



Te Toa Matoa Educational Modules

Prepared by Stella Gorlin, Director of Religious Education
 First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, MI

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Introduction and Overview: How to Use These Modules

Welcome to the Te Toa Matoa Project Educational Modules. These modules are designed to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and its partnership with Te Toa Matoa, based in Kiribati.

This packet includes four educational modules: Climate Refugees and the Te Toa Matoa Project; Climate Change and Disability Activism; Cultural Preservation in Kiribati and Beyond; and Unitarian Universalism and the Te Toa Matoa Project. Each module includes a session objectives, an opening activity and chalice lighting, two main activities, and a closing. These modules are designed to be flexible, depending on the makeup of the participants (age and number), the time allotted to offer the program, and the resources of each congregation. The modules include links to various resources and suggested scripts, as well as a simple assessment tool.

From [Rising Together: Community Resilience While Facing the Climate Crisis - Unitarian Universalist Service Committee](#): “Te Toa Matoa is dedicated to preserving traditional cultural practices through an inclusive approach highlighting the importance of safeguarding culture in the face of climate change. By producing music videos, Te Toa Matoa ensures that the rich heritage of Kiribati remains accessible to all, particularly individuals living with disabilities. With UUSC’s support, Te Toa Matoa is building capacity to ensure that disability rights are central to Kiribati’s climate policies, proving that no community is complete without the full participation of its members.

As the urgency of the climate crisis increases, communities worldwide are demonstrating remarkable resilience. Faced with rising sea levels, frequent natural disasters, and erratic weather patterns, many are finding solutions from within—solutions rooted in collaboration, cultural preservation, and respect. These communities, despite being the most affected by climate change, are not waiting for help but are leading the charge in developing adaptive strategies centering their human rights.

While global leaders deliberate long-term solutions, the communities at the forefront of climate impacts do not sit idly. They develop and implement strategies addressing the daily challenges of displacement, resource scarcity, and ecological devastation. Their commitment to self-determination and collective power is paving the way for a future where both people and the planet can thrive.”



Module One: Climate Refugees and the Te Toa Matoa Project

Session Objectives

- Participants will learn about refugees, especially climate refugees
- Participants will learn about how Kiribati has been impacted by climate change
- Participants will be introduced to the Te Toa Matoa Project

Opening Activity

Chalice Lighting

Materials Needed:

- Chalice
- Candles and matches or battery-powered candles with batteries
- Chalice Lighting Words (on a screen or paper)
- Audio/Visual Cart to show slideshow
- Laptop with slide of chalice lighting words

Ask for a volunteer to light the chalice.

Ask for a volunteer to read the words or invite the group to reach the words together.

*[The Struggle For Freedom by Paul Sprecher](#)**

We light this chalice in memory of the courage
of those who have struggled for freedom,
the persistence of those who've struggled for justice,
and the love of those who've built beloved communities
to carry on the light of hope.

*NOTE: You may opt to use your congregation's or RE program's words or find alternatives at [WorshipWeb Library - UUA.org](#)

Introductions/Nametags/Icebreaker

Materials Needed:

- Name tags (ideally you will keep these for all the modules)
- Markers or pens
- Small plush to pass around to indicate whose turn it is to talk



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DIRECTIONS: Invite participants to make and decorate a clearly legible nametag with pronouns if they are comfortable sharing. (NOTE: You can skip this activity if your participants already know one another) Once they have finished their nametags, lead participants in the Sharing Names Activity.

SCRIPT: *Say in your own words,*

Now it's time to share names, pronouns if you want, and your favorite activity to do. You can pass on everything except your name. See this [insert talking object here]? Whoever has the [talking object] is the only one allowed to talk. I'll start and then I'll toss the [talking object]" to someone else. My name is _____, my pronouns are _____, and my favorite thing to do is _____. Who wants to share next?"

Toss the "talking object" to the next person who wants to share, until everyone has shared their name and favorite thing. Everyone is welcome to pass (except for sharing their name).

