

Religious Education Kit 2014–15

Goals for all ages

- To nurture the values vital to building healthy, sustainable communities, such as sharing of resources, working cooperatively, and fostering a long-term vision of the community's legacy and impact on future generations
- To explore the interconnectivity of human, economic, and environmental sustainability
- To inform participants of the work of UUSC and its partner organizations and of the eye-to-eye partnership approach UUSC brings to that work

Pre-K We Share with Others

Objective

- To explore and experience sharing, and to better appreciate the ways that sharing supports a sustainable community that meets the needs of all its members

Session overview

1. Opening (3 minutes)
2. Story: *It's Mine!* by Leo Lionni (10 minutes)
3. Role Play: *Mine!* (10 minutes)
4. Cooperative Game: *Islands* (15 minutes)
5. Snack: *Share a Snack* (10 minutes)
6. Closing (2 minutes)
7. Alternate Activity: *The Art of Sharing* (10 minutes)

Session plan

1. Opening (3 minutes)

Chalice lighting

[Say words while doing gestures in brackets and ask children to copy the gestures.]

Give us eyes that see [hands by eyes]

a heart that loves [cross hands over heart]

and hands that are willing to serve [hands in front of your chest, palms up].

Song

#402, "From You I Receive" (one verse, sung twice), *Singing the Living Tradition*

2. Story: *It's Mine!* by Leo Lionni (10 minutes)

Introduction

Before reading the story, ask the children the following questions: "When you play with your siblings or friends do you ever have a hard time sharing? Do you say, "It's mine!" while quarreling? How does it make you feel when this happens?"

Story

Read *It's Mine!* to the children. (If you don't already have a copy, check your local library or bookstore.)

Summary

Three selfish frogs live together on an island in the middle of Rainbow Pond. All day long they bicker: "It's mine! It's mine! It's mine!" But a bad storm and a big brown toad help them realize that sharing is much more fun. With characteristic clarity, simplicity, and exuberance, Leo Lionni makes it possible for kids to see themselves through the antics of others who share our world.

Discussion

What lesson did the frogs learn?

3. Role Play: *Mine!* (10 minutes)

Children will role play not sharing and sharing. Adapted from an activity of the same name in Session 7 of "Signs of Our Faith," a Tapestry of Faith program.

Materials

- Simple items such as a toy, a book, a blanket, and some individual objects in a group like plastic cookies that can be divided between two people

Introduction

Introduce the activity: "Learning to share with others is not easy. We're going to practice it now with each other, by pretending to share some things that I brought with me today. You will each have a turn to practice not sharing and sharing. You will be with a partner, so that you have someone to share with. First you will show us what it looks like not to share the object. Then you will show us how you can share that object."

Consider one or more of the following questions to start discussion or introduce specific situations that the children can identify with.

- Name something you might not want to share. What could you do to make it easier? What could you do if someone asked to borrow or play with that item?
- Name a time when you might have to work together to get something done. Is it ever difficult to work together? What could you do if someone in the group didn't want to help?

Discussion

When discussing solutions to conflict, the children might suggest "telling the teacher or an adult." Talk with them about how they might be able to solve the conflict on their own. Once children have listed several ideas, choose a few for them to act out.

4. Cooperative Game: *Islands* (15 minutes)

Materials

- Carpet squares, rugs, flannel, or large pieces of construction paper
- Music (see below for suggestions)

Directions

Create a group of "islands" using carpet squares, rugs, flannel, or large pieces of construction paper or a few sheets taped together and also taped to the floor. Children walk or skip around the floor while music

plays. When it stops, they jump onto an island. Encourage children to share the islands (have fewer islands than children).

After everyone gets the idea, you can change it up a little!

- Ask children to go to a new island each time (easier if the islands are different colors)
- Remove more islands
- Ask everyone wearing one color to share an island (this may be the color of the island)

Songs

“The Sharing Song,” *The Singable Songs Collection*, by Raffi
 “Sharing Comes ‘Round Again,” *15 Singable Songs for the Young at Heart*, by Mary Rice Hopkins

5. Snack: Share a Snack (10 minutes)

Materials

- A snack to be divided amongst the children (e.g., cookies, trail mix)
- Guest at Your Table poster and bookmarks

Directions

As you hand out the snack, talk about how to portion the snack fairly.

Discussion

Ask the children how they would feel if everyone else got a snack and they didn't. Tell the group that one reason for sharing is that there are times when others don't have what they need — like food — and we have enough to give them some. Can they think of any times that they share with others who need what they have in their day-to-day activities (at home, at school, with friends, etc.)?

Explain that UUs believe in sharing with people who have needs we can fill. One way we do this is by working with groups in places where people are in need of food, housing, water, or other basic needs. Through a group called UUSC, we all work together to help meet those needs, by sharing our resources of money, work, and skills to help people all over the world.

Show the children the UUSC Guest at Your Table poster so they can see pictures of some people we share with and ways that the money, time, and skills we share are being used.

6. Closing (2 minutes)

Gather in a circle and hold hands. Say something like the following: “Today we practiced sharing objects, sharing ‘islands’ in our game, and sharing a snack. As UUs, we try to share with others when we have something that they need.”

Benediction

May we always learn to share with all people everywhere.
 [Hold hands up in the air together and all say the following.] See you next Sunday!

Taking it home

Hand out UUSC bookmarks to the children to bring home. You may want to distribute UUSC's *Stories of Hope* for children to give to their parents. Explain that these stories will help their family learn about the ways that UUs share with people all over the world.

7. Alternate Activity: The Art of Sharing (10 minutes)

Materials

- Paper
- Crayons (enough crayons that children will need to share)

Directions

Have children draw pictures of themselves sharing with a friend or family member. Consider sharing paper, too, in addition to crayons (you can talk with the children about ways to problem solve sharing paper, such as cutting it in half). You can use the children's drawings as part of a themed bulletin board on sharing if you have this space. Or send them home so that children talk with their parents about what they drew.

