



# *Soul Matters*

---

What does it mean to be a  
people of WELCOME?

# Contents

Click on Heading to jump to Section

<b>Welcome</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Calendar Inspiration</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Stories for all Ages</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Hymns That Can Serve as Reflections for All Ages</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Book Recommendations</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Sessions</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Chapel</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Add Ons</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Youth and Young Adult</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Family and Parent Resources</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Additional Resources from Katie Covey</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Upcoming Support &amp; Collaboration Opportunities for Themes in RE</b> .....	<b>34</b>

# Welcome

Welcome to the Soul Matters RE Packet for September's theme of "What Does it Mean to Be a People of Welcome?" In this packet you will find various ways to integrate the theme into your ministries for children, youth and families. A few words about our approach to the Sunday Sessions portion of the Packet:

1. We use an "interchangeable component" approach that allows you to reorder, replace or remove the components as best fits your context or time constraints. So while each session's components are designed to fit together, you don't have to use all of them or even use them in the order we've assembled them. These components include wonder box activities, reflection questions, stories, mindfulness activities, games, crafts, songs.
2. Our session components strive to be experiential. In other words, each session is designed to engage children in three fundamental spiritual experiences; what we call "the three S's." We see the "three S's" as an antidote and alternative to competitive, media-saturated & materialistic culture.
  - a. Silence = meditation, listening, mindfulness.
  - b. Service = leadership, helping others
  - c. Sunshine = connection with nature and our bodies through outdoor activities or movement
3. Our Sunday Sessions frequently connect to the holidays and special events that happen during the month. For example, in the session on "Welcoming Diversity," there are resources that amplify and engage the fact that September is National Hispanic Heritage Month. This helps connect what happens in church with what is happening "in the world." It is one way to ensure that faith engagement relates to our daily living.

I also want to share a bit about the overall packet design and content. We know that faith formation is about more than "religious education classes." So we include resources for children's chapel, stories for all ages, family resources and ideas for youth and young adult ministry. For those who have a longer program or a Wednesday Family Night, we've included an "Add On" section with ideas for further exploration.

I'm so grateful for this opportunity to partner with you as you offer your important ministries to so many!

*Katie*

Katie Covey  
Soul Matters RE Resources Coordinator  
soulmattersre@gmail.com

# Calendar Inspiration

## Important September Dates

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

### **Interfaith:**

- [Rosh Hashanah](#) - Jewish New Year - Sept 20-22 \*
- [Muharram](#) - Islamic New Year (“Month of Remembrance”) - Sept 22 \*
- [Mabon/September Equinox](#) - Wicca - Sept 22 \*
- [Yom Kippur](#) - Jewish Day of Atonement begins - Sept 29 \*
- [Rumi’s birthday](#) - Sept 30

### **Unitarian Universalist:**

- Universalism Day: [John Murray](#) preaches first sermon in US (1770) - Sept 30

### **National & Cultural:**

- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept 15 - Oct 15)
- [Suicide Prevention Month](#), World Suicide Prevention Day is Sept 10
- [Labor Day](#) – Sept 04 (\*first Monday)
- [International Literacy Day](#) - Sept 08
- [Grandparent's Day](#) - Sept 10
- [9-11 Remembrance](#) - Sept 11
- [Mexican Independence Day](#) Sept 16
- [International Peace Day](#) Sept 21
- [World Gratitude Day](#) - Sept 21

### **For Fun and On the Fringe:**

- [Johnny Appleseed Day](#) - Sept 26
- [Talk Like a Pirate Day](#) - Sept 19
- [Hobbit Day](#) - Sept 22

# Stories for all Ages

## **The Welcome Challenge**

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session10/287883.shtml>

Save a space for an imaginary visitor as you invite the children to the Story for All Ages. Then, invite the congregation to imagine and share how they might welcome different kinds of visitors, using *The Welcome Challenge from Tapestry of Faith "Signs of our Faith"*:

## **Baucis and Philomon**

<http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/68/fairy-tales-and-other-traditional-stories/5096/philemon-and-baucis/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baucis\\_and\\_Philemon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baucis_and_Philemon)

Greek story of welcoming the strangers who turn out to be the gods and receiving gifts for their radical hospitality.

## **The Real Gift**

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session1/118116.shtml>

When Nana moves in with Nelson, Nelson wonders if she will fit in. Nelson has two Dads, so this could be used for LGBT Pride Month. Sensory element: Hold up a crocheted blanket. Invite a congregant who crochets to briefly demonstrate the technique and supplies. Note: There is a coloring sheet which comes with the story. The sheet could be a "fidget buster" for children who would like to color while listening to the story instead of coming up front. Make sure to have some multicultural skin tone crayons available.

## **Hospitality's Secret: Stop Sitting in Your Tent! - Jewish**

<http://www.g-dcast.com/abraham/>

Use the video as inspiration to create your own children's sermon or story for all ages. The moral of the story: Being a people of welcome means getting out of our tent!

## **Mullah Nasruddin Feeds His Coat**

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/123344.shtml>

Adapted from a Middle Eastern Islamic folk tale which is attributed to different countries, including Turkey and Syria.

## **Coyote and Welcoming the Gift of Friendship**

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session6/118305.shtml>

# Hymns That Can Serve as Reflections for All Ages

(And accompany the Stories for All Ages)

## #188 “Come, Come Whoever You Are”

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

Reflection on the song:

*Come, come, whoever you are,  
Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving,  
Ours is not a caravan of despair.  
Even if you have broken your vows a thousand times  
It doesn't matter  
Come, come yet again, come – Rumi*

If you look at the notes in the bottom of this hymn, you can see the author of the words listed as “Rumi.” Rumi wrote over 7,000 poems and was born 807 years ago. His poems have sold millions of copies in recent years, making him the most popular poet in the US.

When Rumi says come, come, whoever you are, he is extending a profound welcome. Rumi doesn't say, just those of you who have your lives sorted out, come on in. Only you happy people, come along. Only the wealthy or the smartest or the most successful. Only sunny blue-sky days. Rumi doesn't say, you're too greedy, too slow, too fast, too little, not enough, too much – go away. He doesn't sort people and experience into the worthy and the unworthy, saved and unsaved.

The version of Rumi's words which was adapted into a song in our hymnal is actually missing something that's an incredibly essential part of Rumi's original piece. These words were included in the reading. “Even if you have broken your vows a thousand times, it doesn't matter. Come, come yet again, come.” Those who have broken their vows, who have fallen short in some way, are welcome. The unpleasant stuff is welcome too – the anger, fear, doubt. What Rumi advised over 800 years ago is true for us today.”

*Adapted from a sermon by Rev. Sandra Fees (<http://www.uuberks.org/sermon/come-come-whoever-you-are>)*

## #407 Sit at the Welcome Table

Share the reflections of UU Music Director John Hooks on the song and his childhood home built by slaves. <http://www.buxmontuu.org/2013/03/15/sitting-at-the-welcome-table/>

If you are able to project videos, share and discuss one of these videos:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wxljWncd8k>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJXqROwK\\_As](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJXqROwK_As)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xryl42Lzxcq>

# **Book Recommendations**

To read as part of a session or during "For All Ages."