If time permits, play one of the following icebreaker games:

- [All My Friends and Neighbors Game](#)
- [Me, Too! Not a Movement, But a Team Building Game!](#)

Main Activity #1: What Would You Take With You?

Materials Needed:

- Index cards/pieces of paper
- Pencils/pens and markers
- Large sticky notes with sharpies OR Whiteboard/Chalkboard with markers or chalk
- Small plush to pass around to indicate whose turn it is to talk

Guided Meditation and Writing/Drawing Activity:

SCRIPT: *Say, in your own words:*

I want you to close your eyes, if that's comfortable for you, and take three deep belly breaths. In and out. In and out. In and out. Now I want you to imagine yourself in your bedroom or another space in your home where you feel safe and comfortable. In your mind's eye, look around at all of the things in the space. What do you see? What items are especially important to you? Perhaps it's a particular toy or stuffie, or a book or blanket. Picture your room or safe space. Okay, now open your eyes.

DIRECTIONS: Pass out small pieces of paper or index cards and something participants can use to write or draw. Explain to participants that they should draw or list some of the items that they saw during the guided meditation. They can include as many items as they wish.



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After five minutes, call the group together. Invite each person to share a few items from their list, as well as why those items are important. If you have a large group (10 or more), divide the kids into random pairs so that no one is excluded and invite each person to take 2-3 minutes to share their list with their partner. Give all participants a chance to share their lists.

SCRIPT: *Say, in your own words:*

What are some reasons that a person or family might have to leave their home?

DIRECTIONS: Using large sticky notes or a whiteboard, invite one or two participants to record responses. (war, poverty, disease, famine, climate change, gang violence, political violence, etc.)

SCRIPT: *Say, in your own words:*

People become refugees from their home for a variety of reasons. The one we're going to focus on over the next few sessions is climate change. Climate change can affect societies and nations in many ways...

DIRECTIONS: Offer some specific examples of how climate change is already impacting the globe. Recommended resources: [Climate Change](#) and [Climate Refugees](#), among many others that are available. You may adjust how much education and context you provide, depending on your particular group.

Main Activity #2: Kiribati, the UUSC and Climate Change

Materials Needed:

- Audio/Visual Cart to show slideshow and YouTube video
- Laptop with pre-set tabs/apps (make sure closed captioning is enabled on YouTube)

Kiribati and Climate Change

SCRIPT: *Say, in your own words:*

Rising sea levels as a result of climate change are making an impact across the globe. We are going to look at one island nation in particular. It's called Kiribati (pronounced Kee-ree-bas) and it may become the first nation lost to rising ocean levels. Let's learn a bit about Kiribati.

DIRECTIONS: Begin the slideshow and offer some basic information about Kiribati, as time permits. *NOTE: You should tailor this section to your particular group as well as your time frame for the module.*



[Kiribati Slideshow](#) - SEE SPEAKER NOTES IN THE SLIDESHOW

Resources:

- [Kiribati - Wikipedia](#) - basic info and facts about the nation - population of more than 120,000; 32 atolls (ringed islands) and one remote raised coral island; fishing is the main source of income and employment; one of the least developed nations, very reliant on international aid; the climate crisis has compromised access to food and clean water, as well as women's rights, housing security and cultural integrity - lots of interesting things to share with the participants
- [Kiribati](#) - tourist website that is designed to attract visitors; includes little to no mention of climate change - interesting alternative view, and one that significant numbers of citizens are trying to promote—that Kiribati has to diversify its economy and attract global investment in order to build better infrastructure to protect against rising sea waters.

[Kiribati and UUSC Slideshow](#) - THESE ARE PICS FROM UUSC - excellent contrast here to the pics on the tourism website.