K–1 We Work Together in Community

Objectives

- To explore several aspects of work in community: the value of working cooperatively, the need for fairness in worker compensation, and the sustainable production and management of food resources, which all together foster a value of fair and cooperative work that meets the needs of all members of a community

Session overview

1. Opening (5 minutes)
2. Story: The Little Red Hen (20 minutes)
3. Activity 1: Dramatize the Story (10 minutes)
4. Activity 2: Plant Beans (15 minutes)
5. Closing (5 minutes)
6. Faith in Action: Extending the Lesson
7. Alternate Activity 1: Character Headbands (15 minutes)
8. Alternate Activity 2: Find a Friend Game (10 minutes)

Session plan

1. Opening (5 minutes)

Chalice lighting

[Say words while doing gestures in brackets and ask children to copy the gestures.]

Give us eyes that see [hands by eyes]

a heart that loves [cross hands over heart]

and hands that are willing to serve [hands in front of your chest, palms up].

Song

#402, “From You I Receive” (one verse, sung twice), *Singing the Living Tradition*

2. Story: The Little Red Hen (10 minutes)

Materials

- Flannel board and felt pieces if telling the story with a flannel board (patterns available at ow.ly/AzYLd or ow.ly/AzYpp)
- Little Red Hen rebus (available at enchantedlearning.com/stories/fairytales/littleredhen/story)

Introduction

Set the stage for the story by drawing on children's prior experience. Ask them, "Have any of you ever planted a garden of your own? What did you grow? What kind of work did you and your family need to do to care for the plants you grew?"

Continue: "Today we are going to hear a story about a farmer who worked hard to grow her own food and some lazy friends who would not help her — even though she asked them to help. Maybe some of you know this story, *The Little Red Hen*. You can all help me to tell it by joining in with the animals when they say, 'Not I.'"

Story

Tell the story aloud (see Leader Resource 1) with props (plastic farm animal set or pictures of the animals) or make and use flannel board characters.

Pause to ask about the characters' motives and choices, to predict what a character will say or do, and to consider alternative choices and what their effect might be.

Discussion

Engage the children in a guided discussion about community, responsibility, and choices. Ask the children to predict the hen's decision at the end. Try out all three endings. (The children may suggest all three or variations of these.)

Develop concepts of community and working together for the good of all. Ask, "What would happen if nobody does the work of growing food?"

This story does *not* develop empathy, so you will want to bring that important concept into the conversation. Ask something like the following: "The little red hen had chicks, and they did not help in the fields, but she fed them bread anyway. Why?" Discuss how parents have a responsibility to feed their children and to take care of them.

Ask, "What if the dog had a broken leg and couldn't help with the work until it healed. Should the others share food with him then or not? Why? Do we have a responsibility to help other people who need our help when we can?" Talk about how people in a community help do the work for the whole community and help each other when someone needs something they don't have. When everyone helps, there can be enough food for all.

3. Activity 1: Dramatize the Story (10 minutes)

Dramatizing *The Little Red Hen* may be done with or without costumes and props. Alternatively, you can do so with headbands made by the children (see Alternate Activity 1).

If you have more children than parts, assign two cats, two ducks, two dogs, or other animals as needed to give each person who wants one a role.

4. Activity 2: Plant Beans (15 minutes)*Materials*

- Small planting containers
- Lima beans
- Soil
- Drop cloths for table and floor
- Large spoon
- Marker

Directions

Supervise the children as they spoon out enough soil to fill their container. Each child should place one lima bean in their container. Water the beans just slightly (so they are not too wet to carry home). Use a marker to write the child's name on their container. You may want to place each container in a Ziploc bag for transporting home.

5. Closing (5 minutes)*Guest at Your Table presentation*

Display the Guest at Your Table poster. Ask the children to describe the community members they see there. Explain that UUSC is working in various countries along with these people on the poster. Some people need more food, and UUSC works with them to grow more food, like the gardens we are helping people to plant in Haiti. UUSC also works to help people get fair pay for the hard work that they do. UUs know that everyone needs to be treated fairly and that we all need to work together so that everyone can have what they need.

Taking it home

Send home UUSC bookmarks with the children and consider also sending the *Stories of Hope* booklets to be shared with parents. Explain that the stories tell more about the people UUSC is working with and the kinds of work that they do. Their families can help, too, by giving money to help UUSC do this good work in the world.

Gather in a circle and hold hands for the benediction.

Benediction

May we always learn to share with all people everywhere.

6. Faith in Action: Extending the Lesson

The children could experience working cooperatively by bringing a snack to share with the congregation during coffee hour, setting the snack table for coffee hour, and cleaning up after coffee hour with the help of teachers and parents.

7. Alternate Activity 1: Character Headbands (15 minutes)

Make Little Red Hen headbands for the children to wear as they act out the story.

Materials

- Sentence strips or construction paper strips
- Crayons
- Scissors
- Glue
- Tape
- Stapler
- Small pieces of construction paper

Directions

Wrap paper strip around the child's head to measure size. Tape or staple to the right size. Add eyes, ears, and other animal features using construction paper.

Activity source

"Props for Setting the Stage," Learning and Teaching Preschoolers, accessed July 31, 2014, <http://learningandteachingwithpreschoolers.blogspot.com/2010/01/props-for-setting-stage.html>.

8. Alternate Activity 2: Find a Friend Game (10 minutes)

Directions

Have children spread out through the room. Whisper in each child's ear "cow" or "duck."

Tell the children to make the sound of their animal while walking around. Children making the same sound gather and form a group (a herd or a flock).

Variations

Try this with different animals or more than two animals. For an additional challenge, put the children in blindfolds or have them close their eyes and ask them to find their group by sound only (in a safe space, or course).

Leader Resource 1 The Little Red Hen

Once there was a little red hen who decided to grow some wheat. She asked the other animals in the barnyard, "Who will help me plant my wheat?" "Not I!" said the dog. "Not I!" said the cat. "Not I!" said the pig. "Well, then," said the little red hen. "I will do it all by myself." And she did.

The wheat grew tall and was ready to be harvested. The little red hen said, "Who will help me pick my wheat?" "Not I!" said the dog. "Not I!" said the cat. "Not I!" said the pig. "Well, then," said the little red hen. "I will do it all by myself." And she did.

Next, the wheat had to be taken to the mill and ground into flour. "Who will help me grind my wheat?" asked the little red hen. "Not I!" said the dog. "Not I!" said the cat. "Not I!" said the pig. "Well, then," said the little red hen. "I will do it all by myself." And she did.

