

Religious Education Kit 2013-2014

Note: Though the following lesson plans are broken down by age groups, many of the activities can be adapted or combined for different age groupings in order to accommodate any size religious education program. Please pick and choose what works for your program so that all can learn about the Guest at Your Table initiative and enhance their UU identity.

Multigenerational Expansion

Objective

To include the whole congregation in learning about and supporting UUSC's empowering work through the Guest at Your Table program.

Activities

Do any or all of the following as time allows.

During family worship or children's time, use the story *Light*¹ by Jane Breskin Zalben. In this adapted Kabbalah legend, she writes, "With love, caring, and acts of kindness, everyone has the power to repair one small piece of a broken world — and make it whole." Or substitute another story or lesson of choice.

Announce that all are invited to taste some of the food the children will be preparing, learn more about Guest at Your Table at the end of the service, and get their Guest at Your Table envelopes and *Stories of Hope* booklets to take home.

After the service and classes end, serve food from class lessons below in small portions during coffee hour.

- Set up several tables on which children put their prepared food portions.
- Have the Guest at Your Table poster available as a visual aid.
- Explain that we want to welcome many "guests" who can't be with us in person.
- Ask senior-high youth to enter into conversation with adults and pass out *Stories of Hope* booklets.

Pre-K and Kindergarten

Objective

To promote the idea that all are welcome and that each brings unique gifts to share and make life better for all.

Materials

- Chalice and matches
- Story: "The Ant and the Grasshopper" (text below under "Resource")
- Plain white paper plates
- Crayons or markers
- Stapler
- Un-popped popcorn kernels and popcorn popper (alternative: already popped corn)
- Napkins
- Juice (optional)
- Guest at Your Table bookmarks or "Who Are Our Guests?" printed inserts

¹ Jane Breskin Zalben, *Light* (New York: Dutton Juvenile, Penguin, 2007).

Preparation

- Create and practice a song tune.
- Make a sample noisemaker.
- Pop some corn in advance if preferred.
- If making individual boxes, have enough supplies on hand.
- Find out when and how your congregation will collect the Guest at Your Table donations.
- Read *Stories of Hope* booklets.

Opening (5 minutes)

Gather in circle on the floor.

Light the chalice then say the following:

"We are the church of the open mind.

We are the church of the helping hands.

We are the church of the loving hearts.

We light our chalice for ourselves and for all the people of the world."

Introduce any new children.

Give overview: Explain plan for day, including that each group of children and youth will be learning about Guest at Your Table, a very special UUSC program in which congregations around the country participate. Ask if anyone has heard about it before. (If you will be doing the multigenerational expansion, explain how that will work.)

Gathering (10 minutes)

Do your regular opening for this age group or ask each child to tell the group what their favorite food is, things they like to do, or what they did or will do for Thanksgiving.

Sing or chant: "Good morning *sun*, what a beautiful day." Repeat for as many times as you wish changing "sun" to other words (e.g., sky, trees, floor, names) as suggested by children. Any simple tune can be used, or it can be spoken.

Story and discussion (15 minutes)

"The Ant and the Grasshopper," Aesop's fable adapted from version found in *Tapestry of Faith*

Read the story (text below under "Resource") to the children.

For discussion, allow children to answer the following questions (feel free to add your own or solicit questions from the children) as they wish:

I wonder . . .

. . . what Grasshopper likes to eat?

. . . why Hardworking Ant is worried about winter?

. . . why Grasshopper likes to sing?

. . . how Hardworking Ant feels about doing a lot of work?

. . . if Welcoming Ant did the right thing?

. . . how much Grasshopper helped the ants by sharing music?

. . . what you like to do in the winter?

. . . what special talents you have?

. . . what ways your friends have been kind to you?

. . . how you can help others?

Creation (15 minutes)

Make individual percussion instruments:

1. Decorate one side of a paper plate using crayons or markers; be sure to put child's name on it.
2. Fold plates in half and staple edges together leaving a small opening.
3. Put a handful of corn kernels inside paper plate.
4. Staple the opening shut.

Sharing (5 minutes)

Have children wash hands first. Make popcorn with children to share as they listen to the next section.

Integration (5 minutes)

Display the Guest at Your Table poster or pass out bookmarks. Invite children to look at the photos and talk about what they see. Add your own insights from the Guest at Your Table resources.