Show video (4:02)

[Kiribati: Battling for Survival \(Rising Sea Levels\)](#)

SCRIPT: Say, in your own words:

Kiribati is just one of nations around the globe that an organization called the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, or UUSC, is partnering with. Now I'm going to share a bit of information about the UUSC.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)

DIRECTIONS: Offer some basic background information from [UUSC.org](#) so kids understand how long UUs have been doing this kind of global justice work. See some key points below. Depending on the age levels in your group, you may need to simplify the language to an age-appropriate level. *Note: You should tailor this section to your particular group as well as your time frame for the module.*

- Our 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. Our work is grounded in the belief that all people have inherent power and dignity.
- [Martha and Waitstill Sharp | Holocaust Encyclopedia](#): Martha and Rev. Waitstill Sharp, American Unitarian aid workers, helped thousands of people escape Nazi



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persecution in 1939–1940. Among those they helped were Jews, intellectuals, and children in Prague, Lisbon, and southern France. In recognition of the risks they took to assist Jews, Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel, honored the Sharps as Righteous Among the Nations in 2006.

- [Defying The Nazis: The Sharps' War | PBS](#)
- The UUSC:
 - advances human rights and champions social justice on a global level
 - defends communities that are threatened by systemic oppression based on their identities
 - defends the rights of people who have been forced to flee their communities due to climate change and natural disasters, conflict, famine, and poverty
 - partners with local organizations and individuals on the ground in the most vulnerable communities
 - aims to center the voices of people most affected by injustice,

Closing

Exit Slip: What did you learn today?

Materials:

- Index cards/small pieces of paper
- Pens or pencils

DIRECTIONS: Pass out exit slip and ask kids to answer the prompt – what did you learn today? If you have early elementary kids, pair them with older elementary kids or an adult volunteer to assist with writing their answer. Repeat the prompt out loud as needed.*

Extinguishing the Chalice

Materials Needed:

- Lit Chalice
- Candles and matches or battery-powered candles with batteries

Ask for a volunteer to extinguish the chalice.

Ask for a volunteer to read the words.

[An Unquenchable Flame By Ben Atherton-Zeman](#)

As we extinguish the flame on our chalice, we ignite it inside ourselves.
Our commitment to our mission and to one another is an unquenchable flame.
Let us remember that we are not alone until we light this flame next time.

*Collect the slips from the kids as they depart.

Module Two: Climate Change and Disability Activism

Session Objectives

- Participants will learn about disability rights
- Participants will learn about UUSC's partnership with Te Toa Mataoa

Opening Activity

Chalice Lighting

Materials Needed:

- Chalice
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- Audio/Visual Cart to show slideshow
- Laptop with slide of chalice lighting words

Ask for a volunteer to light the chalice.

Ask for a volunteer to read the words or invite the group to reach the words together.

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Climate Pictionary

Materials Needed:

- Large whiteboard, dry erase markers, erasers
- Slips of paper with words/phrases (listed below), folded, in a basket

DIRECTIONS: Divide your group into two teams (if you have nine or more people); otherwise, you can play with the whole group, one person at a time.



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SCRIPT: Say, in your own words:

For our opening activity, we are going to play Climate Pictionary to test how much all of you know about protecting the environment and climate change. Each team will pick one person/we will choose one person to pull a piece of paper with a word or phrase out of the basket and they will draw the item while their teammates/the group try to guess what is being drawn as quickly as possible. We'll see how many you can figure out.

- Pollution
- Garden
- Recycle
- Solar Energy
- Wind Energy
- Habitat
- Landfill
- Power Outage
- Flood
- Hurricane
- Wild Fires
- Body of Water
- Plants
- Compost
- Pollinator
- Rain Garden

Main Activity #1: Reading and Reflection on Climate Refugees

Materials Needed:

- Copy of *My Wounded Island* by Jacques Pasquet and Marion Arbona.
- Computer or other smart device to stream [read-a-long video](#) of *My Wounded Island*
- Paper, coloring pencils, markers
- Small plush to pass around to indicate whose turn it is to talk
- [My Wounded Island SLIDESHOW](#) (final slide includes YouTube link below)
- [My Wounded Island](#) (included with the permission of the First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor)

DIRECTIONS: Read or show the YouTube video of the storybook *My Wounded Island* by Jacques Pasquet and Marion Arbona. During or after the story, invite the kids to draw pictures of what they love about Planet Earth, using the art supplies provided.