Finally, the flour was ready to be made into bread. "Who will help me make my bread?" asked the little red hen. "Not I!" said the dog. "Not I!" said the cat. "Not I!" said the pig. "Well, then," said the little red hen. "I will do it all by myself." And she did.

The bread smelled so good when it was baking. All the animals' mouths started watering as they gathered around hoping to get a piece of bread. "Who will help me eat my bread?" asked the little red hen. "I will!" said the dog. "I will!" said the cat. "I will!" said the pig. "No!" said the little red hen. "You did not help me plant my wheat. You did not help me pick my wheat. You did not help me take it to the mill to be ground into flour. And you did not help me make my bread. I did it *all by myself!* And my little chicks and I will eat it all by ourselves!" And they did!

Grades 2–3 Sustaining the Community and Its Natural Resources

Lesson

A long-term vision of the legacy to future generations guides the development of a healthy, sustainable community.

Objective

- To consider the need for a vision of the legacy we leave for future generations in farming, land use, and in our own lives and communities

Session overview

- Opening (2 minutes)
- Story: Farmer's Legacy (10 minutes)
- Cooperative Game: This Is a What (10 minutes)
- Activity: Dream Chests (20 minutes)
- Reading: Leaving a Legacy of Forest and Food (10 minutes)
- Closing (5 minutes)

Vocabulary:

- Legacy:** something that happened in the past or that comes from someone in the past; something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past
- Sustainable:** people have what they need and it will not run out, now or for future generations
- Natural resource:** a material in nature that is helpful to people and sometimes that we need to live (for example: air, water, trees, animals, minerals)

Session plan

1. Opening (2 minutes)

Chalice lighting

[Say words while doing gestures in brackets and ask children to copy the gestures.]

Give us eyes that see [hands by eyes]

a heart that loves [cross hands over heart]

and hands that are willing to serve [hands in front of your chest, palms up].

Song

#402, "From You I Receive" (one verse, sung twice), *Singing the Living Tradition*

2. Story: The Farmer's Legacy (10 minutes)

Materials

- Leader Resource 2: The Farmer's Legacy

Introduction

Read the title of the story to the children and ask if anyone knows what legacy means. Explain that a legacy is something that happened in the past or that comes from someone in the past. Often it means what someone leaves when they die to give to people in the next generations — to their children and their children's children. A person's legacy may be a thing or money that they pass down, but it is also what we learned from that person. Ask the children: "Let's think of someone famous who left an important legacy, who made the world a better place. [Take names, e.g., Martin Luther King Jr.] What legacy did that person leave to us all?"

Story

Read "The Farmer's Legacy" (see Leader Resource 2) together as a group (as a "readers' theatre").

Assign roles to those who would like to read:

- Narrator
- First brother
- Second brother
- Sister

For additional readers, you may divide the narrator lines into three parts. Ask the readers to stand up and to read their parts clearly and loudly for all to hear.

Discussion

Talk with the children about the following questions:

- What was the farmer's legacy? Explain that the land is a natural resource; a material in nature that is helpful to people and sometimes that we need to live (for example: air, water, trees, animals, minerals).
- Did the farmer leave any other legacies, any invisible legacies? For example: cooperation, the satisfaction of work, better relationships between his children.
- What might have happened if he left the farm for the children without saying it held a treasure?

3. Cooperative Game: This Is a What (10 minutes)

Materials

- Four random objects easily held and passed (e.g., a spoon, a pen, a small glue bottle, a small stuffed animal, a small plastic toy)

Purpose

- To practice teamwork and concentration while completing a task together

Skills

- Communication, listening, paying attention, patience, creative thinking

Introduction

Tell the children that they will be playing a game called "This Is a What." Introduce it by saying, "In this game we pretend to give some things to the rest of the group like the farmer gave his land as a legacy. And like the farmer's treasure, it is not always clear what each treasure is in this game. The game also gives us an opportunity to work together, like the brothers and sister did, because we all need to pass these objects to one another at the same time."

Continue directions: "This bag of objects will represent the things that we will leave behind to others. You can name each object whatever you'd like it to be — except that you can not call it what it really is. For example, I might hold this object [take out a spoon] and say, 'This is a duck.' I can't say, 'This is a spoon.' If I do I need to say it again, and that takes me off beat with everyone else."

Directions

Tell players to sit or stand in a close circle.

Explain to players that you will bring an object into the circle, turn to the player next to you, and give the object a new name by saying the following:

Player 1 (you): This is a duck [holding, say, a spoon].

Player 2 (the player next to you): A what?

Player 1: A duck.

Player 2: A what?

Player 1: A duck [handing the spoon to Player 2]

Player 2: [Taking the spoon] Oh! A duck! [Ask twice then say, "Oh! A _____."]

Explain that Player 2 will then turn to the next player, repeat the same script, and then pass the object to the next player. Practice this script and the motions with players by going around the circle once.

When all players understand the script and motions, begin the game again with a new object, giving it a new name.

Tell players that once the new object has moved part of the way around the circle, another new object will be introduced. Explain that the goal is to keep the rhythm of the script and motions going so that players who are giving and receiving the objects are saying the same thing at the same time.

The leader's role is not to participate but to hand the new objects into the circle at appropriate times. Ask players if they have any questions about the game.

Begin the game by starting a new object. Add more objects as you go. The game ends when all the objects have made it around the circle or time runs out. Explain to players that now they will reflect on how they experienced the game.

Discussion

Debrief the game with players. Remember, cooperative games are effective as learning tools when you debrief. This is your opportunity to help players connect the game to personal experiences, actions, and beliefs. You will want to reinforce any skills or beliefs you are hoping players will carry beyond the game.

Ask the following questions:

- What happened during the game?
- What was challenging about this game? What was easy?
- What skills did you use to make this game successful [cooperating, watching others, listening, etc.]? How do you bring these skills into your lives?

Thank players for their participation.

Activity source

"This Is a What..." Digital Activity Center, Peace First, accessed July 31, 2014, <http://www.peacefirst.org/digitalactivitycenter/node/381>.

4. Activity: Dream Chests (20 minutes)

Adapted from "Your Dream Chest," by the Legacy Project (available at legacyproject.org/activities/dreamchest.html).