## **The Big Orange Splot**

by Daniel Manus Pinkwater

[https://www.amazon.com/Big-Orange-Splot-Manus-Pinkwater/dp/0590445103/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496701789&sr=1-1&keywords=the+big+orange+splot+by+daniel+manus+pinkwater](https://www.amazon.com/Big-Orange-Splot-Manus-Pinkwater/dp/0590445103/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496701789&sr=1-1&keywords=the+big+orange+splot+by+daniel+manus+pinkwater)

Mr. Plumbean celebrates self-expression and creativity in this favorite story of a neighborhood and welcoming differences.

## **The Golden Rule**

by Irene Cooper

[https://www.amazon.com/Golden-Rule-Irene-Cooper/dp/081090960X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496701600&sr=1-1&keywords=the+golden+rule+by+ilene+cooper](https://www.amazon.com/Golden-Rule-Irene-Cooper/dp/081090960X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496701600&sr=1-1&keywords=the+golden+rule+by+ilene+cooper)

Everybody *knows* the Golden Rule, but what if people really *followed* it? A grandfather explains its power to his grandson.

## **Sitti's Secrets**

by Naomi Shihab Nye

<https://www.amazon.com/Sittis-Secrets-Aladdin-Picture-Books/dp/0689817061>

An American girl visits her grandmother in Palestine and wishes the world were more welcoming to differences.

## **Each Kindness**

by Jacqueline Woodson

[https://www.amazon.com/Each-Kindness-Addams-Award-Awards/dp/0399246525/ref=pd\\_rhf\\_se\\_s\\_cp\\_3?encoding=UTF8&pd\\_rd\\_i=0399246525&pd\\_rd\\_r=SD98PF077VCSM8MSFRHR&pd\\_rd\\_w=GzTE2&pd\\_rd\\_wq=mjnpN&psc=1&refRID=SD98PF077VCSM8MSFRHR](https://www.amazon.com/Each-Kindness-Addams-Award-Awards/dp/0399246525/ref=pd_rhf_se_s_cp_3?encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=0399246525&pd_rd_r=SD98PF077VCSM8MSFRHR&pd_rd_w=GzTE2&pd_rd_wq=mjnpN&psc=1&refRID=SD98PF077VCSM8MSFRHR)

Chloe and her friends won't play with the new girl, Maya. Every time Maya tries to join Chloe and her friends, they reject her.

## **It's OK to be Different**

by Todd Parr

[https://www.amazon.com/Its-Okay-Different-Todd-Parr/dp/0316043478/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496789933&sr=1-5&keywords=todd+parr+books](https://www.amazon.com/Its-Okay-Different-Todd-Parr/dp/0316043478/ref=sr_1_5?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496789933&sr=1-5&keywords=todd+parr+books)

It's Okay to be Different is designed to enhance emotional development, celebrate multiculturalism and diversity, and promote character growth.

## **The Peace Book**

*by Todd Parr*

[https://www.amazon.com/Peace-Book-Todd-Parr/dp/0316043494/ref=sr\\_1\\_9?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496790062&sr=1-9&keywords=todd+parr+books](https://www.amazon.com/Peace-Book-Todd-Parr/dp/0316043494/ref=sr_1_9?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496790062&sr=1-9&keywords=todd+parr+books)

Perfect for the youngest readers, this book delivers a timely and timeless message about the importance of friendship, caring, and acceptance.

## **Last Stop on Market Street**

*by Matt de la Pena; pictures by Christian Robinson*

<https://www.amazon.com/Last-Stop-Market-Street-Matt/dp/0399257748>

- Children take a real bus trip with Matt de la Pena reading his book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4irkUDbaIA>
- Listen to the illustrator describe how children need to see themselves in picture books to be welcoming of all: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwnvmyClFtq>



# Sessions

## **Session 1** ***The Meaning of Welcome*** ***(Water Ceremony Options)***

### Young Children (P - K)

#### Wonder Box

##### **The gift of unseen welcoming love**

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session1/118103.shtml>

Use the empty Wonder Box to help participants understand the concept of intangible gifts.

#### Story

##### **The Real Gift**

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session1/118116.shtml>

Tell it with a real crocheted blanket to feel!

#### Mindfulness

##### **“I Wiggle” preparation**

*I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]*

*I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]*

*I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]*

*I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]*

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

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

From Tapestry of Faith Chalice Children

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/297576.shtml>

Next, ring a bell or bowl, and invite the children to listen to it until they can't hear it anymore. Say, “It is nice to share the silence together.”

#### Song

## **Play it outdoors!**

The Welcome Song (Rolling a Ball) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KEA2FQ6Cl4>

## **Game**

### **What Is It?**

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session1/118104.shtml>

## **Arts and Crafts**

### **Poster Making**

Welcome Tree - on a piece of poster paper, draw the trunk and bare branches of a tree. Make tempera paint handprints from the children's hands for the leaves, in various colors and label it "Our Welcome Tree."

### **"Sunshine" Activity (connection with nature and our bodies):**

Share in some water play if you offer a Water Ceremony  
A water slide, a tub of water

## **Service**

Make a welcome poster for the preschool room door, or for another door!

## **Elementary Aged Children (1 - 5th)**

### **Reflection Questions**

Prop - a welcome mat

Do you know what a "Welcome Mat" is? How many of you have a Welcome Mat at your front door? What does it look like? Why do people use a Welcome Mat? (to wipe off shoes, to let guests know they are welcome)

The theme this month is "Welcome. What does it mean to be a people of welcome?" (We welcome each other, we welcome the stranger, we welcome guests, we welcome hard times, doubts and fears, we welcome all beings.)

## **Story**

Use a story from the "For All Ages" section or the book recommendations.

## **Mindfulness**

Offering hospitality to oneself. <https://www.mindful.org/practice-befriending-self/>

## **Creating a Welcoming Ritual**

What ways can we think of to be welcoming? From Tapestry of Faith, Signs of our Faith  
<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session10/287884.shtml>

## Creating Name Tags

Invite children to create their name tag. Use materials that will last at least for the month, hopefully longer. One suggestion is a brightly colored selection of shoelaces as lanyards with a clip name tag. Children may color and decorate the white card inside the plastic sleeve.

Invite the children to create extra name tags for visitors to wear. Use the questions from Tapestry of Faith, "Signs of our Faith" at <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session10/287885.shtml>

Before or following the activity, help the children process with the following questions:

- Why is it important that people wear name tags while at our congregation?
- Do you think name tags are welcoming? Why?
- Do you think it is important that all ages wear name tags?
- 

## Making a Covenant

A covenant is a promise or set of promises which we make together about how we wish to act when we are together. What might we list as our covenant? How might we add welcome as a theme to a covenant we make together? Write the children's suggestions on a poster board. Invite each child to sign their name. Post it as a reminder of the group covenant.

A few ideas:

- Be a croissant, not a bagel. A croissant has an opening, since it is shaped like a "C," a bagel is closed, there is no room for more.
- Don't yuck on my yum. Let me like what I like without being embarrassed or shamed.