Discussion Questions for during or after the drawing time:

- How is the story of Sarichef the same and/or different from Kiribati?
- How do the populations of Sarichef and Kiribati respond to rising sea levels? Does everyone agree on what to do?
- If your community was facing the same situation as Kiribati, what would you want to do? (note for the group that you will return to this question later)

Lead an informal discussion, using the “talking object” from Module #1. Allow the participants to respond freely and try to encourage conversations, particularly around the final question.



Main Activity #2: Barrier Awareness Walk/Accessibility Scavenger Hunt

Materials Needed:

- [ACCESSIBILITY SCAVENGER HUNT Template](#)
- Pens, pencils, or highlighters

DIRECTIONS: Organize a scavenger hunt in which participants search for items or clues related to accessibility features in their environment, such as ramps, Braille signage, or accessible parking spaces. This game encourages participants to observe their surroundings with a focus on inclusivity and accessibility. You may choose to follow up with a group walk around the building to identify any items that the kids were not able to find during the scavenger hunt. Then, lead a discussion and introduce the mission of Te Toa Matao.

SCRIPT: Say, in your own words:

We've explored our own congregation to see how accessible we are for people with disabilities. Even in a progressive place like ours, we still have work to do. Imagine for a moment that you live in a place that is threatened by climate change, like Kiribati. People with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. What are some effective ways to protect people with disabilities? Answers may include: Ask people with disabilities what they need to protect themselves; provide money and resources to build walls and other structures; assist with relocation, etc.

"Te Toa Matao is building capacity to ensure that disability rights are central to Kiribati's climate policies, proving that no community is complete without the full participation of its members." (UUSC.org)

Closing

Exit Slip: What did you learn today?

Materials:

- Index cards/small pieces of paper
- Pens or pencils

DIRECTIONS: Pass out exit slip and ask kids to answer the prompt – what did you learn today? If you have early elementary kids, pair them with older elementary kids or an adult volunteer to assist with writing their answer. Repeat the prompt out loud as needed.*

Extinguishing the Chalice



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*Collect the slips from the kids as they depart.



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Module Three: Cultural Preservation in Kiribati and Beyond

Session Objectives

- Participants will explore the importance of cultural preservation
- Participants will explore the Te Toa Matoi Project and its mission to advocate for disabled people of Kiribati
- Participants will explore the musical traditions of Kiribati

Opening Activity

Chalice Lighting

Materials Needed:

- Chalice
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- Laptop with slide of chalice lighting words

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Ask for a volunteer to read the words or invite the group to reach the words together.

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What is Culture?

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard, dry-erase markers, eraser OR large sticky notes and markers

DIRECTIONS: Ask one or two of the kids to be the recorders.

SCRIPT: Say, in your own words:

Have any of you ever heard the word “culture?” You may have learned about culture in social studies or humanities classes at school. What about “pop culture?” Let’s make a list of the things that come to mind when you hear that word. Raise your hand so everyone has the chance to share their ideas.

Possible responses: [language](#), ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, religion, currency, clothes, cuisine, works of art, rituals, and ceremonies, among other elements.

[Elements of Culture - Exploring Traditions, Language, and More](#)(starts at minute 3:01, watch to 8:36))

If you opt for Main Activity #1, continue as follows:

SCRIPT: Say, in your own words:

Now that we have a better idea of what we mean when we say “culture,” we’re going to build a time capsule for our Congregation.

Main Activity #1: Time Capsule Project: [insert Congregation here]

OPTION ONE: Physical Time Capsule

Materials Needed:

- Small or Medium-sized container (plastic bin, aluminum canister or box), pre-labeled – you want to make sure that the size of the box requires a small number of items, so that there is deliberately not enough space for everything the group might want to bring.
- Clipboard and/or notebook to record items
- Permission from Religious Educator or church staff to run the hunt during RE time
- Pre-set items (hymnals, flaming chalice, t-shirt or other apparel with your congregation’s name, any other items that are important to your congregation, and that can be included in a time capsule)

DIRECTIONS: Explain that the group is going to create a time capsule that captures the culture of your individual congregation/institution.