Materials

- Shoe boxes or other small boxes or containers
- Craft materials for decorating the boxes
- Paint
- Glue
- Sequins
- Markers
- Colored paper
- Stickers

Introduction

Introduce the activity to the children by saying the following: “The good land and the satisfaction of good work and of being together with family were the treasures the farmer left to his children. We are going to make treasure chests to hold your legacies — the treasures you want to leave to the world that are not objects but legacies of qualities and ways that you have touched the lives of other people.”

Give each child a cardboard box and items to decorate it a way that reflects the child’s personality.

Box creation

While children are busy decorating their boxes, tell them that they will put words and pictures into the box that represent the things they want to leave as their legacy to others. Be clear that decorating will be mostly done today, but filling the treasure chest will not be finished today.

Say to the children, “Your treasure chest is a place to put pictures, to write words, or to cut out short stories that are important to you and that represent your values. You will start this today, but you can keep the box. Over time, as you look through magazines and newspapers, clip out articles, images, cartoons, etc. that inspire you, interest you, and relate to the dreams and goals you have for yourself. You can add these to your box. You can also include stories about people who are heroes or role models for you.”

While the children are still decorating boxes, you may read the story of Chisantus Mwandihhi, included in Leader Resource 3. Invite children to put this in their treasure box if his work is an example of the kind of thing they would like to do.

As people are finishing, ask who would like to share some of their treasures with the group.

5. Reading: Leaving a Legacy of Forest and Food 10 minutes)

Introduction

Before reading the story, say to the children, “This is the story of a man and a village who are working hard to leave a legacy that will last for many generations — for their children and their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren — the legacy of the rain forest.”

Story

Read the story to the class. (See Leader Resource 3.)

Discussion

Talk with the children about this story. Ask: “Why is this an important legacy? The legacy of the rain forest and of these gardens is sustainable. Does anyone know what sustainable means?”

Go into more detail: “Sustainable means that people have what they need and it will not run out, now or for future generations. The SoilFarm Multi-Culture Group is teaching people sustainable ways to grow food — called sustainable agriculture — so that the soil, the water, and the forest will stay healthy. People will have what they need, and it will not run out — for them or for their children or for their grandchildren. This is an important legacy of a natural resource, like the legacy of the soil that the farmer left his children. The ways they are

growing food do not harm the soil or the forest; they save them so that they will be there for a long time into the future. People can keep doing this for a very long time without ever running out of what they need: good rich soil, water, and food.”

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) gives money and other kinds of help to the SoilFarm Multi-Culture Group in Kenya. UUs want to help people create safe, sustainable, and healthy ways to live on the earth, to grow their own food, and to work together. This project in Kenya is doing that work, and we help them by giving them the money they need for equipment, seeds, and other materials. UUSC funds and supports projects like this — sustainable projects that will leave a positive legacy for the people of their community — in many parts of the world.

Also take some time to introduce Guest at Your Table and *Stories of Hope*: “I will be giving you a bookmark and a booklet of stories to bring home today. You can read about some of UUSC’s other projects and their partners in other countries.” Explain that their families can help by giving money to UUSC, so that together we can leave a UU legacy of good changes in the lives of some people and their communities.

6. Closing

Wrap up the session: “Today we read a story about a farmer who left a legacy of land and cooperative work to his children. We played a game of This Is a What. You made your own treasure boxes to fill with your treasures in life. I hope that special box will help you identify and stay focused on who you are and what’s really important to you. You can add more ideas and pictures whenever you like.”

Then gather in a circle and hold hands for the benediction.

Benediction

May we always learn to share with all people everywhere.
[Hold hands up in the air together and all say the following] See you next Sunday!

Taking it home

Send home UUSC bookmarks with the children and consider also sending the *Stories of Hope* booklets to be shared with parents. Explain that the stories tell more about the people UUSC is working with and the kinds of work that they do. Their families can help, too, by giving money to help UUSC do this good work in the world.

Faith in action ideas

- Paint pots and plant a seed to sell to congregation as a fundraiser for UUSC
- Hold a bake sale as a fundraiser for UUSC
- Keep a jar or box in your classroom and invite children to put money in each Sunday for the coming month

Leader Resource 2 The Farmer’s Legacy

This is a readers’ theater story adapted from “Creating Home,” a Tapestry of Faith program (available at uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session9/sessionplan/activities/59175.shtml).

Narrator: Once there was a farmer. He was very old. He knew he would soon die. He had lived a good life. He had worked hard to farm a large piece of land. His family had all they needed.

But he was sad that his three children fought all the time. None of them seemed interested in working on the family farm. They moved away. They wanted money without having to work as hard as their father had. They did not care about the land.

The old farmer wanted his children to understand that the land is very important. He wanted them to know that it is a wonderful thing to work your own land and provide for your family. One winter day, the old farmer called his children to his sick bed.

Farmer: My children, I have saved a great treasure for you. I want to leave you this treasure when I die.

Children: Where is this great treasure?

Farmer: I have hidden it in the fields. You will find it there.

Narrator: A short time later, the farmer died. The children were very sad, because they loved their father. Their sadness brought them together to talk and hug one another. They did not fight so much now. They decided to go out into the fields together to find the treasure their father had hidden there. They all agreed they would share this treasure.

First Brother: Father said it is deep in the fields. It must be buried.

Second Brother: We'll need to dig for it. If we plow the field and turn all the soil, we may find it.

Narrator: So they plowed the fields for days and days until they had dug up almost all the farmland, but they found nothing.

Sister: We have dug up all this land, but we haven't found a treasure. We must have missed it. It is spring and time to plant crops. Since we have already dug up the earth, let's plant this field.

Narrator: So they did. The crops grew all summer. Fall came, and the farmer's children harvested the crops. Now they had corn and wheat to sell at the market, to bring home all the money they needed for their families.

Then they began digging again, looking for their treasure.

First Brother: We have dug up all this land, but we haven't found our treasure. We must have missed it. It is spring again. This soil is good. It gave us a good crop last year. Since we have already dug up the earth, we might as well plant as we did last year.

Narrator: So they did.