## Game

Pass the Mask - from Sheila Shuh, Rochester, NY - Like the game Telephone, this game involves passing the same expression from one person to another, and the last person sees if their expression matches the first person's. Invite the children to line up so they are facing one direction, one behind the other. The last person (or leader) taps the person's shoulder in front of them to turn around and look, and makes a face/ body expression. That person then taps the person in front of them and repeats the expression. When the expression gets to the front, that person checks with the person who began and sees if it matches!

Masks: In addition to silly and terrifyingly scary expressions, be sure to include different expressions of welcome - a smile, cupping hands around ears for listening, mouthing "hello," blowing a kiss, shaking hands.

## Craft Activity

- Playdough or Modeling Clay
- Sequins, gems, decorations to stick into the clay, optional.

- Create a chalice that represents welcome. When children are done, invite them to give their chalice to someone else in the group as a way of being welcoming.

### **“Sunshine” Activity (connection with nature and our bodies):**

#### **Water Play for the Water Ceremony**

##### **A Water Slide for everyone**

<http://www.spiritjam.info/blog/liturgy-of-the-water-slide>

- **Fairy Houses**  
Create a welcoming house for fairies, outdoors. Based on the book, [Fairy Houses](#) by Tracey Kane. Fairies love houses made entirely of found, not picked, materials from nature. Tuck them against a tree trunk, under a bush, or next to a flower.

### **Movement**

#### **Horrific Tai Chi Welcome (Silly)**

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session2/132185.shtml>

### **Service**

#### **Build Welcome Bags for the Visitor Table**

Create Welcome Bags for the Visitor Table to hand to visiting folks. Make enough so each visitor or member of a visiting family will receive one.

- White lunch bags, decorated with welcome signs and words by the children and youth. Perhaps words in Spanish and/or other languages in your community!
- A homemade card of welcome
- A brochure about the congregation
- An invitation to an upcoming event or group (ideally signed and with a contact number or email. I.e. “Please join me at the Fire Circle Sing-a-long, Sunday evening, Sept. \_\_. Let me know if you have any questions. Sincerely, Rachel S. 555-1234”
- Piece of Dove chocolate with a love saying inside the wrapper.
- Links to the congregational Facebook page and other social media
- Link to a Welcome video about UU in general.
- Pipe cleaners for kids who wish to stay in the adult service.
- A cheery piece of tissue paper, in the congregation’s colors, if you have them or multicolored.

## **Session 2**

### **Welcoming Diversity**

#### **Young Children (P - K)**

##### **Wonder Box**

##### **Finger Puppets**

Have two small finger puppets, different from each other, or 2 of anything, such as pipe cleaners, which can be made into pretend puppets. Place the puppets on your fingers.

Leader: Who are you?

I'm butterfly! [or whatever.]

I'm bear! [or whoever.]

Are you friends?

Butterfly: I'm not sure. She isn't like me.

Bear: I'm not sure. He isn't like me.

Leader: Can you be friends even though you look different?

Ask the children. Can they be friends, what do you think?

Let's find out. What do you like to do?

Butterfly: I like to eat.

Bear: Me, too!

Bear: I like to explore.

Butterfly: Me, too!

Butterfly: I like to rest when I'm tired.

Bear: Me, too!

Etc.

Carry on a conversation, which shows that two different puppets can be friends with each other. Invite the children to contribute why they can be friends. They both like to play. They both like to eat yummy things.

And what about the differences? One likes flower nectar, one likes roots. One has fur and one has wings. Etc. Ask the children if they still can be friends. Yes, even though they are different, they can be friends. Invite the puppets to ask the children if they are friends. How do you welcome your friends? (say hello, give a hug, wave)

##### **Song**

##### **A Friend at Church**

How can we show that we like to be friends? We can sing a special song: (Tune of Farmer in the Dell)

"We find a friend at church, we find a friend at church,

Hi, ho the dairy o!

We find a friend at church

We welcome [John] to church, hello!

We welcome [John] to church, hello!

Hi, ho the dairy o!

We welcome [John] to church, hello!

*Insert each child's name as you sing. Pantomime waving hands when you say "hello!" For the second round, introduce another word for hello, such as "Buenos Dias!" or "Bonjour!"*

### **Story**

Share a story from the Book Recommendations section, especially one of the Todd Parr books or Last Stop on Market Street.

### **Mindfulness**

Focus on breathing when in a stressful moment, such as worrying about a person who is new and different, or being a person who is new and different. Five-finger starfish meditation: this breathing technique has kids holding up one hand in a starfish position (fingers spread wide) while they gently trace up and down each finger with the other hand, focusing on regular breathing at the same time.

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

### **Craft**

#### **Make Love Hearts**

Add the word "Welcome" to the heart.

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session1/297601.shtml>

### **Play**

Play with toys and be welcoming to each other. How would you be welcoming with blocks? With Duplos? With cars? With Puppets? With [other toys in the room.]

## **Elementary Children (1-5th)**

### **Reflection**

Light the Chalice in Spanish and English for Hispanic Heritage Month

"We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action."

"Encendemos este cáliz por la calidez del amor, la luz de la verdad y la energía de la acción" Translated by Vicky Santibanez, Chilean translator and member of Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Lafayette, CO

Who knows a different language or someone who speaks another language? Anyone going to a bilingual school? What does it feel like if you don't know the language?

Invite the children to memorize the Spanish of the chalice lighting. For those who can write and read, they may wish to write it down to take it home, if they don't speak Spanish.

How does it feel to be a "stranger?" How can we welcome people who are different from us?

Our UU principles remind us to try to celebrate "the inherent worth and dignity of every person." In children's language, "Each person is worthwhile."

What messages are part of our society right now about people who are different from white culture, like the Muslims, racial minorities, LGBT people. How can we counter those messages? Be welcoming!

## **Story**

Read Sitti's Secrets, a book by Naomi Shihab Nye about another type of "other" - a Palestinian family.  
<https://www.amazon.com/Sittis-Secrets-Aladdin-Picture-Books/dp/0689817061>

## **Mindfulness**

Children share feelings about mindfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awo8jUxlm0c>

A quick intro to mindfulness

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

- Please get into your 'mindful bodies' – still and quiet, sitting upright, eyes closed."
- "Now place all your attention on the sound you are about to hear. Listen until the sound is completely gone."
- Ring a "mindfulness bell," or have a student ring the bell. Use a bell with a sustained sound or a rain stick to encourage mindful listening.
- "Please raise your hand when you can no longer hear the sound."
- When most or all have raised their hands, you can say, "Now slowly, mindfully, move your hand to your stomach or chest, and just feel your breathing."
- You can help students stay focused during the breathing with reminders like, "Just breathing in ... just breathing out ..."
- Ring the bell to end.

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

## **Song**

The best "Hello" Welcome Song ever! Lyrics and melody at

<http://yollisclassblog.blogspot.com/2009/04/hello-song.html>

If the whole song is too hard, try just teaching the chorus. Invite the preschoolers to join in!