SCRIPT: Say, in your own words:

We're going to make a time capsule to celebrate our congregation! In a few minutes, we are going to move around the building to find items or artifacts that are meaningful to this community, some of which we can include in our physical capsule and some of which we will include on a list of additional items that would also be good choices.

Choose participants to record the items on the clipboard or in the notebook as you tour the building. Make sure you find all of the pre-set items. Kids will nominate items to include and they will make their case. The group has to vote on whether to include the item. Once you have found the items, walk back to the gathering space and lead a brief discussion. Invite kids to share their thoughts about the activity. Encourage them to build a time capsule at home with their families, at school with their classmates, or in their neighborhoods.

Additional Resources:

- [How to Make Your Own Time Capsule: Sample Letters & Supplies](#)
- [Preservation for Children and Families](#)

Main Activity #2: Music and Dance in Kiribati

Materials Needed:

- Laptop/Smartphone + bluetooth speaker to play tracks from Spotify

DIRECTIONS: Explain to participants that you are going to play some sample music of the South Pacific, including traditional tracks from Kiribati. Invite participants to stand up and stretch or dance as they listen.

[Music of Kiribati - Wikipedia](#)

- [Music of the South Pacific - Recordings by David Fanshawe \(1978-1992\) - Compilation by Traditional | Spotify](#)
- [Tibwereri by Kiribati Tribe](#)
- [Te Kamei Tewai \(Kiribati\) from Music of the South Pacific](#)
- [TE TOA MATOA \(From Kiribati\) Live at 303](#)

Bring the group back together and start a discussion about why music is important to individuals, communities, and cultures..

SCRIPT: Say, in your own words:

Who here likes music? Let's go around the circle so each one of you has the chance to share your favorite type or genre of music, your favorite artist or musician, or your favorite song. During your sharing time, I also invite you to share why you like music, and how it makes you feel.

Allow all the kids to share (with the option to pass).

SCRIPT: Say, in your own words:

How many of you know the National Anthem? What about Take Me Out to the Ballgame? The Star-Spangled Banner? This Land is Your Land? What about Frosty the Snowman? Santa Claus is Coming to Town? Considering how many different kinds of music we have in the United States, isn't it kind of amazing that so many of us know these songs by heart? All cultures have unique songs and hymns, or forms of dancing and singing, or artistic styles.

Discussion Questions:

- *Remember the activity we did on the first day? When we shared about the things in our rooms that we would want to take with us if we had to leave quickly? What about things like art and dance and music? Can we take those things with us?*
- *So now, imagine that your room is a whole country. What would you save?*
- *Remember in the last session when we talked about whether the people of Kiribati should stay and try to preserve their country and culture or whether they should migrate and essentially start over? If they choose to leave, how can they bring their culture with them?*

Closing

Exit Slip: What did you learn today?

Materials:

- Index cards/small pieces of paper
- Pens or pencils

DIRECTIONS: Pass out exit slip and ask kids to answer the prompt – what did you learn today? If you have early elementary kids, pair them with older elementary kids or an adult volunteer to assist with writing their answer. Repeat the prompt out loud as needed.*

Extinguishing the Chalice

Materials Needed:

- Chalice
- Candles and matches or battery-powered candles with batteries

Ask for a volunteer to extinguish the chalice.

Ask for a volunteer to read the words.

[An Unquenchable Flame By Ben Atherton-Zeman](#)

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*Collect the slips from the kids as they depart.