Explain that UUSC partners with people like those pictured on the box. Say, in your own words: "Just like the ants and grasshoppers, we all have valuable ways to work together and enjoyable ways to learn from others around the globe — to make a better world for all of us. What might we do to help others in their work far away?" Accept all comments and ask if it would be easy or helpful to send or do the suggestion from far away; if it is not suggested by the group, suggest that money is the easiest thing to send far away. Explain that all of the children may talk with their families about working with others to build a better world for all of us. Continue: "Our congregation can think about the people we are helping as if they are in our homes with us as our guests — we will get to know them better, and we will all work together to help them. We'll put the money that is collected from our congregation with the money raised by others around the country, and together we will be able to accomplish a lot."

Closing (5 minutes)

Repeat opening song with previous and new words using paper-plate "instruments" for accompaniment.

End by holding hands and giving thanks for what we have and for what we share. Invite the class to bring their items home.

Multigenerational expansion

If you are doing this, have children put popcorn in small cups and bring to tables set up to share with congregation.

Resource: "The Ant and the Grasshopper"

One summer day, Grasshopper was hopping about in a field, chirping and singing joyfully. Hard-Working Ant passed by, struggling to take a heavy kernel of corn to the nest. "Why not come and sing with me?" said Grasshopper. "You are working much too hard."

"I am helping to store food for the winter," said Hard-Working Ant. "You should be doing this too, since there won't be anything to eat once it gets cold and the snow falls."

"Why worry about winter?" said Grasshopper. "There is plenty of food around here!" Hard-Working Ant just continued on carrying the heavy kernel of corn.

Day after day, Hard-Working Ant trudged back and forth from the cornfield to the ant nest, struggling to carry corn kernels to store for the winter.

Day after day, Grasshopper danced merrily across the fields, singing to Hard-Working Ant.

"Forget about work! Listen up! Enjoy the summer!" Grasshopper sang.

When the cold winds of winter began to blow and the puffy flakes of snow began to fall, Grasshopper soon learned that food did indeed become very scarce. Grasshopper became hungry and cold; meanwhile, the ants were tucked into their nest, sharing all the food they had collected during the summer.

Grasshopper knocked one day on the door of the ants' house. Welcoming Ant answered the door and looked at cold, hungry Grasshopper. "Please," Grasshopper asked. "It is too cold out here, and I am so hungry. May I share with you?"

Welcoming Ant stepped aside to let Grasshopper in, but Hard-Working Ant stepped forward. "Don't let Grasshopper in," Hard-Working Ant protested. "Grasshopper wasted the summer singing and dancing, instead of helping us store food."

Welcoming Ant said, "Just because Grasshopper made a different choice, does not mean we should ignore the ways that Grasshopper does contribute." Welcoming Ant invited Grasshopper inside.

Grasshopper eagerly walked into the ants' nest and sat right down at the table filled with food to get something to eat. Afterward, Grasshopper began to sing. It was a catchy tune, a happy song, and soon all the ants found themselves laughing and dancing, even Hard-Working Ant.

And all through that cold, long winter, the ants shared their food and home with Grasshopper, and Grasshopper shared songs and joy with the ants. Together they had a wonderful time — even Hard-Working Ant, who had to admit the wintertime was more pleasant with Grasshopper to share music and friendship.

Grades 1–3

Objective

To learn that self-sufficiency and sharing helps build healthy communities and how we can help support them.

Materials

- Chalice and matches
- Story: "Stone Soup, an Old Folk Tale Retold" (text below under "Resource")
- Clean, small stones (they do not have to be smooth)
- Water-based paint and brushes
- Table cover/newspaper
- Yarn in several colors
- Assorted veggies and dip
- Bowls, napkins, and juice if desired
- *Stories of Hope* chapter about Danielle Neus

Preparation

- Wash stones and dry.
- Cut yarn into 12" lengths, one for each child and one color for each group of three to five children
- Cut up veggies if necessary and put dip in bowls.

- Find out when and how your congregation will collect the Guest at Your Table donations.
- Read *Stories of Hope* booklets.

Opening (5 minutes)

Sit in a circle on the floor or around a table. Light the chalice then say:

“We are the church of the open mind.
We are the church of the helping hands.
We are the church of the loving hearts.
We light our chalice for ourselves and for all the people of the world.”

Introduce any new children.