And again, fall came, and they harvested their crops. This year's harvest was even bigger than the year's before. All three families were provided for well from their earnings. After the harvest, they dug for their treasure again, and, not finding it again, decided to plant their crops. This continued for a few years. During that time, they lived comfortable lives off the money from selling their crops. They grew strong from working in the fields and no longer were lazy. They were healthy and happy.

Finally one spring, they all three realized the truth of their father's treasure, the legacy that he had left to them.

Second Brother: Our father was wise; the treasure he has left us — his legacy — is right here beneath our feet. The rich land of the farm is our treasure. This is the true legacy our father left to us.

Sister: Yes, so it is. Let's stop digging for treasure and begin to simply treasure working the farm, for our father was wise enough to leave us this great gift.

First Brother: Let's all share this land and take good care of it, so we can leave it to our own children someday — a great treasure and an important legacy from our father.

Narrator: And so they did.

Leader Resource 3 Leaving a Legacy of Forest and Food

Adapted from Stories of Hope 2014 (see story about Chrisantus Mwandibi).

This is a story about a village in Kenya, Africa, that is trying to save a rain forest and water sources as well as help reduce the problem of climate change. The people of this village want to leave the rain forest and its water as a legacy for their children and for their children's children.

These big dreams began with one man, Chrisantus Mwandibi, and with one small project. Chrisantus saw the people of the village cutting down the trees of the rain forest that surrounded their village. People were burning wood from the rain forest to make charcoal for cooking. They sold the charcoal for money. They used the money from their charcoal to buy food for their families.

Chrisantus grew very worried about how this was destroying so many trees. He could see that, in the future, people would need the forest and its resources, especially the water. He wanted to leave the legacy of the beautiful forests, with all their animals and their water resources.

Chrisantus also realized that people needed food. They would need to keep cutting and burning the rain forest for charcoal if they had no other way to pay for their food. But he knew that selling charcoal was not the only way to get food. He began to teach others how to grow their own food, and even food to sell, in ways that helped to save the water, soil, and rain forest. He helped teach them that they could care for themselves and their families and for the earth, too. These ideas and ways of farming are called "permaculture."

Using permaculture methods, with crops that belong in the area and do not need chemicals or special watering systems irrigation, people can grow their own food. They do not need to burn the rain forest in order to buy food.

Climate changes have caused problems in Kenya, as in many other parts of the world. Strong heat and storms have damaged the crops. These climate changes are caused by burning fuels and the carbon put into the atmosphere when we use fossil fuels. The trees help to clean the carbon from the air. Keeping the rain forest healthy, with all of its wonderful air-cleaning trees, also helps to reduce the problems of climate change and to keep our whole earth healthy.

Chrisantus started a larger organization called the SoilFarm Multi-Culture Group. This is a community-led group. By teaching people to live in a healthier relationship with their environment, the SoilFarm Multi-Culture Group is helping reduce the problems of climate change while they change people's lives for the better. More and more people from other parts of Kenya, including agriculture experts, come to Chrisantus's organization to learn about permaculture and to start using it for their own projects. Many successful projects have grown from the first small project of one man in one village. Taking action at home can change the world. Chrisantus Mwandihhi and the SoilFarm Multi-Culture Group are leaving the rain forest, a precious legacy, for future generations.

Grades 4–5 Sustaining Culture and Identity through the Arts

Objective

- To explore the role of the creative arts in expressing both individual identity and culture, and in sustaining a community, as well as the role of the arts in some of UUSC's partner projects

Session overview

- Opening (2 minutes)
- Story: The Magic Vase (10 minutes)
- Activity: Nonverbal Identity (10 minutes)
- Video: UUSC and the Arts (10 minutes)
- Activity: Decorating Our Vases (15 minutes)
- Closing (2 minutes)

Vocabulary:

- Identity: the special qualities that make each person different, unique, and irreplaceable (individuality)
- Culture: the behaviors, beliefs, arts, and products of a community or a group of people
- Sustainable: people have what they need and it will not be lost or taken from them, now or for future generations

Session plan

1. Opening (2 minutes)

Chalice lighting

[Say words while doing gestures in brackets and ask children to copy the gestures.]

Give us eyes that see [hands by eyes]

a heart that loves [cross hands over heart]

and hands that are willing to serve [hands in front of your chest, palms up].

Song

#402, "From You I Receive" (one verse, sung twice), *Singing the Living Tradition*

2. Story: The Magic Vase (10 minutes)

Materials

- "The Magic Vase," from the Tapestry of Faith curriculum, available online at uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session1/sessionplan/stories/60015.shtml, Unitarian Universalist Association
- Props: money, a small vase, flowers (optional)

Introduction

Ask the children, "What do you think of when you hear the word 'magic'? This is a story of a magic vase."

Story

Tell the story, preferably from memory. You may want to use props (money, a small vase, flowers).

Discussion

- Was the vase really magic? What was the magic?
- How did it change the people's lives?
- Do you think something beautiful really affects the way you feel and even the way you behave?

3. Activity: Nonverbal Identity (10 minutes)

Materials

- Whiteboard or flip chart
- Marker

Directions

- Ask students to stand in a circle and to introduce themselves by demonstrating something unique about themselves — without using words! They can pantomime a quality, characteristic, or interest that is part of their identity. Students can then sit down again.
- Ask for a definition of "identity." Write the definition on the board or a flip chart: the special qualities that make each of us different, unique, and irreplaceable.
- Give students a definition of "culture." Write this definition on the board if you have one: the behaviors, beliefs, arts, and products (things) shared by a group of people or a community.
- Ask students to brainstorm some behaviors, beliefs, arts, organization, and things that are common to their culture as a group. This may include age-driven behaviors, shared religious or political beliefs, popular music or arts of the group (could be a heated debate!), local organizations and institutions they belong to, clothing choices, and technology use.
- Say something like, "This discussion tells me that you have much in common, a shared culture, but you are also each unique as an individual. For instance, when we talked about art, some people liked ___ and others liked _____. And we also had shared interests in some arts and cultural items. The shared elements of our culture bring us together as a community, while unique aspects of our identity, our individuality, make us each special."