## **Games**

**Label Maker:** Give pairs of children who can read and write a pad of sticky notes and a Spanish-English dictionary. Play festive music while students label everything in the room with a bilingual label. When the music stops, have students take a tour of the room and practice the new words.

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collections/teaching-content/bring-hispanic-heritage-month-life-collection-resources/>

**The Welcome Challenge** from Tapestry of Faith "Signs of our Faith"

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session10/287883.shtml>

**The Welcome and UnWelcome Game** from Tapestry of Faith "Moral Tales"

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/123330.shtml>

**Don't Judge a Book by its Cover** from Tapestry of Faith "Moral Tales"

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/123335.shtml>

### **Activities**

Ideas for Cultural Lessons from Sitti's Secrets

[https://ccas.georgetown.edu/sites/ccas/files/Cultural%20Lessons%20from%20Sitti's%20Secrets\\_1.pdf](https://ccas.georgetown.edu/sites/ccas/files/Cultural%20Lessons%20from%20Sitti's%20Secrets_1.pdf)

### **Theatre/ Game**

**Kitty Wants a Corner** (from the Divine Theatre and Dance Project by Matthew Davis from the Fahs Collective)

<https://divinetheateranddance.com/2015/04/21/kitty-wants-a-corner/>

### **"Sunshine" Activity (connection with nature and our bodies):**

Play Label Maker and other games outdoors!

### **Service**

Share the Spanish/English chalice lighting with another group or with the congregation.

Share the "Hello" song with another group or with the congregation.

## ***Session 3*** ***Welcoming the Hard Times*** ***(Rosh Hashanah options)***

### **Young Children (P - K)**

#### **Wonder Box**

##### **A Band-Aid.**

I wonder what the Band-Aid is for? (Fixing owies)

Owies do happen, don't they? Have you had an owie? What happened?

Owies get better. They happen and then your body heals. What a nice thing that your body can heal the scratch or the sniffles. What do you do when you have to rest from a scratch or the sniffles? Do you read books with your parents? Do you watch a movie? Do you snuggle down and sleep under your favorite blanket?

It is nice to do these things. If we welcome the time to let our body heal, we can enjoy the movie, the blanket and the reading.

#### **Story**

About hospitals which help people get well, about an operation



## **The Berenstain Bears: Hospital Friends**

by Mike Berenstain

[https://smile.amazon.com/Berenstain-Bears-Hospital-Friends/dp/0062075411/ref=sr\\_1\\_43?ie=UTF8&qid=1496851161&sr=8-43&keywords=berenstain+bears+books](https://smile.amazon.com/Berenstain-Bears-Hospital-Friends/dp/0062075411/ref=sr_1_43?ie=UTF8&qid=1496851161&sr=8-43&keywords=berenstain+bears+books)

The hard thing is that people are hurt and have to go to the hospital. The good thing is that there are people who really want to help you get better and you get to meet them.

## **Madeline**

by Ludwig Bemelmans

[https://smile.amazon.com/Madeline-Ludwig-Bemelmans/dp/0670445800/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496851362&sr=1-1&keywords=madeline](https://smile.amazon.com/Madeline-Ludwig-Bemelmans/dp/0670445800/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1496851362&sr=1-1&keywords=madeline)

The hard thing is that Madeline has to have her appendix out. The good thing is that she got to show off her scar.

## **Mindfulness**

Place a Band-Aid around your finger just pretend.

Gaze at your finger and say welcome to the healing. Hello, healing. Thank you for helping me. Cradle your finger and give it your love and a little kiss. Close your eyes and cradle your finger in the quiet while I ring the bell.

## **Arts and Crafts**

### **Band-Aid art**

<https://www.gryphonhouse.com/activities/band-aid-art>

<http://www.littledreamers.com/bandaaid-art/>

## **“Sunshine” Activity (connection with nature and our bodies)**

### **Welcome Sun and Welcome Shade**

Say welcome, sun and walk in sunlight. Then it gets hard and hot, so we go into the shade and say welcome, shade. Then it gets hard and chilly, so we go into the sun and say welcome, sun again. We need sun and shade both. Walk around some more and feel the heat and coolness, the sun and shade.

## **Service**

Make little snack baggies with the extra band aids and give them to people who might need them. The office of the church, a person on the playground,

## **Elementary Children (1-5th)**

### **Reflection Question**

We know that life is sometimes hard. Have you ever thought of welcoming the hard times? We don't want hard times. But they happen. How might we shift our thinking to accept hard times and learn from them? Here's a clip of former First Lady Michelle Obama talking about her daughters and the hard times

they had to experience and what they learned from them.

<http://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2016/07/26/dnc-convention-michelle-obama-sot-01.cnn>

She shared that the motto for the cruelty and racism they experienced in the White House was “When they go low, we go high.” Are there times you can think of when something hard taught you? What did you learn?

Hard times are caused by others and by ourselves. For the Jewish people, this month is a time to atone (to apologize) for the hard things they have caused. This month is the Jewish Holiday of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Find a Shofar, a Ram’s Horn used as a trumpet, that is blown with a harsh sound to wake up to spiritual needs. Or use the YouTube Video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKQrBURDtQE>

Ask a trumpet player to try to blow it, as “[embouchure](#)” is needed to make it sound! Have some wipes on hand and invite the children to try blowing it. It’s hard! You have to tighten your lips and fill your lungs with air, but don’t puff out your cheeks.

“The sound of the shofar is an ‘alert,’ ...The sound of the Shofar inspires us with awe, for it reminds us that it is a Day of judgment.

The broken sounds of the *shevarim* and *teruah* [blasts] are like stifled sobs and groans, piercing the heart; they break the heart with remorse for our past failings....”

from [http://www.chabad.org/kids/article\\_cdo/aid/4754/jewish/The-Shofar.htm](http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/4754/jewish/The-Shofar.htm)

## **Story**

### **Zen Shorts**

by Jon J. Muth

[https://smile.amazon.com/Zen-Shorts-Caldecott-Honor-Book/dp/0439339111/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1496846968&sr=8-1&keywords=zen+shorts+by+jon+j.+muth](https://smile.amazon.com/Zen-Shorts-Caldecott-Honor-Book/dp/0439339111/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1496846968&sr=8-1&keywords=zen+shorts+by+jon+j.+muth)

A Zen Panda shares stories with children in a family next door. To Addy he tells a story about the value of material goods. To Michael he pushes the boundaries of good and bad. And to Karl he demonstrates what it means to hold on to frustration.

### **The Last Stop on Market Street** (see Book Section)

## **Mindfulness**

### **The Path of Forgiveness**

When do you atone, apologize, for past hard things you have caused? What would it be like to welcome the opportunity to clear the air, to become right with the world again? Get into a comfortable position, lying down if you’d like, and close your eyes. Take a trip with me in your mind...