Give overview: Explain plan for day, including that each group of children and youth will be learning about a very special UUSC program, Guest at Your Table, in which congregations around the country participate. Ask if anyone has heard about it before. (If you will be doing the multigenerational expansion, explain how that will work.)

Gathering (5 minutes)

Ask the group about Thanksgiving (or other previous or upcoming event). Questions you can ask: How do you celebrate? Do you have guests or were you a guest? Do you bring something to share or help with the cooking? What is your favorite food? Do you try something new? Do you have fun?

Story and discussion (10 minutes)

“Stone Soup, an Old Folk Tale Retold,” adapted by Vicki Merriam

Read the story (text below under “Resource”) to the children.

At the end of the story, ask: “If we were making soup, what would you bring to put in it? Why do people need healthy food? What does a tire garden look like? Do you think it is a good idea for people to work together and share? Why?”

Creation (15 minutes)

Decorate stones:

1. Cover tables.
2. Invite children to paint stones.
3. Set aside to dry.

Sharing (10 minutes)

Have children wash hands first.

Pass out cut-up assorted veggies and dip to be eaten while they listen to the *Stories of Hope* chapter about Danielle Neus.

Integration: Group Ties activity (10 minutes)

Give everyone a length of yarn and ask them to hold it up. Say: “As you see someone holding up the same color, go and tie two of your ends together to make a longer length. As you find your whole group, you will form a line. Each person should keep holding part of the yarn.”

Give the children time to tie up in color groups. Then call out (for example), “Blues, tie to reds.” Direct two children at the ends to tie their two lines together.

Keep joining groups until everyone is standing in a circle together, each child still holding part of the yarn.

Explain that the circle of yarn represents a way that they, too, are connected through their time together — and yet we are different (diverse) just like the different colored yarns. Ask: “What are ways we are different? What are ways we are the same? What are examples of community (or teamwork) we have heard about today? What are some ways people have tried to include everyone?”

When everyone has had a chance to share, go around the circle with scissors. Cut a length for each child by cutting between the knots, so each length includes two pieces of yarn tied together. Invite children to tie their lengths on their wrists as a reminder of their time together.

Closing (5 minutes)

Distribute Guest at Your Table bookmarks and invite children to collect their painted stones. Explain that these bookmarks are a way that Unitarian Universalists learn about people like those pictured on the bookmark. Say, in your own words: “The story you heard was an old tale, but there really is a person named Danielle who is helping the people of Haiti to come together, learn to grow food, and rebuild their communities even stronger than before. Danielle, her friends, and the people of Haiti will be stronger with our support. What might we send or share to help them? [Suggest money if it is not suggested as the easiest thing to send.] Every person who contributes adds up to bigger results. Joining together helps us accomplish more.” Invite each child to talk with their family about the day’s activities. Continue: “We can think about the people we are helping as if they are guests in our homes. We’ll collect all the donations from our congregation, see how much all our coins and dollars add up to, and later send it to UUSC to add to money from other congregations around the country. Together we can achieve much more than we could alone.”

End by holding hands and giving thanks for what we have and for what we share. Wish them a healthy week. Send stones and bookmarks home with children.

Multigenerational expansion

If you are doing this, have children arrange veggies on plate with dip and bring to tables set up to share with congregation.

Resource: “Stone Soup, an Old Folk Tale Retold”

Have any of you heard the story of stone soup? It is about a stranger who comes to town but does not know anyone and has no money. The stranger wants some soup to eat but does not have anything to make it with. The stranger tricks people into filling a pot with their spare vegetables for the chance to taste some of the stranger’s “stone soup.” It is a funny story, but it’s also one that can make us think how things get better when we all pitch in.

But did you know that in some places it really is hard for people to find enough vegetables for a pot of soup? I want to tell you a different way of finding help and pitching in for a better solution, and this story happened for real.

For many years, people who lived in Haiti, an island in the Atlantic Ocean, struggled to grow enough food and earn enough money to take care of their families. There was not a lot of good soil, so plants could not grow well. Then there was an earthquake a few years ago. It became very hard after that, especially in the city, where the earthquake did a lot of damage and there was no land to grow crops. Many families left the city to go out into the country in order to try to find work and food.