4. Video: UUSC and the Arts (10 minutes)

Introduction

Begin by saying to the children, "We are going to watch a video that shows us how the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, UUSC, is helping to encourage artistic expressions of both individual identity and culture. The video shows that, just like the magic vase in the story, the arts can inspire people and help support happier and healthier lifestyles. Art forms like painting, dancing, and playing music can be a little bit magical that way! As you watch, listen for the ways that the arts are magic and how they sustain and strengthen individuals and cultures all around the world. One of the partner groups that works with UUSC in Haiti is called APROSIFA (it might be hard to understand on the video)."

Video and discussion

Watch the UUSC video “UUSC’s partners use the arts to promote human rights,” available online at uusc.org/artsvideo.

Stop the video at 1:00 and ask, “How are the arts helping to sustain individuals in APROSIFA?” (The art is healing youth from trauma after the earthquake, giving youth productive activity in a very low-income area of Port-au-Prince, and financially sustaining people — youth are now selling their artwork.) Also ask, “How is APROSIFA’s youth art program helping to sustain the community?” (It brings people together and helps them work together and make friendships.)

Stop the video at 2:38 and ask about the role of the arts in Uganda.

Watch to end of video. Then, as a group, list the ways that the arts helped support people’s identities and cultural communities.

5. Activity: Decorating Our Vases (15 minutes)

Materials

- Recycled jars and bottles (collect these in advance; consider asking others in the congregation and the parents of your class to bring in bottles)
- Paints (oil-based acrylic is best)
- Paint smocks
- Drop cloths for table and floor
- Plastic bins or a covered table (to leave wet bottles to dry)

Introduction

Start by sharing the following with the children: “The vases we are painting will be colorful decorations for people’s homes that will brighten their spirits like the magic vase! We will be selling these vases to the congregation during coffee hour next week to raise money for UUSC’s programs. The projects that UUSC works on help sustain individuals and communities all over the world — not only through the arts but also by providing better working and living conditions for people, supporting partners whose projects build homes, and more.”

Directions

Find pictures and directions on Pinterest or at the links below:

- rusticweddingchic.com/diy-painted-vases (step-by-step explanation)
- growingajeweledrose.com/2013/03/pour-painting-rainbow-vases.html (these rainbow vases will take more time and create more mess, but are a beautiful option to consider)

Note: If you use a non-water-based, non-washable paint, you will not need vase liners. Water colors also work, but require a vase liner (an additional purchase that will decrease your profits).

Ask children to put on smocks (oversized T-shirts work well) and pull up sleeves. Cover the table and floor with drop cloths. Children may then choose their paint colors and swirl it in the bottle.

If children can make several bottles each, they will make a greater profit for UUSC.

Clean up as a team!

6. Closing (2 minutes)

Share with the children: “Today we heard a story about a magic vase and learned some ways that art is magic for people around the world, especially individuals and communities that are threatened and need the support

that the arts give to them. The group we learned about, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, works with partners all around the world, bringing art, housing, and other important programs to give people sustainable, healthier lives.”

Gather in a circle and hold hands for the benediction.

Benediction

May we always learn to share with all people everywhere.

[Hold hands up in the air together and all say the following] See you next Sunday!

Taking it home

Send home UUSC bookmarks with the children and consider also sending the *Stories of Hope* booklets to be shared with parents. Explain that the stories tell more about the people UUSC is working with and the kinds of work that they do. The sales of their vases will help to fund these projects. Their families can help, too, by giving money to help UUSC do its good work in the world.

Faith in action ideas

- Sell the painted vases for a price decided upon by the class
- Count the money and include it in the congregation’s collection for UUSC
- Post the amount collected in the order of service or newsletter so that the adult members will be aware of the children’s successful efforts

Grades 6–8 Interconnections

Objectives

- To explore the concept of sustainability as it pertains to human systems
- To discover interconnections between economic, social, and environmental sustainability
- To expand the participants’ awareness of global sustainability in social justice work

Session overview

1. Opening (10 minutes)
2. Video: The Eco-Village Project (15 minutes)
3. Activity: Making Connections (15 minutes)
4. Game: Human Knot (10–15 minutes)
5. Closing (2 minutes)
6. Alternate Activity (15 minutes)
7. Faith in Action Ideas

Session plan

1. Opening (10 minutes)

Chalice lighting

“The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others.” —Albert Schweitzer

Check-in

Go around the circle, with each person telling the group the following:

- Name (if needed)
- Something good in their week or something bad if it is on their mind
- One thing they’d change in the world if they could wave a magic wand and make the world a better place

Note: If a participant wants to say something silly, let them get the sillies out and have a good laugh! Then ask that the youth also say something they would truly like to change on a more serious level. Encourage somewhat specific answers (so that “the environment” might turn into water pollution, for example.)

Introduce the session by saying, “Today we will be exploring the ways that people are working to make positive changes in the world. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is a group that works in many different parts of the world. They work with partners from other countries. Today we’ll learn more about what UUSC and its partners do to help to find solutions to some of these problems.”

2. Video: The Eco-Village Project (15 minutes)

Introduction

Start by saying, “We are going to watch a short video clip about one of the projects that UUSC is involved in. This project is happening in Haiti. Before we see the video, let’s gather a little background information.”

Discuss the following:

- What do participants know about Haiti?
- The Papaye Peasant Movement (MPP), one of UUSC’s partner organization in Haiti, is an organized group of farmers. They are building housing in the Haitian countryside, in what they call an “eco-village.” What do you think an eco-village might be?
 - A community that uses environmentally friendly energy and farming methods.
- Why might housing be important in the countryside of Haiti?
 - In the 2010 earthquake, many people were left homeless. Many of them left the chaotic and dangerous city of Port-au-Prince to get to the safety of the countryside. Even now, some people are still homeless or in very inadequate housing. Throughout Haiti, there are many people who need better places to live, even if there was no earthquake. The earthquake worsened a very bad situation. The first residents of the eco-villages were earthquake survivors.

Continue: “As we watch this video story of the Haitian eco-village, I want you to remember the topic we mentioned earlier. As we watch, listen for whether your problem is being solved. [For example, many of you said you’d take care of the earth if you could wave a magic wand. Others said you’d feed hungry people — think about how this project is addressing hunger or homelessness.]”

Video

Watch “Life in the Haiti Eco-village: UUSC and MPP,” which is available online at uuscj.org/journeys/haiti.

Discuss

- Did you see your problem being addressed by the eco-village project? How?