Imagine that you are walking down a path. It is a path of forgiveness. There is a fog that surrounds you. It is the wrong doings that surround you. The fog robs the beauty of the forest around you. It becomes harder

and harder to walk, your feet are heavy, your legs are wooden. Your face is frozen. Then, out of the fog comes a person. It might be a person to whom you need to apologize, or to whom something wrong has happened. That person approaches you and looks you in the eyes. Their eyes are soft, they have a slight smile. What do you say to them in your mind? Imagine saying that. How do they respond? A bench appears and you sit with them for a while.... As you sit, the fog lifts, your legs and face relax, your feet are light. You can see the beauty all around you. You say goodbye to that person with a smile. You walk on the path again, almost dancing. You walk for a while and when you are ready, return to this place, your body, and open your eyes.

If you would like to, share what happened on your path...

Remember the path and that bench when hard things happen. Welcome the path and welcome that time on the bench together.

### **Game**

**Fishing for Friends** from Tapestry of Faith “Signs of our Faith”

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/123327.shtml>

### **Songs**

**You’ve Got a Friend in Me** - Song from Toy Story

**Claire and her Dad**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukD8zj6nqVY>

**Toy Story with Lyrics**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIYOJ\\_hSs0o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIYOJ_hSs0o)

### **Arts and Crafts**

Explore Rosh Hashanah activities through the suggestions in “Add On” Section for the Calendar Dates.

**The Last Stop on Market Street** activities

<http://www.carolhurst.com/titles/laststoponmarket.html>

### **“Sunshine” Activity (connection with nature and our bodies):**

Go outside and find beauty in unexpected places. Welcome the hard, ugly places and find the gem of beauty in them. It might be a crack in a cement sidewalk with a dandelion, or a white stone in a patch of gravel. It might be a dead tree with a woodpecker home in it, or a broken bottle with the sun shining through it. Take digital pictures and send photos of these places to the members of your group, to remind them to welcome the hard times.

### **Service**

Share apples and honey for Rosh Hashanah as an after-service snack for everyone! Or for a different group in RE.

## **Session 4.**

### **Welcoming All Beings**

#### **(Autumnal Equinox options)**

### Young Children (P - K)

#### **Wonder Box**

A leaf or other natural item showing the changing of the seasons or a small stuffed animal whose real counterpart is preparing for winter i.e. a frog, a mouse, a cricket. Or a squash.

Hold up the leaf. What is happening outside these days? We are welcoming the changing seasons. What are the animals doing? They are getting ready for winter. They are eating as much as they can. It is harvest time in some places. If you live in a climate where there aren't many seasons, celebrate the beauty of nature.

#### **Story**

Share a story suggested in the Outdoor Tour Session of Chalice Children, from Tapestry of Faith

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session3/297813.shtml>

Or one of the books about Fall <http://www.pre-kpages.com/best-books-about-fall/>

#### **Arts and Crafts**

**A Welcome Snack:** What fruits or vegetables grow in the fall? Do you have a garden? What is growing now? Serve harvest snacks, such as apples (cut them so the star shows and tell the story of the Little Red House with a Star Inside <http://happyhomefairy.com/apple-star-story-for-preschoolers/>)

Cut up sweet potatoes and squash to munch on like carrot sticks. We welcome the harvest! We welcome the beauty of nature!

#### **Mindfulness and Sunshine Activity**

##### **Safari Walk**

Tell your kids that you will be going on a safari, and their goal is to notice as many birds, bugs, creepy-crawlies, and any other animals as they can. Anything that walks, crawls, swims, or flies is of interest, and they'll need to focus all of their senses to find them, especially the little ones.

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

#### **Service**

**Welcoming Pet Food Project:** Be part of a Pet Food Drive to welcome all the animals who are lost. Collect the pet food for your local animal shelter. In advance, encourage families to bring cans and dry pet food. Invite the children to stack and play with the cans and bags, and pick out their favorite pet picture. What pets do you have? How do you take care of them? How would a pet feel if it is lost? How would they feel welcomed if they are rescued?

#### **Game**

## **Welcome All Beings**

Give each child a stuffed animal or puppet. Play Ring Around the Rosie and the Farmer in the Dell with all of the animals and puppets. Give the animals and puppets a tour of the room and show them your favorite places. Move outside, if appropriate, and show them your favorite places on the playground or grounds.

## **Elementary Children (1-5th)**

### **Reflection**

Did you know that your dog is your twenty-seventh million cousin? In the tree of life, we are all related. The great lesson of evolution is that we are related not only to every living thing, but also to everything that has ever lived on Earth. <https://www.evogeneao.com/learn/tree-of-life>

When we hold the awareness of our interconnectedness with all things, we stay in balance. Even our planet is balancing this month. It is the Autumnal Equinox - when night and day are equal.

### **Mindfulness**

Meditation on our Ancestors

<http://thegreatstory.org/ancestors-meditation.pdf>

### **Online Activity**

#### **Tree of Life Explorer**

Using the online tool, choose various forms of life to see where they are related.

<https://www.evogeneao.com/explore/tree-of-life-explorer#rodents>

### **Song and Puppet Show**

#### **All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcG1JNpazN4>

Make puppets of all sorts of critters or used stuffed animals and create a puppet show of animals using this song as a background. Puppets can be paper bags or socks, or stick puppets cut out of paper. Hang a blanket over a broomstick for the puppet theatre.

### **Story**

#### **Owen and Mzee**

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session7/60092.shtml>

Two animals who become friends

### **Games**

#### **Find a Friend Who....** From Tapestry of Faith Moral Tales

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session7/123370.shtml>

## **Barnyard** from Tapestry of Faith Moral Tales (Movement)

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session2/123155.shtml>

### **Invite an Inter-Species Guest:**

Is there a friendly pet who might visit? A dog, a cat, an iguana, a hen, a hamster? How should we make the guest feel welcome? (move slowly, speak quietly, touch gently, follow the owner's suggestions, give it water)

## **Arts and Crafts**

Make a Care and Protection of All Beings Collage

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop3/149488.shtml>

## **“Sunshine” Activity (connection with nature and our bodies):**

### **Welcome Balance for the Autumnal Equinox/Mabon**

Mabon is the Wiccan name for the Autumnal Equinox. It is a time for harvest celebrations as well as balancing the day and night, the light and shadow.

When the Northern Hemisphere is tilted toward the sun, the northern part of the world receives more hours of sunlight and the people in the Northern Hemisphere experience summer. In the winter, the opposite is true. The Northern Hemisphere is tilted away from the sun and receives fewer hours of sunlight.

But on two days each year, the fall and spring equinoxes, day and night are of equal length. The Earth is tilted neither toward nor away from the sun. The word equinox comes from a Latin word that means “time of equal days and nights.”

Go outside, if you are able.

Separate into pairs. Invite one child to be day and another to be night. Start out by grasping wrists and gently leaning back so each is holding the other up.

Say something like:

- *“Now, decide in each pair who is day and who is night. At first, you are equal for the Autumnal Equinox. But slowly the earth tilts and days grow shorter, nights grow longer.”*
- Day starts bending their knees and Night stands on tiptoes.
- *“It is winter. We arrive at the Winter Solstice, the longest night and the shortest day of the year.”*
- Day is as low as they can get, and Night as high as they can get. *“Then the earth slowly tilts again. The Northern Hemisphere gets longer days and shorter nights.”*
- Slowly, Day rises and Night shrinks until they are equal.
- *“When Day and Night are equal again, it is what... Spring Equinox, in March! Then the earth continues to tilt. What comes next? The longest Day of the year and the shortest night. Called... Summer Solstice.”*
- Day is on tiptoes and night is as low as they can get. Then slowly, the earth tilts and nights grow longer and days grow shorter. Soon, they are equal for the Autumnal Equinox again. Rest here, leaning back and welcome the balance! Cycle through the solstices and equinoxes one more time to embody the tilting of the earth.