Some of the people who left the city were unaccustomed to living in rural areas, but the people in the countryside had some ideas to help. Although the people there — many were farmers — were not prepared for so many new visitors all at once, they started out by sharing what they had and then began to teach the visitors how to grow their own food. They agreed they would work together in community gardens and share the food they grow. They also learned about growing gardens in tires as containers to protect the soil and water.

One day a woman named Danielle came into the village. Danielle knew things she had learned as a child from her mother, who worked in her community, and her grandfather, who was a farmer. Danielle remembered that there were still many people who did not leave the city, and she tried to think about how to help these people. She realized that they could do more than share their community garden crops — they could also share the lessons they were learning.

Danielle said that she would show their friends and families in the city how to build their own gardens and grow lots of healthy vegetables. They would use old tires to contain water and nutrients in the soil and protect the plants from animals that might eat them. Then her friends and family could show even more people back in the cities how to make tire gardens, too. That way, even those who could not travel to the countryside would have better food. The people agreed it is much better to work together helping each other and sharing better ways to do things collaboratively. When we share, we all gain in the end.

Grades 4–5

Objective

To learn that self-sufficiency and sharing helps build healthy communities and how we can help support them.

Materials

- Chalice and matches
- Story: “Leftover Rice and Beans: A Story of Two Families” (text below under “Resource”)
- 2 bags of boil-in-bag white or brown rice or 4 cups precooked rice
- 1 can (14½ oz.) red kidney beans
- 1 large tomato
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- Tortilla chips
- Shredded cheese (cheddar, jack, or Mexican blend; increase amounts as needed for all children and to share if doing expansion)
- Microwave bowls or stove-top pots
- Teaspoon
- Plates and napkins
- Cheese grater/shredder (optional)
- Yarn in several colors
- *Stories of Hope* booklets

Preparation

- Cook rice ahead of time.
- Find out when and how your congregation will collect the Guest at Your Table donations.
- Read *Stories of Hope* booklets.

Opening (5 minutes)

Sit in a circle around the chalice. Light the chalice then say:

“May our faith in the spirit of life, our hope for the community of earth, and our love of the light in each other help us to do our best to help others.”

Introduce any new children.

Give overview: Explain plan for day, including that each group of children and youth will be learning about Guest at Your Table, a very special UUSC program in which congregations around the country participate. Ask if anyone has heard about it before. (If you will be doing the multigenerational expansion above, explain how that will work.)

Gathering (5 minutes)

Ask the group about Thanksgiving (or other previous or upcoming event). Questions you can ask: What do you do to celebrate? Do you have guests/do you attend as a guest? Do you bring something to share or help with the cooking? What is your favorite food? Do you have fun?

Story and discussion (15 minutes)

“Leftover Rice and Beans: A Story of Two Families,” by Vicki Merriam

Read the story (text below under “Resource”) to the children.

Discussion starters:

- Do you know some people in your neighborhood?
- Do the people in your neighborhood share with each other?
- Did Vicki and Dally make a good decision for the cat family?
- How could you get to know your neighbors better?
- Are there things you could do to help others?

Creation (15 minutes)

Have children wash hands first.

Have group make easy rice and beans. The following recipe serves six to eight people (make as much as needed); cooking time is 15 minutes. They can eat this while you read from *Stories of Hope* and share it with the congregation.

Ingredients (increase as needed)

- 2 bags of boil-in-bags white or brown rice (or 4 cups precooked rice)
- 1 can (14½ oz.) red kidney beans
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- Tortilla chips
- Cheese (cheddar, jack, or Mexican blend), shredded

Directions

Prepare rice according to package directions. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, combine cooked rice, tomatoes, beans, and chili powder. Microwave on high for two minutes or until hot. (Alternate method: mix and heat in a pot on the stove.) Top with shredded cheese. Serve in a bowl with tortilla chips on the side for dipping.

Sharing (5 minutes)

Children can eat rice and beans while listening as you read the *Stories of Hope* chapter about Danielle Neus.

Integration: Group Ties activity (10 minutes)

Give everyone a length of yarn and ask them to hold it up. Say: “As you see someone holding up the same color, go and tie two of your ends together to make a longer length. As you find your whole group, you will form a line. Each person should keep holding part of the yarn.”

Give the children time to tie up in color groups. Then, call out (for example), “Blues, tie to reds.” Direct two children at the ends to tie their two lines together.

Keep joining groups until everyone is standing in a circle together, each child still holding part of the yarn.