3. Activity: Making Connections (15 minutes)

Materials

- Ball of yarn
- Scissors

Introduction

Start this activity by saying, “Many of you heard ways that UUSC is working to help with the problem you mentioned earlier in class, through

their partnership with MPP and the eco-village project. All of these problems seem to be connected in the situation in Haiti. That is typically true in any community of people. We’re going to think more about the connections by playing a connecting game with this ball of yarn.”

Directions

Ask participants to sit in a circle on the floor. One person will start with the ball of yarn and say what problem they want to solve. Then, holding one end of the yarn, they will roll the rest of the ball across the circle to someone else.

The person who gets the yarn next will say their problem, and how it might be connected to the other person’s problem. Some connections are easy to see (poverty and homelessness, for example) but others will be very hard. (pollution and homelessness). Use your imaginations. If someone is stuck, they can ask for help.

Help coach and supply suggestions as needed. If the group can’t find a connection, just pass the yarn to someone else.

Discussion

- What happened with the yarn? What does this show about how our problems connect?
- What does it say about the ways we can plan to help solve a problem?

Conclusion

UUSC tries to consider all of these factors as it works with its partner organizations. As they plan, they are asking the following questions:

- How are we treating the environment in this project?
- How will people earn their money?
- How will this project build a healthier community for people?
- Will people be able to continue learning and expanding on what is being done?

The ability of people to be self-sufficient in continuing the health of the project is called sustainability. The eco-village is an example of several problems being addressed within one project, in ways that should be sustainable by the village residents. This is an example of what is called “sustainable development.”

4. Game: Human Knot (10–15 minutes)

Directions

To experience interconnections physically and playfully, now tangle yourselves up in some of these interconnections with this game. Standing in a circle, group members reach across and shake hands, with each hand connecting to a different person. The group then tries to unravel the “human knot” by unthreading their bodies without letting go of other people’s hands.

5. Closing (2 minutes)

Closing words

“Pull a thread here and you’ll find it’s attached to the rest of the world.”
—Nadeem Aslam, *The Wasted Vigil*

Taking it home

Send home the *Stories of Hope* booklets with participants and the links to the video segment(s) they’ve seen. Encourage sharing these with their parents!

6. Alternate Activity (15 minutes)

Choose from the following options:

- A. Share the story of Danielle Neus from 2013 *Stories of Hope*, available online at uusc.org/2013SOH.
- Introduce the story: “This is an article about other UUSC partners in Haiti.”
 - Read the story. Ask for volunteers to each read a section. (Inclusion note: Do not ask that all go around the circle and take turns; this is uncomfortable for those who may have reading disabilities or difficulties.)
 - Discuss: Where are the interconnections in this article?
- B. View video: “Who Is UUSC?”
- Watch an overview of UUSC’s activities at uusc.org/whoisuusc and discuss.
- C. View other UUSC videos
- Watch an assortment of UUSC videos on their YouTube channel at youtube.com/uusc4all and discuss.

7. Faith in Action Ideas

- A. Create jar terrariums to sell as fundraiser (30 minutes)

Materials

- Mason jars, pickle jars, other wide-mouthed jars, or bowls of various sizes
- Gravel and small stones
- Soil
- Moss, ferns, and other small plants

Directions

Find directions at the following websites:

- nelliebellie.com/how-to-make-a-terrarium
- pinterest.com/pin/398146423280565404 (picture series that can serve as worksheet)
- hgtv.com/gardening/how-to-create-a-terrarium

Have kids make signs and announcements to help publicize and sell the terrariums.

- B. Create a UUSC Guest at Your Table fundraising page

Visit guest.uusc.org and set up a fundraising page. The youth may also have other suggestions for fundraising and social justice projects.

Grades 9–12, Senior High Youth Self-Sustaining Social Justice Initiatives

Objectives

- To foster greater understanding and appreciation of sustainable social justice work
- To inform youth about the featured initiatives of UUSC’s Guest at Your Table program
- To inspire youth toward social justice work through knowledge of UUSC, an organization that advances human rights and social justice around the world

Session overview

1. Opening (2 minutes)
2. Partner Sharing (10 minutes)
3. Whole Group Discussion: Our Service Experiences (5 minutes)
4. Small Group Explorations of UUSC Initiatives (30 minutes)
5. How Can We Help? (5 minutes)
6. Closing (2 minutes)
7. Faith in Action Ideas

Session plan

1. Opening (2 minutes)

Chalice lighting

Post for all to read in unison, or distribute hymnals.

I am only one.
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something;
And because I cannot do everything,
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

—Everett Edward Hale, *Singing the Living Tradition* #457

2. Partner Sharing (10 minutes)

Materials

- Whiteboard or easel chart
- Markers
- Timer and bell or signal to keep time

Introduction

Post the questions below on the whiteboard or chart paper. Ask the youth to each turn to a partner and share their responses to the questions. To encourage active listening, let participants know they will be sharing their partner’s story with the whole group.

Discussion

- Describe one time you felt you had been of service to others and advanced social justice in at least some small way.
- What human need were you providing for?
- How did this service experience change your perspective on the person/people you served?

Allow each person approximately one minute to share and announce the time to switch. Ask youth to share briefly to the whole group what their partner shared with them.

3. Whole Group Discussion: Our Service Experiences (5 minutes)

As a large group, discuss the following:

- In what ways were the people you were serving involved in the work in these examples, if any?
- How are these efforts creating self-sustaining social change in the long term?

4. Small Group Explorations of UUSC Initiatives (30 minutes)

Materials

- Whiteboard or flip chart
- Markers
- Large paper for posters and presentation materials
- Three computers or tablets with internet access
- A projector and screen (optional)
- Copies of UUSC fliers and *Stories of Hope* for all participants

Introduction (1 minute)

Start by saying the following, “We’re going to explore the UUSC website and publications to learn more about the sustainable and self-empowering justice work done by UUSC through its partnership programs. This work differs from many of our local experiences of social action, which are also helpful in meeting an immediate need. The work of the UUSC, however, focuses on empowering communities toward long-term sustainable social justice. As you view these video clips, think about which UUSC initiative you’d like to learn more about today. You’ll be gathering with a small group to explore one of these topics.”