### **Shadow Tag.**

Invite the children to play shadow tag, in which they try to jump on each other's shadows, if you have a cooperative sunny day and room to run outside. Or try Elbow Tag  
<http://www.norcal.playworks.org/playbook/games/elbow-tag>

# Chapel

Here's a format for a Children's Chapel or Circle Time. Mix and match the components to fit your program. We recommend some type of ritual that is the same most every Sunday, to create comfort and memories even with discontinuous attendance. Post the words on the wall so that guests and newcomers can join in. When you offer Multigenerational services, offer these same words as a whole community of children, youth and adults.

## **Welcome Centerpiece**

Choose a color for a cloth, a chalice, an offering box, a way of sharing Joys and Sorrows (candles or rocks in water). Blue for the Water Ceremony?

## **Entering**

Invite the singing bowl. (Ring the bowl)

"To this quiet place of beauty, we come from busy things  
Pausing for a moment for the thoughts that quiet brings."

## **Songs**

**Sit at the Welcome Table:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZenshd8iqM>

**Come, Come Whoever You Are:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmMp0OKHgTA>

**Hello to All the Children of the World:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nYjGy\\_ZUG8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nYjGy_ZUG8)

**It's a Small World:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CblhYhrOJAg>

## **Chalice Lighting**

"We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action." (or your own congregation's words)

## **Offering (optional)**

"We drop our coins in. We get back pride, to help other people feel good inside."

## **Sharing of Joys and Concerns**

"We listen to each other, it is a holy act  
To share our joys and sorrows, with grace it flows on back."

You may always say, "Pass."

If you wish to share, say your name, then light a candle or drop a rock in the water for your joy or concern.  
"For all the joys and concerns which remain unspoken, we light this candle/add this rock."



## **Meditation on Welcome**

Move into a comfortable position and close your eyes if you are comfortable. Our first principle reminds us that “Each person is worthwhile.” Each being is worthy of welcome. So we move into breathing, feeling relaxed. We breathe in peace, we breathe out welcome. Each breath in brings us peace, as a glowing inside of us. With each breath out we breathe welcome to spread around the room, around the congregation, around the community, and around the world. Breathe in peace, breathe out welcome. Stay in this place of peace and welcome until I invite the bell.  
Ring the bell.  
Return slowly to this room, to your body, open your eyes when you are ready.

## **Story**

Chose a story from the packet- see “Stories for All Ages” section.

## **Songs, redux**

### **Extinguishing the Chalice**

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.*

# Add Ons

Use these resources to increase the activities in your session, offer activities in a second hour, or use during a weeknight family night.

## **For Further Theme Exploration**

### **Welcoming Songs**

Coming Home from First Unitarian of Rochester, NY

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

### **Welcoming Videos**

**Welcome to Unitarian Universalism:** <https://www.uua.org/beliefs/who-we-are/video>

**Welcome the Stranger**

by Catholic Bishops - the largest refugee organization in the world:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XdWZRDIQhs>

United Methodist on **Welcoming Two Syrian Refugees:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z37qSxOEEwQ>

### **Welcoming Service Projects**

**The Warm Welcome Project** - Knitting hats for refugees

<https://www.littleskein.com/blogs/news/warm-welcome-project>

**World Relief** - Six ways to help Syrian Refugees

[https://www.worldrelief.org/blog/6-ways-you-can-help-syrian-refugees-today?qclid=Cj0KEQjwmv7JBRDXkMWW4\\_Tf8ZoBEiQA11B2fvebgd20VLZ\\_uDChHIUJIXLGxJ6XoDXKd-U0ytTA8EQaAhM28P8HAQ](https://www.worldrelief.org/blog/6-ways-you-can-help-syrian-refugees-today?qclid=Cj0KEQjwmv7JBRDXkMWW4_Tf8ZoBEiQA11B2fvebgd20VLZ_uDChHIUJIXLGxJ6XoDXKd-U0ytTA8EQaAhM28P8HAQ)

## **To Further Explore the Special Calendar Dates**

### **Interfaith:**

[Rosh Hashanah](#) - Jewish New Year - Sept 20-22

- Tons of activities for Kids at [http://www.chabad.org/kids/article\\_cdo/aid/354744/jewish/Rosh-Hashanah.htm](http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/354744/jewish/Rosh-Hashanah.htm)
- Find a [Shofar, a Ram's Horn](#), that is blown with a harsh sound to wake us up to our spiritual needs

[Muharram](#) - Islamic New Year - Sept 22

- Counter Islamophobia with a story. <https://kitaabworld.com/blogs/news/counter-islamophobia-through-stories-muslim-kids-as-heroes>
- Watch a video about Islamic New Year: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvPJlOKDA20>

September Equinox/Mabon - Wicca - Sept 22

- Activities for Kids <https://www.thoughtco.com/celebrating-mabon-with-kids-2562314>

Yom Kipper - Jewish Day of Atonement begins - Sept 29

- A description for children [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/1281278/jewish/Speaking-to-Kids-About-Yom-Kippur.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1281278/jewish/Speaking-to-Kids-About-Yom-Kippur.htm)

Rumi's birthday - Sept 30

- Video of Sufi Music for Rumi's Birthday <https://rumiscircle.com/2014/09/30/happy-birthday-mevlana/>

## Unitarian Universalist

Universalism Day: John Murray preaches first sermon in US (1770) - Sept 30

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session12/60161.shtml>

## National & Cultural

Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept 15 - Oct 15)

- <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collections/teaching-content/bring-hispanic-heritage-month-life-collection-resources/>

Suicide Prevention Month, World Suicide Prevention Day is Sept 10

- **Life of an Ally** from Tapestry of Faith, Heeding the Call for Jr. High <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop5/172096.shtml>
- **Myths and Fact about Suicide** from Tapestry of Faith Adult Facing Death with Life <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/facing-death/workshop-6-suicide-and-right-die/activity-1-myths-and-facts-about>
- Post Suicide Prevention Hotline Numbers, especially in the restrooms. From Tapestry of Faith Adult Facing Death with Life <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/facing-death/workshop-6-suicide-and-right-die/activity-2-suicide-prevention>

VJ Day WWII – Sept 02

- VJ Day for Kids <http://www.american-historama.org/1929-1945-depression-ww2-era/v-j-day.htm>
- Movie: **The Emperor** (PG 13) for Youth [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2103264/?ref=nm\\_flmg\\_act\\_9](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2103264/?ref=nm_flmg_act_9)

Labor Day – Sept 04 (\*first Monday)

- US Holidays and UU Sources Matching from Tapestry of Faith, Amazing Grace <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/grace/session5/115259.shtml>