Explain that the circle of yarn represents a way that they, too, are connected through their time together — and yet we are different (diverse) just like the different colored yarns. Ask: “What are ways we are different? What are ways we are the same? What are examples of community (or teamwork) we have heard about today? What are some ways people have tried to include everyone?”

When everyone has had a chance to share, go around the circle with scissors. Cut a length for each child by cutting between the knots, so each length includes two pieces of yarn tied together. Invite children to tie their lengths on their wrists as a reminder of their time together.

Closing (5 minutes)

Distribute *Stories of Hope* booklets. Explain that these booklets are a way that Unitarian Universalists learn about others like those pictured on the cover. Say, in your own words: “Danielle, Emmanuel, Guerna, and Adeline are helping the people of Haiti to come together, learn to grow food, and rebuild their communities after the earthquake. We can share some of what we have to help them in their work. What might we send or share with others instead of actual food? [Suggest money if it is not suggested as the easiest thing to send.] We can think about the people we are helping as if they are in our homes with us as our guests. We’ll collect the donations later and UUSC will combine the money that is collected from our congregation with the money raised by others around the country. Together we can achieve much more than we could alone.”

End by giving thanks for what we have and for what we share. Wish them a healthy week. Send booklets home with children.

Multigenerational expansion

If you are doing this, have children put rice and beans in bowls topped with cheese, place with tortillas on a plate, and bring to tables set up to share with congregation.

Resource: “Leftover Rice and Beans: A Story of Two Families”

Tina went to see Dally and Jorge, two members of a family in her neighborhood. Dally lived in a small house with Jorge and also Jorge’s three siblings and his mother. As Tina talked to Dally and Jorge, she learned they would soon have a baby and would need to move into a larger home before the baby was born.

While they got to know each other and began to talk about some possibilities, a thin, young cat came into the kitchen to eat from a dish of leftover rice and beans set out on the floor for it. As Tina left, she noticed several tiny kittens dashing about the back of the house. Dally said the family of cats were strays that were living in the cellar and her

family was trying to take care of them. Tina and Dally talked together about how to help the family of cats. They came to an idea that seemed to be most agreeable and best for all.

Tina returned the next day with cat carriers, and Dally and the whole family helped round up the kittens and the mother cat. Tina and Dally made arrangements with the Humane Society to help find homes for the cats, but they would not have space until the following day. So, Tina offered to bring them to her house as temporary guests. She put them all in a spare room and gave them some food and water. Tina helped them feel them safe, comfortable, and warm for the night. She enjoyed watching the kittens with the mother cat and felt she began to get to know them a little.

The next morning, Tina and Dally brought them to the Humane Society where they would be given medical care and then placed in loving homes. Tina and Dally returned to the small apartment, where the rest of the family who had harbored the needy family of cats in their cellar and fed them leftover rice and beans were waiting. Tina and Dally and Jorge were glad they could help the family of cats and that they got to know each other better through this mutual effort to help their small guests. Now they would talk together about next steps to find a solution that Dally and Jorge could agree on for their own growing family. They knew they would remain friends.

Grades 6–8

Objective

To listen to and try to understand others as well as to learn ways people stand up for others’ rights and how we all can share what we have.

Materials

- Chalice and matches
- Story: “Loaves and Fishes: A Modern Interpretation of an Old Story” (text below under “Resource”)
- Small twigs or other wooden sticks such as toothpicks, lollipop sticks, etc.
- Twine
- Sliced bread
- Canned tuna
- Mayonnaise
- Lettuce
- Sliced cheese
- Can and bottle openers
- Dull knives
- Plates and napkins
- *Stories of Hope* booklets

Preparation

- Find out when and how your congregation will collect the Guest at Your Table donations.
- Read *Stories of Hope* booklets.

Opening (5 minutes)

Sit or stand around chalice and light it as you say:

“May our faith in the spirit of life, our hope for the community of earth, and our love of the light in each other help us to do our best to help others.”

Introduce any new children.

Give overview: Explain plan for day, including that each group of children and youth will be learning about a very special UUSC program, Guest at Your Table, in which congregations around the country participate. Ask if anyone has heard about it before. (If you will be doing the multigenerational expansion above, explain how that will work.)

Gathering (10 minutes)

Invite each person to say how they are feeling or share something about the past or upcoming week.

