in the dark and Christmas's surprising message that hope can be found in the outcasts and seemingly powerless. This session will also give us an opportunity to celebrate the inspirational UU Charles Dickens, who wrote A Christmas Carol, a story of finding hope in the unexpected place of a cold-hearted man named Scrooge

**Leader Note: Knowing that this time of year is busy and churches may be doing very different activities, we've designed this lesson to be flexible:**

- [Yule, Solstice](#) (Pagan/Wiccan) - Dec. 21 -
- Christmas Eve - Dec. 24, 2025 (Wednesday)
- Christmas Day - Dec. 25, 2025 (Thursday)

#### Option 1: [Multigenerational Winter Pageants & Services Ideas](#)

Since RE programs differ widely on the Sundays around Christmas, we are offering ideas and elements for creating multigenerational services or pageants for children, youth, and adults. We hope that the variety of elements provided below will be “building blocks” for whatever holiday programs you are planning! This link is also included in the Lower Elementary and One Room School House Packet. It includes two wisdom tales, two no rehearsal pageants, a guided meditation, and a hands-on craft.

#### Option 2: [Winter Solstice RE Session](#)

Because RE programs vary widely on the Sundays around Christmas, some of you may be holding your pageant midweek on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, rather than this Sunday. For those who are, we are offering our regular RE session, featuring Upper Elementary 'building blocks' that can be used to create a Winter Solstice–focused lesson this Sunday.

**Leader Background: National Geographic “What’s the Winter Solstice”**  
<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/winter-solstice>

**Option 3:** Combine elements of both for your Sunday Service, RE and/or Christmas Service

# Session Four:

## Hope and Choosing to Begin Again

### Theme Angle

This month, we are exploring some of the different ways we can choose hope. This week, we lift up how we choose hope when we notice we have the ability to start over. This session gives us the opportunity to explore and honor the invitation of new news, as well as celebrate our UU value of transformation.

*Leader Note: We are reminded by the many wonderful DREs we work with that New Year's Sunday is a perfect time to keep things simple. Many families will be away, so this session is designed to be an All Ages light, easy, and joyful lift.*

## Light It!

### Chalice Lighting

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives. (hands on heart)

As we light this chalice today, (cup your hands like a chalice)

May the flames (wiggle your fingers like flickering flames)

Remind us (tap the side of your head)

Each new day is a chance to start again (Get down in a runners [starting stance](#))

# Tell or Read It!

## Stories to Inspire Us

### Wisdom Tale 1: How the Resolution Came to Be (A Wisdom Tale adapted from The History of New Year’s Resolutions)

#### Theme Connection

This story explores the history of New Year’s resolutions and how they offer us a chance to choose hope by beginning again.

#### Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1g07HrCMBWrWPEcbGmgaZGBr67AYb3\\_BtVFO0zyo\\_7Bs/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1g07HrCMBWrWPEcbGmgaZGBr67AYb3_BtVFO0zyo_7Bs/edit?usp=sharing)

### Wisdom Tale 2: The Story of Mussa and Nagib (A Middle Eastern Wisdom Tale)

#### Theme Connection

This story explores and reminds us that hope and transformation begin when we choose what to let go of and what to keep.

#### Printable, Ready-to-Use Wisdom Tale Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MaJx3APJrGVMZ3Trle6gmbAjCrcelgU59vUhGp5uco/edit?usp=sharing>

*Leader Note: As [oral storytelling](#) has long been a means for religious traditions to pass down wisdom, we encourage storytellers to memorize the wisdom tales and tell them from memory. Click [HERE](#) for some storytelling guidance.*

### Picture Book 1: The Feather: A Story of New Beginnings by Kren York

#### Set It Up

“This story reminds us that embarking upon any life chapter is like taking brave steps into the unknown and that change isn’t something to fear, but a doorway to adventure, opportunity, and possibilities.”

**Video Preview:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0581MmelRiw>

#### Sum It Up

In your own words, remind the children of how the story is connected to the session’s theme angle.

#### Discuss it: Reflection Questions to “[Build and Bond](#)”

- What does the feather leave behind when it drifts away from its host?
- How do you think it feels to leave something familiar (like home or a friend)?
- What helps the feather keep going even when things are new or strange?
- Where do you see hope in the story? (Moments where the feather sees something beautiful, meets something new, etc.)
- If you were the feather, what would you imagine ahead in your journey—what might you hope to see or learn?

## Picture Book 2: My Tree: A Story About New Beginnings by Hope Lim and Il Sung Na

### Set It Up

“This story reminds us of how important it can be to try and make the best of new circumstances and welcome a new beginning.”