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Module Four: Unitarian Universalism and the Te Toa Matoa Project

Session Objectives

- Participants will learn about UUSC's partnership with Te Toa Matoa
- Participants will explore how UU values are reflected in the work of UUSC

Opening Activity

Chalice Lighting

Materials Needed:

- Chalice
- Candles and matches or battery-powered candles with batteries
- Chalice Lighting Words (on a screen or paper)
- Audio/Visual Cart to show slideshow
- Laptop with slide of chalice lighting words

Ask for a volunteer to light the chalice.

Ask for a volunteer to read the words or invite the group to reach the words together.

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The Te Toa Matoa Project

Materials Needed:

- Computer or other smart device to stream YouTube videos



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DIRECTIONS: Explain to the group that you are going to watch a couple of videos about UUSC's partnership with Te Toa Matoa.

- Show Video (1:07)
 - [Strong and Resilient: Supporting Disability and Climate Justice in Kiribati](#)
- Show Video (1:25)
 - [Music, Culture, and Resilience: How Te Toa Matoa Inspires Kiribati's Future](#)
- Additional Reading, if time allows
 - [Preserving Culture and Community in the Face of the Climate Crisis](#)

Main Activity #1: What Can We Do in Our Congregations?

Materials Needed:

- Computer or other smart device to stream YouTube videos
- Large sticky notes with sharpies OR Whiteboard/Chalkboard with markers or chalk
- Small plush to pass around to indicate whose turn it is to talk

DIRECTIONS: Explain that the group is going to consider some fundraising projects to help raise money for Te Toa Matoa to purchase new instruments. Brainstorm with the whole group and record on the whiteboard or sticky notes.. Consider some of the projects at the links below. Draft a proposal to bring to the appropriate ministry, committee or group in your congregation.

Resources:

- [22 Fundraising Ideas for Kids that are Effective and Fun | Bonfire](#)
- [30 Kid-Approved Fundraisers that Don't Feel Like Homework | Charitable Impact | Blog](#)

Main Activity #2: Social Justice Poster Project

Materials Needed:

- Large sticky notes with sharpies OR Whiteboard/Chalkboard with markers or chalk
- Large poster board or trifold
- [Te Toa Matoa Social Media Toolkit](#) - includes videos and graphics
- Markers, glue, tape, scissors, access to a printer
- [How to Create Your Own Social Justice Poster · SFMOMA](#)
- [How To Make a Social Justice Poster](#)
- Computer or other smart device to stream YouTube videos

SCRIPT: Say, in your own words:

“Art and culture have played a central role in every successful movement for social change. Art can inspire, educate, and spur the imagination beyond the realm of what politics can do. Social justice posters, in particular, are powerful living reminders of the ongoing worldwide struggles for peace and justice. In this activity, students will watch a short video by artist Favianna Rodriguez on the guiding principles of effective poster design, and then will create a poster of their own.”

DIRECTIONS: Divide the participants into groups of two or three and explain that each team will create a social justice poster. Show the YouTube video for practical tips. As the groups work, visit each one and ask them open questions about social justice, oppression, climate, disability, and how UU values lead us to projects like Te Toa Matoa. Emphasize with them that making an active difference in your own life and community is important for each one of us as individuals. Explain that caring for others and the earth are spiritual practices for a lot of Unitarian Universalists that help us feel empowered so that we continue to do the hard work.

Closing

Final Exit Slip: Participant Evaluation

DIRECTIONS: Pass out the final exit slip and ask kids to write down their favorite part of the entire workshop, what they learned that they didn't know, and what they want to do to serve the people and culture of Kiribati. If you have early elementary kids, pair them with older elementary kids or an adult volunteer to assist with writing their answer. Repeat the prompt out loud as needed.*

Gratitudes

Ra-gather in a circle and engage in a gratitude toss, using the "talking object" from the beginning:

Explain that the group will go around the circle and share what they are grateful for in their church community, in their neighborhood, in their family, or in the natural world. Invite participants to raise their hands when they are ready to share.

Make sure everyone gets the chance to say something and let people say more than one thing if they like.

Extinguishing the Chalice

Materials Needed:

- Chalice



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