Story and discussion (10 minutes)

“Loaves and Fishes,” a modern interpretation of an old story, adapted by Vicki Merriam

Read the story (text below under “Resource”) to the children.

Discussion starters:

- Have you heard a version of this story before?
- If you went to a large event such as this, would you be willing to share what food you had with others there?
- Have you ever felt blessed?
- Is Jesus’s teaching “to love one another” one you can make part of your life? How?
- What kind of example of love and sharing could you set?

Creation (10 minutes)

Have everyone wash hands first.

Make a tuna sandwich by inviting youth to give directions, one person at a time, on how make it. You should follow the directions literally (e.g., youth says take bread out of bag, facilitator rips open bag or upends all the bread out of the bag; youth says open can of tuna, facilitator bangs it on table or tries to use a bottle opener to open the can; youth says put tuna in bowl, facilitator puts whole can in; youth says put tuna on bread, facilitator puts whole bowl on bread). Save the made sandwich for closing activity. Invite youth to make their own sandwiches for snack to eat during next activity. Have an alternative (salad, cheese, etc.) for those who do not eat tuna or bread.

If you are doing the multigenerational expansion, make enough for the congregation. Cut sandwiches up into quarters and serve on plates.

Sharing (5 minutes)

Children can eat their sandwiches while listening as you read the *Stories of Hope* chapter about George Friday.

Integration: Bundle of Sticks activity (10 minutes)

Give each youth a twig or stick. Ask if they can break it in half. Have them pair up and put their two sticks together. Ask if they can break them in half. Double up the pairs so that there are four people and four sticks. Ask if they can break them in half now. Keep doubling until they can’t be broken. If the group is small, double up until all are one group. Add sticks to the group till they can no longer be broken. When bundle can no longer be broken, tie it together with twine and set it on the table as a reminder.

Ask: “How many sticks did you need in the bundle to keep it from breaking? Why didn’t the bundle break then? How might this example relate to what we have learned today? What is a coalition? How is there more power in a group?”

Closing (5 minutes)

Distribute *Stories of Hope* booklets. Explain that these booklets are a way that Unitarian Universalists learn about others like those pictured on the cover. Say, in your own words: “George is helping people come together to stand up for their rights. We can share some of what we have to help them in their work. What might we send or share with them? [Suggest money if it is not suggested as the easiest thing to send.] We can think about the people we are helping as if they are in our homes with us as our guests.” Invite them to talk with their families about their guests to get to know more about them. Continue: “We’ll collect the donations later and UUSC will combine the money that is collected from our congregation with others around the country. Together we can achieve much more than we could alone.”

End by giving thanks for what we have and for what we share. Wish them a healthy week. Send booklets home with children.

Multigenerational expansion

If you are doing this, put sandwich quarters on a plate and bring to tables set up to share with congregation.

Resource: “Loaves and Fishes: A Modern Interpretation of an Old Story”

In the final weeks of his life, Jesus traveled through the countryside with his disciples, spreading his message of love and the empowerment of all. Everywhere he went, he drew crowds of people who were anxious to hear his message. They came from all walks of life and circumstances. They were farmers and fishers, cobblers and carpenters, millers and merchants, shepherds and sailors, young and old, sick and healthy, rich and poor, immigrants and citizens. They traveled in groups from near and far, on foot or by cart.

At one gathering, 5,000 or more people came to see Jesus, to hear his words, to ask him to heal their sick. After a long day, Jesus and his disciples were tired and hungry. They had five loaves of bread and two fish to share. But the people were hungry too, and this certainly was not enough to feed 5,000. They were told to sit down in the grass, and Jesus told his disciples to pass the bread and fish out to the crowd as best they could. Then he wandered among them, greeting them individually, blessing them, reminding them to love one another.

Slowly, each person, each family, brought out the food they had brought with them on their long journey. At first, not knowing what others around them would do, they had been reluctant to bring out their supplies. But when they saw Jesus’s example and looked around at those seated near them, they began to bring out their food. Some had fruit, some had cheese, some had vegetables, some had dried meat, some had bread, some had fish. Everyone had something, since in that time they would not embark on a journey without something to sustain them. Although some less than others, they all had different things to offer. They began to share with those around them a bit of this and a bit of that until they all had a variety of things to eat, including the loaves and fish that the disciples offered. In this way, everyone, regardless of who they were or where they came from, had something to share and something to gain. And then they began to talk with one another, to learn about each other, and they agreed that they would gather up the leftover food in baskets to share another time with those who would need it.