Videos (5 minutes)

Watch the following three videos:

- “Sustainable Recovery in Haiti,” available at uusc.org/haitivideo
- “The Human Right to Water,” available at uusc.org/hrwvideo
- “Choose Compassionate Consumption” (workers’ rights), available at uusc.org/cccvideo

Small group work (20 minutes)

Invite youth to choose one initiative as their focus, and form groups based on these interests. Create at least one group to explore each of the three topics. Group sizes may be from one to five people, though optimal size is three.

Directions for the small group work (to post on a flipchart or white board):

1. Each group will explore their topic on the website, fliers, and other materials.
2. Each group will create a poster or chart that conveys their information to the rest of our youth group.
3. Each group should select people to play the following roles:
 - Timekeeper (may also play another role)
 - Writer
 - Art coordinator (if an artistic poster is desired)
 - Reporter/spokesperson (may also play another role)
 - Lead researcher (optional role created for groups of five, as all members will participate in this aspect of the work)
4. One spokesperson from each group will take two minutes to share the poster and report to the whole group. (5 minutes)
5. Discuss: How are the efforts of UUSC designed to be empowering and sustainable?

5. How Can We Help? (5 minutes)

Brainstorm and generate a list of ways that youth can help support UUSC’s social justice work around the globe. Refer to the suggestions found on UUSC’s website under “Take Action” for more ideas — especially the possibility of creating a Guest at Your Table fundraising page.

6. Closing (2 minutes)

Closing words

The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.

It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own, but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together our vision widens and our strength is renewed.

—Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, *Singing the Living Tradition* #580

Extinguish the chalice and carry its flame with you wherever you go.

7. Faith in Action Ideas

1. Create a youth group fundraising page for Guest at Your Table at guest.uusc.org. Encourage congregants, friends, and community members to visit this page and donate.
2. Youth may also create individual fundraising pages for Guest at Your Table.
3. Youth offer to host, facilitate, cook for, and/or participate in the congregation’s Guest at Your Table multigenerational suppers.
4. Explore the excellent opportunities for youth leadership development and social justice learning through UU organizations such as the following:
 - District and Regional Youth Leadership trainings
 - UU College of Social Justice summer youth programs: uucs.org/youth
 - UU UNO’s Annual Spring Seminar: uua.org/international/events/seminar

Adult Small Group Ministry Two-Hour Session UUSC’s Guest at Your Table: Stories of Hope

Objectives

- To inform participants of the global social justice work of the UUSC
- To reflect on and discuss our own relationships to social justice work, and to learn from actively listening to the reflections of others
- To consider the connections between the partnership model of global justice work and our UU principles and values

Session overview

1. Chalice Lighting
2. Check-In
3. Opening Words
4. Discussion
5. Sharing
6. Closing

Session plan

1. Chalice Lighting

“Justice is conscience, not a personal conscience but the conscience of the whole of humanity.”

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn

2. Check-In

Begin the session with the following check-in: “As we go around the circle, please share your name and anything you’d like the group to know about where you are right now as you enter into this space. Please keep this brief, just the ‘headlines’ not the whole story, so that we can move into our time of reflection and deeper sharing.”

3. Opening Words

“Stop thinking this is all there is,” by Mark Morford

Realize that for every ongoing war and religious outrage and environmental devastation, and bogus military attack plan, there are a thousand counterbalancing acts of staggering generosity and humanity and art and beauty happening all over the world, right now, on a breathtaking scale, from flower box to cathedral.

Resist the temptation to drown in fatalism, to shake your head and sigh and just throw in the karmic towel. Realize that this is the perfect moment to change the energy of the world; to step right up and crank your personal volume; right when it all seems dark and bitter and offensive and acrimonious and conflicted.

There’s your opening. Remember magic. And finally, after all this time, believe you are part of a ground-swell; a resistance; a seemingly small but actually very, very large, impending karmic overhaul. A great shift. The beginning of something important and potent and unstoppable.

4. Discussion

Materials

- Chalice
- Lighter
- Whiteboard or flip chart
- Markers
- Enough *Stories of Hope* booklets and UUSC membership enrollment forms for each participant

Introduction

Begin by saying the following, “As UUs supporting the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, or UUSC, we are all ‘part of a ground-swell; a resistance . . . a great shift . . . of something important and potent and unstoppable,’ as Mark Morford puts it. Today we’ll first learn a little more about the global justice work of the UUSC. Then we will take time to reflect on and discuss our own relationships to this work — and its relationship to our UU search for meaning and for a world that is peaceful, fair, and free.”

Post on whiteboard or chart paper the following: UUSC’s vision, mission, and featured initiatives (below). Assign three people to each read one of the pieces in *Stories of Hope* aloud.

- Mission: UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies.
- Vision: UUSC envisions a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights.
- Featured initiatives
 - Choosing Compassionate Consumption (Story of Hope: Don Mario Pérez)
 - Sustainable Recovery in Haiti (Story of Hope: Nancy Vilce and Marie Obethe Moise)
 - The Human Right to Water (Story of Hope: Chrisantus Mwandih)

Explain to participants: “UUSC has chosen a ‘Story of Hope’ to illustrate one aspect of each of these initiatives. On their website, you can find much more information about the many projects, actions, and advocacy efforts UUSC supports around each initiative. While these true stories of hope do not give us a full picture of all that UUSC does, they do illuminate for us the truth of people’s lives and depict both the challenges and the hopeful energy of UUSC’s partners in their work for social justice.”

Continue: “I have asked three of you to each read one of the stories. They are also published in the *Stories of Hope* booklets that you can bring home with you today. After each story is read, we will pause for a moment of silent reflection. We will then allow 10 minutes of sharing guided by the questions for reflection.”

Discussion

Post the following questions on the chart paper or whiteboard and discuss:

- What strikes and impresses you about this story?
- What surprises you?
- What breaks your heart?
- What brings you hope?

5. Sharing

After discussing all three stories, go around the circle and ask each person to state briefly something they liked and/or wished for in today’s discussion.

6. Closing

Highlight the ways to be involved with Guest at Your Table and UUSC:

- Bring home the *Stories of Hope* booklets
- Attend a Guest at Your Table multigenerational supper
- Become a member of UUSC

Closing words

The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.

—Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, *Singing the Living Tradition* #580

Author Bio

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