**Video Preview:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9u1-dU-ETWk>

### Sum It Up

In your own words, remind the children of how the story is connected to the session's theme angle.

### Discuss it: Reflection Questions to “[Build and Bond](#)”

- Why was the plum tree (Plumee) so special to the boy? What did it remind him of?
- In what ways can memories from a place or thing we used to have help us feel better when things change?
- As we start a new year / new time, what is something you hope will grow for you — maybe in friendship, learning, courage?
- What can this story teach us about being patient, caring, or hopeful for what’s ahead?
- How can you be like the boy, caring for a new tree (or new thing) so that it can grow — what kind of care helps hope to blossom?

# Wonder Box

## Objects to Cultivate Our Curiosity

### Reflection Object to Gather Ahead of Time

Whiteboards and dry-erase markers



### Introduction & Reveal

#### If using the wonderbox to introduce the session and session theme:

- Remind the children that each month we explore a different theme, and each week we explore the monthly theme in a unique way.
- Explain that the wonderbox will provide us with a clue about today's unique exploration of the monthly theme.
- Reveal what is in the box.

#### If using the wonderbox to help the children explore the session angle in more depth:

- Introduce the wonderbox with something like, "And now let's explore today's topic some more by finding out what is in our wonderbox."
- Reveal what is in the box.

### Wondering & Takeaway

- Ask the group what they think **these have** to do with our monthly theme of **choosing hope**.
- Encourage the group to brainstorm. Ask follow-up questions if needed, then share the answer:
  - Explain that today is about exploring how New Year's is a wonderful reminder of how we choose hope when we notice we can start over
  - Give each child a small whiteboard (or sheet of paper in a page protector with dry-erase marker).
  - Invite them to draw something silly or write a word.
  - Then say: "Now we get to erase and start over!" Repeat a few times.
  - Debrief: "How does it feel to erase and try again? How is that like choosing hope?"

# Engage It!

## Activities & Crafts for Experiential Learning

### Dissolving Bowl Resolution Ritual

This activity should take 10-20 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

#### Activity Prep

Gather and set out small slips of [dissolvable paper](#), pens or markers, and a large bowl or basin of water.

**Leader Note:** Use water-soluble markers or paper for a magical dissolving effect.

#### Set It Up

“The New Year reminds us that we can let go of things that hold us back and make space for hope, growth, and new beginnings.”

#### Directions

- Begin with a short meditation or guided reflection like this:  
“Think about something that has been hard for you, a worry, habit, or feeling you want to let go of. Imagine it being washed away and erased so you can make space for new beginnings.”
- Give each child a slip of paper and a pen and invite them to write or draw something they want to let go of and a hope they have for the new year, a resolution.
- Invite children to come forward if they want and share the meaning of what they wrote.
- Emphasize that sharing is optional—some things can be private.
- Have children drop their slips into a bowl of water and watch the paper float, dissolve, or sink, symbolizing letting go and making space for hope.

#### Sum It Up

“Let us remember this ritual and its message that just like these papers are washed away, we can release what weighs us down and invite hope and new beginnings into our lives.”

### Hope Journals

This activity should take 20-30 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

#### Activity Prep

Gather and set out paper, markers, stickers, and staplers.

#### Set It Up

Today, we are exploring how we choose hope when we notice we can start over. To help us do that we are going to make hope journals. A place where we can draw or write down all our hopes and new ideas for the year to come.

#### Directions

- Invite kids to make a small booklet or journal.
- On the cover, they decorate it with the title: “My Hope Journal.”
- Invite them to draw or write on the first page something they’d like to begin again in the new year.

#### Share Out

Invite kids if they are comfortable to share their hopes with each other.

## New Beginnings Breakfast

This activity should take 30-60 minutes and can be done with any number of children.

*Leader Note: Be aware of food allergies*

### Activity Prep

Gather and set up a breakfast buffet with

- Plates, napkins, silverware, and cups
- Drinks
- Pancakes or Waffles
- Toppings (blueberries, chocolate chips, strawberries, bananas, whipped cream, sprinkles, syrup, butter, etc.)

### Set It Up

“Today, we are exploring how New Year's is a wonderful reminder of how we are choosing hope when we notice we can start over and begin again. This is also a way we live into our UU value of Transformation. To help us do that we are going to take a lesson from breakfast: Just like pancakes/waffles start as batter and transform on the griddle, we have the chance to transform our year ahead with hope.”