### International Literacy Day - Sept 08

- **Reading is Fundamental** from Tapestry of Faith, Youth Program “Exploring our Values through Poetry” <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/poetry/workshop7/113759.shtml>
- Eight Classroom Activities for International Literacy Day  
<https://www.waterford.org/8-classroom-activities-for-international-literacy-day/>

### Grandparent's Day - Sept 10 (\*second Sunday)

- Across Generations Tons of Activities  
<http://www.legacyproject.org/activities/activitiesaq.html>

### 9-11 Remembrance - Sept 11

- What Happened for Children <http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3756477>
- 10 Books about 9-11 to Share with Kids and Teens  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rocco-staino/911-books-kids-teens\\_b\\_926274.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rocco-staino/911-books-kids-teens_b_926274.html)

### Mexican Independence Day Sept 16

- Video - What is Mexican Independence Day (some bleeped out swearing)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCEJldGnLc>
- Video - The Mexican Flag <https://vimeo.com/89819193>

### International Peace Day Sept 21

- <https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/peace-day>
- <http://internationaldayofpeace.org/get-involved/children-and-youth/>

### World Gratitude Day - Sept 21

- Game - **It's a Miracle** from Tapestry of Faith Miracles Multigenerational program  
<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-1/activity-1>
- **Gratitude Circle** from Tapestry of Faith Love Will Guide Us  
<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session11/168866.shtml>
- **Enacting Prayer in the World** from Tapestry of Faith Moral Tales  
<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session3/123202.shtml>

**More Resources and links can be found on the Soul Matters Pinterest Page on Welcome:**

<https://www.pinterest.com/soulmattersre/2017-welcome/>

# Youth and Young Adult

*Here are a variety of components for use in your Middle School/Senior High/Young Adult Groups. For multigenerational sharing, ask yourself, how can this be shared with the wider community? With a younger or older group? As part of worship? In addition, think of leadership opportunities for this age. How will you share your gifts with our community in relation to the theme?*

*For additional reflection questions and exercises on the theme for Youth and Young Adults, be sure to check this month's Soul Matters Small Group Packet (after all, isn't Youth Group a Small Group Ministry?!) Also, don't forget that attending an adult worship service on "A People of Welcome" is a great learning and engagement opportunity.*

## **UU Reflection**

### **Considering our 5th Principle - Consensus and Majority Rule as a Welcoming model:**

Vote for an activity using Majority Rule.

A walk or a coffee shop visit

A game or a discussion

Process: Review what is required for people to make decisions together. What we did just now was voting by majority.

There's another, more welcoming way of making a decision called consensus building. Our 5th Principle says "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large." Sometimes we shorten it to "All people have a vote." Maybe we should consider shortening it to "All people have a say," to reflect the importance of the consensus model.

Use the steps from <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/consensus> to build consensus about the choices above.

- What differences and benefits do you see in each way of coming to an agreement as a group? Especially about welcoming input!
- • Consensus requires participation from all group members, including those with minority opinions. Majority rule does not require a collective agreement.
- • Consensus enables all group members to be invested in the chosen outcome. Majority rule may result in those in the minority feeling left out of the decision-making process.
- • Consensus requires an environment that is conducive to healthy discourse. Majority rule does not require the same level of interaction, and may allow members to keep their beliefs private, if they so choose.
- • Majority rule is a quicker decision-making process.
- • Majority rule is susceptible to abuse by the majority, while groups seeking to reach a consensus may fall victim to groupthink.

After you build consensus, offer the activities that were chosen, if appropriate.

## **Welcoming the Diversity**

“In true *community* we will not choose our companions, for our choices are so often limited by self-serving motives. Instead, our companions will be given to us by grace. Often they will be persons who will upset our settled view of self and world. In fact, we might define true community as that place where the person you least want to live with lives...” - Parker Palmer, “The Company of Strangers”

- How has this happened in your life?
- Who do you least want to live with?
- How might they be a part of your true community?
- Viewed through the lens of cliques, what might this teach us?

## Craft

**Make Welcome Flags** (also a good Multigenerational Project) from Tapestry of Faith, Signs of our Faith  
<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session10/287887.shtml>

**Decorate the room** to include elements of welcome (a poster, comfortable place to sit, etc.)

## Reflection

**Welcoming Guests** instead of Visitors to the Group

<http://www.uua.org/interconnections/56233.shtml>

How do we welcome guests to our group? What might we start doing?

## Reader’s Theatre

**A Messiah is Among You**

Pass around a printed copy of the story to read together

<https://storiesforpreaching.com/the-messiah-is-among-you/>

Then, create an affirmation page for each person, writing the affirmations on each page silently while the pages are passed around.

**Mindfulness Practices:**

Narratives of Inclusion Meditation for older teens and young adults

<http://www.mindfulteachers.org/2016/11/narratives-of-inclusion.html>

**Offering Hospitality to Oneself Meditation**

<https://www.mindful.org/practice-befriending-self/>

## Games

**Clumps**

Any size room. Easy game used to get to know each other. Simply yell, "Form a group according to . . . (see suggestions below)." If you're looking for a certain number of people per team, just say, "Form a group of 4!"

Variation: Once in their groups, the game leader reads a question from the list below (or write your own) and everyone in the group answers.

Clumps: height, hair color, # cavities, # siblings, shirt color, number of people in your immediate family, month of birth, favorite color, grade, middle initial, school you attend.

Questions:

- What is your favorite cartoon (or cartoon character)?
- Who do you most admire?
- What animal is most like your personality?
- What would you do with \$100,000?
- What do you hope to be doing in 10 years?

“Observation” (for more than 10 people):

Form a circle of chairs, and have everyone but IT (start with IT as leader) seated. IT walks around the inside of the circle observing each member until IT has decided on a particular characteristic of people to pick. IT then taps each person who has that characteristic, and that person stands and moves into the center. The remaining seated people try to guess which characteristic is common to all of the folks standing in the center. Whoever guesses the correct characteristic gets to be IT next. Examples might be glasses, buttons, sandals, purple clothing, jeans, etc. Those standing in the circle may try to guess quietly among themselves.

"Observation" (for fewer than 10 people):

Have one or two people chosen who will go out of the room. Once they are out of the room, the chosen person or team changes something about their appearance. They return to the room and the audience tries to figure out what was changed. - From [“Lodestone; Magnetize Your Middle School!”](#) by Katie Covey

### **Welcoming the hard times reflection -**

“If you can’t get out of it, get into it!” Outward Bound Motto

Share this excerpt from Parker Palmer’s experience [rappelling](#):

“I was about halfway down when the second instructor called up from below: “Parker, I think you better stop and see what’s just below your feet.” I lowered my eyes very slowly—so as not to shift my weight—and saw that I was approaching a deep hole in the face of the rock.

In order to get down, I would have to get around that hole, which meant I could not maintain the straight line of descent I had started to get comfortable with. I would need to change course and swing myself around that hole, to the left or to the right. I knew for a certainty that attempting to do so would lead directly to my death—so I froze, paralyzed with fear.