Senior High and Youth

Objective

To learn about the experiences of immigrants in this country and how we can help others to empower them to make changes in their lives and the life of their communities.

Materials

- Chalice and matches
- *Stories of Hope* chapter on Nelson Escobar
- *Stories of Hope* booklets
- Masking tape or rope
- Small “prizes” (food)
- Hula hoop (more than one if group is large)
- “Who Is UUSC?” video (available online at uusc.org/whoisuusc)

Preparation

- Find out when and how your congregation will collect the Guest at Your Table donations.
- Read *Stories of Hope* booklets.
- Mark off line on floor with tape or rope.

Opening (5 minutes)

Sit or stand around chalice and light it as you say:

“May our faith in the spirit of life, our hope for the community of earth, and our love of the light in each other help us to do our best to help others.”

Give overview: Explain plan for day, including that each group of youth will be learning about a very special UUSC program, Guest at Your Table, in which congregations around the country participate. Ask if anyone has heard about it before. (If you will be doing the multigenerational expansion above, explain how that will work.)

Gathering (10 minutes)

Invite each youth to share one thing from the past week. Ask if any have felt they (or someone they know) were ever treated badly or felt left out because of who they are. Ask if it was fair to be treated that way.

Game: Cross to My Side (10 minutes)

Have youth pair up. If there is an odd number, have one group of three. Ask them to stand facing each other on opposite sides of the line (tape) on the floor. Tell them the “rules”:

1. No talking during this game.
2. No touching during this game.
3. The winners are people who get their partners to cross the line (without touching or talking).
4. The winners will get a “prize” (food). Everyone will be a winner.

Do not offer any other advice. If asked, just repeat the rules. There are no losers in this game. Everyone should get a “prize.” Each person should get their partner to cross the line and then reverse it so that both have crossed the line both ways. They can do it simultaneously or take turns. If they do not figure this out, suggest that you did not say anything about losers and that there is always a way to help everyone to win.

Ask: “How does it feel to be a loser? A winner? Does it feel better if everyone wins? How can we make this happen?”

Pass out food to eat while listening to the story.

Integration (10 minutes)

Read the *Stories of Hope* chapter about Nelson Escobar.

At the end of the story, ask: “How do we decide which choice to make? Do other people influence our choices? What kinds of injustice would you want to stand up against? How would you feel if you could stand up for what is right? Is it harder to do it alone? How might you get others to help?”

Cooperative Game: Hula Hoop (5 minutes)

Follow these steps:

1. Form a circle and have everyone crouch or bend down (use chairs for those who have trouble crouching).
2. Place a hula hoop on the floor inside the circle and ask youth to place one finger from each hand under the hoop.
3. Imagine that the hoop is filled with helium. With only each person’s two fingers and without talking, the group as a whole must slowly raise the hoop to shoulder height and then above their heads. It must be kept level at all times, and their fingers must always be touching the hula hoop.
4. If someone feels their fingers go off the hoop or if it is not kept level, they have to start again. What tends to happen is everyone goes too quickly and not everyone can keep their fingers on it or it doesn’t stay level.
5. Keep trying till it works or group gives up.
6. Ask: “Did you feel you had control of the hoop? What would have made this easier? How does communication help? Why is it important to try difficult tasks? Why is working together important?”

Video: “Who Is UUSC?” (10 minutes)

Watch the “Who Is UUSC?” video, available at uusc.org/whoisuusc.

Closing (5 minutes)

Distribute *Stories of Hope* booklets. Ask if anyone has read this before and what they remember. Explain that these booklets are one way that Unitarian Universalists learn about people like those pictured on the cover. Say, in your own words: “We save up donations during Guest at Your Table and send them to UUSC to empower their work with these human rights leaders. Some of the money will go directly to help Nelson Escobar’s work.” Explain that each youth may take a booklet home to discuss with their family. Continue: “We can think about the people UUSC partners with as if they are in our home with us, as our guests — we want to get to know them and to connect with them. We’ll collect the donations later, and UUSC will combine the money from our congregation with others around the country. Together we can achieve much more than we could alone.”

Multigenerational expansion

If you are doing this, ask youth to distribute materials with congregation and talk about what they learned.