### Directions

Invite kids to have breakfast together, and as you do, have a conversation about the hopes they have for the year to come.

### Discuss It

- What is the best thing that happened this year?
- If I could choose "a person of the year," it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- The biggest challenge I overcame this year was...
- The one thing I wish I had done this year was...
- Next year, I hope that...
- Sometime in my life, I want to....

## Blanket Forts, Hot Cocoa, and Stories or Movie

This activity should take 60+ minutes and can be done with any number of children.

### Activity Prep

Gather and set out

- A variety of sheets, blankets, pillows, and binder clips or other ways to secure over tables, chairs, etc., to build the forts
- A Hot Coco station (Be mindful of allergies- have dairy-free options for the hot chocolate and vegan marshmallow options for those who may not be able to have gelatin.)
- A device to play a movie on

**WTC Note:** Many folks find themselves mentally, spiritually, and physically overwhelmed during the winter holidays. Some folks suffer from depression. Additionally, for those who have experienced loss, the holidays and shorter hours of daylight can amplify the pain of that loss. All of this means it is important to remind ourselves and each other that it is ok to take time to slow down, find calm, and even cuddle up with our favorite thing in real and metaphorical blanket forts!

## Set It Up

“Raise your hand if you’ve ever felt really tired. (pause, raise your own hand) Yep, me too! The holiday season can be fun, but it can also be super busy—there’s so much going on that we sometimes forget to slow down. For lots of people, the New Year is a chance to pause, take a deep breath, and begin again with new hope.

So today, we’re going to celebrate the hope that the New Year brings and our UU Value of transformation by transforming blankets into blanket forts—our own cozy little spaces—where we can rest, recharge, and imagine the new beginnings we’re hoping for in the year ahead.”

## Directions

- Invite kids to build blanket forts. Make sure you have plenty of space. Give them a time limit to build, so you have time for some actual resting.
- Invite them to transform their warm milk into a cozy hot chocolate treat with hot cocoa, peppermints, marshmallows, whipped cream, sprinkles, etc.
- Rest and recharge while a leader reads or rereads books from this month's packet, or you watch a movie that lifts up new beginnings and transformation.

## Movie Options

- Akeelah and the Bee (2006, PG) - A movie about overcoming challenges, stepping into new possibilities.
  - Akeelah’s journey shows courage, growth, & transformation through learning & community support.
- Moana (2016, PG) A movie about personal growth, following your calling, and transforming your world.
  - Moana leaves what is familiar, faces challenges, and discovers her strength and purpose.
- Soul (2020, PG) - A movie about self-discovery, purpose, and appreciating new opportunities.
  - A reminder that every day is a chance to start fresh and embrace life.
- Raya and the Last Dragon (2021, PG) - A Movie about trust, community, and renewal.
  - Shows how hope and perseverance can heal divisions and create new beginnings.

# Extinguish It!

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives (hands on heart)

As we extinguish our chalice (cup your hands like a chalice)

And as we go out into the world, (use finger to make a walking motion)

Let us remember that each new day gives us a chance to transform and start again  
(Get down in a runner's [starting stance](#))

# December's Packet Stories At-a-Glance

*To support leaders as they assemble a session that best fits their children's developmental needs, this section provides an overview of all the wisdom tales and storybooks in our RE packets each month.*

## Wisdom Tales (from the upper elementary packet)

- [The Light of Hope](#)
- [A Lamp in Every Corner](#)
- [The Hanukkah Story and the Light of Hope](#)
- [One Candle](#)
- [The Messiah is One of Us](#)
- [Silent Night - A Story of Hope in Song](#)
- [The Rebirth of the Sun](#)
- [The Shortest Day: Celebrating the Winter Solstice](#)
- [How the Resolution Came to Be](#)
- [The Story of Mussa and Nagib](#)

## Story Books (from the lower elementary & one room schoolhouse packet)

- **A Flicker of Hope** by Julia Cook
- **Hanukkah Cookies with Sprinkles** by David A. Adler
- **A Hanukkah with Mazel** by Joel Edward Stein
- **The Feather: A Story of New Beginnings**
- **My Tree a story about New Beginnings** by Hope Lim and Il Sung Na

# Soul Work Table Activities

*Many congregations have a multi-sensory table in the sanctuary to support children, youth, and adults who find it easier to focus when their hands are busy. Some of our Christian cousins call it a “Prayground.” Read about how they approach it [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). In UU circles, the tables are often for all ages, meaning adults are invited to use it too. We love calling it “Soul Work Table,” but of course, feel free to give it whatever creative name you want.*

- [Choosing Hope Coloring Sheet](#)
- We also suggest using some of the creative activities from this packet and any other manipulatives you choose on your soul works table.