The second instructor let me hang there, trembling, in silence for what seemed like a very long time. Finally, she shouted up these helpful words: “Parker, is anything wrong?”

To this day, I do not know where my words came from, though I have twelve witnesses to the fact that I spoke them. In a high, squeaky voice I said, “I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Then,” said the second instructor, “it’s time that you learned the Outward-Bound motto.”

“Oh, keen,” I thought. “I’m about to die, and she’s going to give me a motto!”

But then she shouted ten words I hope never to forget, words whose impact and meaning I can still feel: **“If you can’t get out of it, get into it!”**

I had long believed in the concept of “the word become flesh” but until that moment I had not experienced it. My teacher spoke words so compelling that they bypassed my mind, went into my flesh,

and animated my legs and feet. No helicopter would come to rescue me; the instructor on the cliff would not pull me up with the rope; there was no parachute in my backpack to float me to the ground. There was no way out of my dilemma except to get into it—so my feet started to move and in a few minutes I made it safely down.”

From <http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/writings/leading-from-within/>

*How might you welcome the hard things, so you can accept and move through them?*

## **Organize**

Start a Chapter of PeaceJam - youth working with Nobel Prize Winners <http://www.peacejam.org/>

## **Conversation**

Can we believe anything we want? No. Share and discuss “A Candid Welcome; Top 10 Reasons You May Not Feel Comfortable in a UU Congregation” <http://www.uuworld.org/articles/candid-welcome-uu>

## **Justice Conversation for Welcoming All Beings:**

GreenPeace and the Japanese Whaling

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/journey/chapter4/where-she-blows>

## **Ethical Eating Conversation:**

**Carnism** is the invisible belief system, or ideology, that conditions people to eat certain animals. Because carnism is invisible, people typically don't realize that eating animals is a choice, rather than a given.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0VrZPBskpg>

## **Song for Welcoming All Beings**

### **One Heart Beating**

<http://songsforthegreatturning.net/seeing-with-new-eyes/one-heart-beating-sue-kirkpatrick>

**Love Reaches Out** - from the Sanctuaries, Washington, DC <http://thesanctuaries.org/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvIPa28cVfA>

## **Using Words to Welcome or Exclude**

*Created by Sarah Gonzalez: Resisting Racism Youth Lesson*

*Recommended by the organizers of the UU White Supremacy Teach-in*

“A facilitation guide for discussing the difference between the intent behind our words and actions and the impact of our words and actions and how these differences are important. These words can be welcoming or put downs. The discussion then turns towards an exploration of institutional racism and how our privileges can play out in conversations about race.”

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HN323VpqLpq0\\_94xx5Cxft9vtk57q8KNNkVE7kwrpU/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HN323VpqLpq0_94xx5Cxft9vtk57q8KNNkVE7kwrpU/edit)



# Family and Parent Resources

*These resources support parents as they live out and engage our themes with their children. Playing off our monthly theme question of “What does it mean to be a people of Welcome?”, we invite parents to ask “What does it mean to be a parent of Welcome” or “What does it mean to be a family of Welcome?”*

*As you use these resources to engage these questions, keep in mind some additional ways to use them with other parents or your church community:*

- *Read it and reflect with those in your family.*
- *Share and discuss them with other parents or another family.*
- *Use them in a Parent Circle that meets on Sunday afternoon or mid-week.*
- *Use them at a Wonderful Wednesday night that includes dinner, spiritual practice and activities on the theme, including times together as families, and separate as kids and adults. Be sure to gather at the end for a goodnight hug and lullaby!*

## **Your Five-Year-Old is already Racially Biased and What You Can Do About It**

<https://medium.com/embrace-race/your-5-year-old-is-already-racially-biased-heres-what-you-can-do-about-it-d72de0480ba3>

Helping our children be more welcoming and intercultural competent.

## **7 Tips for White Parents to Talk to Their Kids About Police Murders of Black People**

<https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/7-tips-for-white-parents-to-talk-to-their-kids-about-police-murders-of-black-people/>

Welcoming and talking about hard truths.

## **Family Activities on Welcome**

from Tapestry of Faith, Signs of Our Faith

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session10/287890.shtml>

## **Raising Children to Be Interfaith Ambassadors**

by Michelle Richards

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/raising-interfaith-ambassadors>

## **A Candid Welcome; Top 10 Reasons You May Not Feel Comfortable and Welcome in a UU Congregation**

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/candid-welcome-uu>

A list of welcoming and unwelcoming beliefs from a UU perspective. Helps parents engage their children in the question, Is UUism about believing anything you want?

## **“How Tonglen helps Children Handle Pain”**

<http://howdoideate.com/relationships/parenting-skills/how-tonglen-helps-children-to-handle-pain/>

Helping children welcome the hard times

## **The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving**

by Dr. Lisa Miller

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1250033837/ref=as\\_li\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1250033837&linkCode=as2&tag=incom05-20&linkId=d1d0eb85deeeae52389b3a3f1bb0f43dc](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1250033837/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1250033837&linkCode=as2&tag=incom05-20&linkId=d1d0eb85deeeae52389b3a3f1bb0f43dc)

*Welcoming spirituality to childhood!*

## **Additional Resources from Katie Covey**

Katie creates curriculum distinct from Soul Matters. You can learn more about all she offers at <http://www.uure.com>. If you have purchased her curriculum, here are sessions from it that relate to the theme of Welcome.

### **Elementary ages:**

From [Picture Book UU](#):

Session #1 - The Big Orange Splot

Session #29 - The Golden Rule

For Welcoming Hard Times - from [Picture Book World Religions](#)

Session #14 - Zen Shorts

### **Youth:**

[Lodestone, Magnetize Your Middle School](#) has a unit on Death

and the acceptance of it which helps us value our life for “Welcoming the Hard Times.”

“[Full Circle; Fifteen Ways to Grow Lifelong UU’s](#)” by Katie (formerly Erslev, now Covey) highlights the importance of youth group and youth leadership experiences. Book available at the UUA Bookstore.

# **Upcoming Support & Collaboration Opportunities** **for Themes in RE**

**Come and play and think together!**

## **August**

**RE Brainstorming Lab on Abundance (November)**

**Tuesday, Aug.1, 2017, 1 p.m. ET**

Share ideas for November's RE packet on the theme of Abundance!

**RE Implementation Lab for Welcome (September)**

**Wed, Aug. 16, 2017, 1 p.m. ET**

How we plan to use September's packet on Welcome in our programs!

## **September**

**RE Brainstorming Lab on Hope (Dec. Packet)**

**Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017, 1 p.m. ET**

Share ideas for what should be included in December's packet on Hope!

**RE Implementation Lab for Courage (October)**

**Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2017, 1 p.m. ET**

Let's help each other think about using October's packet on Courage in our programs!

## **On-Going Resources and Support**

**Don't forget about our RE Leader Support Facebook page.** It's a great on-going 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/>

**Offer your teachers and parents spiritual nourishment and inspiration by encouraging them to join the**

**Soul Matters Inspiration Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>



© 2017-18 Soul Matters ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Packets are for use by member congregations of the Soul Matters Sharing Circle.

Learn how to join at <http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com>