## RE Companion Resources

### 2025 - 2026 Chalice Chapel Songbook

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qgnKOouVChrXydvCBz9laRCizCOkTHLc/view?usp=sharing>

This song book offers kid-friendly hymns that align with each of this year's spiritual theme for each month. This resource was created and generously shared with permission by DRE Dana Lundquist and RE volunteer Chris Wise from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh

- Sept Building Belonging - 1021 Lean on Me
- Oct Cultivating Compassion - #1031 May we be filled with loving kindness
- Nov Nurturing Gratitude - #402 From You I Receive
- Dec Choosing Hope - #1022 Open the Window
- Jan Practicing Resistance - # 1017 Building a New Way
- Feb Embodying Resilience - # 389 Gathered Here
- Mar Paying Attention - #1007 There's a River Flowing My Soul
- Apr Embracing Possibility - #1024 When the Spirit Says Do
- May Awakening Curiosity - #1003 Where Do We Come From?

### Feeding Our Spirit: Exploring Our UU Values through Fun in the Kitchen

[https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/store/p945/RE\\_Summer\\_Feeding\\_Our\\_Spirit.html](https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/store/p945/RE_Summer_Feeding_Our_Spirit.html)

Unitarian Universalism calls us to live our values with creativity, experimentation, and joy. And what better way to explore those values than through cooking, conversation, and community? This additional companion resource explores and highlights our UU values in a fresh and delicious way: through the joys and creativity of cooking! Each session centers on one of our new UU values and is paired with an introduction, story options, thoughtful discussion prompts, and three hands-on recipes. It gives people of every generation a chance to engage with their faith actively: to examine it, try it on, turn it over, take it apart, and rebuild it again and again. Perfect for Sunday mornings, midweek gatherings, or evening programs, this curriculum builds UU identity, fosters connection, and creates sweet memories. Whether in the kitchen at home, in a classroom, or in a church fellowship hall, these recipes help kids and adults alike practice gratitude, curiosity, generosity, and hope—while mixing, baking, and sharing food together.

While each recipe is aligned with one of our UU values, here is how we propose also aligning with our monthly themes:

September: Building Belonging

- Love - Chocolate Chip Mug Cake (simple comfort food to share)
- Interdependence - Bagels (every topping adds to belonging, just like people!)

October: Cultivating Compassion

- Love - Cinnamon Rolls (warm, shareable comfort food)
- Justice - Chicken Noodle Soup (classic symbol of caring for others when they're sick)

November: Nurturing Gratitude

- Generosity - Hot Chocolate Mix (easy to give away as thank-you gifts)
- Justice - Caprese Salad Stacks (appreciating seasonal foods, gratitude for the earth's gifts)

December: Choosing Hope

- Pluralism - Rainbow Pasta Salad (many colors, many people—hope in diversity)
- Transformation - Homemade Ice Cream (magic + joy = hope)

January: Practicing Resistance

- Equity - Deep Dish Mug Pizza (resisting “fast food only” culture, making your own)
- Justice - Soft Pretzels (twisted like arms linked in solidarity!)

February: Embodying Resilience

- Transformation - Carrot Pineapple Muffins (taking rough carrots, turning into something sweet)
- Generosity - Sugar Scrub Gift (self-care + care for others = resilience)

March: Paying Attention

- Pluralism - Elephant Toothpaste (a big, messy, surprising experiment that makes us notice!)
- Love - Pudding Pops (slow down, savor, pay attention to small joys)

April: Embracing Possibility

- Interdependence - Rock Candy (waiting patiently to see crystals form = possibility)
- Transformation - Painted Toast (ordinary bread becomes art = endless possibilities)

May: Awakening Curiosity

- Pluralism - Mug Jelly Doughnuts (curious surprise inside!)
- Equity - Taco Bar (so many ways to build your own = curiosity in choice)

June: Flourishing Together

- Equity - Fruit and Yogurt Parfaits (layered together = flourishing community)
- Generosity - Baked Nutella French Toast (big, celebratory dish to share)

## 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](#).

### 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>.

## ***Soul Matters RE Packet Author & Contributors***

***Packet Author: April Rosario, Soul Matters Director of RE Resources***

Thanks to all the Soul Matters Religious Educators who send in suggestions for our monthly packets! Whenever you have stories, games, or activities you'd like to suggest, just email April at [soulmattersre@gmail.com](mailto:soulmattersre@gmail.com)



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