

New UU Course for Kids

edited by Eric Posa and Connie Dunn

Age Level: K-6

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Four Week Course

produced for use at the

Denton Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

To introduce children to Unitarian Universalism in the same manner that we introduce adults to it. The course is organized in a similar method as the adult course, but deals with issues on a child level.

This course is designed to meet the needs of children K-6. It is not intended to be a course to teach the Principles and Purposes nor is it intended to give a history of Unitarian Universalism. It is, however, intended to give a brief overview of Unitarian Universalism.

Whereas, the adults might discuss what churches and belief systems they have encountered; the children will discuss who we are as individuals and the importance of finding our individuality.

Whereas, the adults might discuss the inner workings of the church; the children will learn why a democratic process is important.

Whereas, the adults might discuss Unitarian Universalism history and theology; the children might discuss what is truth and right.

Whereas, the adults might discuss how we express what we believe; the children might discuss the need for a peaceful, fair and free world through folding paper cranes.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE CHILDREN

(Put the letter on church stationery or Religious Education Department letterhead. Have the Religious Education Director or the teachers sign the letter.)

Date:

Dear

WELCOME to the NEW UU course at (your church). We will be learning about what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. We'll hear stories and do activities, sing songs and have fun together!

Before you come to the first class or during the course of this class, be sure to ask your parents what they believe as Unitarian Universalists and what they feel is important about your coming to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. We will want to hear about your family during our New UU course!

I hope you'll be coming, and I look forward to seeing you in class on (Day of Week), (Month Day, Year), at (Time).

Sincerely,

TEACHERS or RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTOR might add something in the letter about themselves. Children like to know something about the men and women who are their teachers. Tell them about family, different activities, classes taught before, church programs led, etc. Send letter out about a week to a week-and-a-half before the class.

SESSION 1

Who Are You?

Overview

This session will explore who we are as individuals. Before we can become part of a group, we must know who we are. Each of us has a set of values that we live by. In the same way, each group has a set of values that it operates by. Unitarian Universalists have Principles and Purposes. Unitarian Universalists do not have a creed or a belief system that each person must agree to. This point may need to be explained to a fuller extent, depending on the age levels of children and the sophistication of their thought process.

PLEASE NOTE: Since we are a small Fellowship, the age range may be large. Therefore, the explanations may need to be on different levels to meet the needs of the children.

The session is broken into four portions: Introduction/Greeting; Story, Activity; and Song. The song learned in Session 1 is used throughout the four sessions.

Introduction/Greeting

Since this is the first session, introductions will be necessary. A fun introduction to use is to ask each person in turn to tell his or her name and favorite activity. You may use any variation of this theme.

Story

Read or tell: *The Boy Who Loved Morning*.

Lead a discussion to discuss:

1. Values that the boy learned in the story.
2. Values each individual has.
3. Connect values to Principles and Purposes.
4. Clarify the difference between a creed and the UU set of Principles and Purposes*.

* Principles and Purposes are on page 15.

Activity

Make thumbprints.

Before the activity, set out ink pads, paper and magnifying glasses. Also make sure you have soap and towels ready for the children to clean up afterward.

Have the children make their thumbprints and examine them under the magnifying glasses.

Next, have them compare their own prints with other children in the class to see if each one is different. Ask if they can find any alike. Ask if they are all different. Here is an opportunity to point out that though the thumbprints are different, the people who belong to them have some similarities. (Note: This is an awareness exercise for diversity.)

Song

IF I'M A UNITARIAN

Arr. by Betsy Roman
copyright 1977

By the Children of the
Celebration - 1977
Unitarian Community
Church
Santa Monica, CA

The image shows four staves of musical notation in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes. The melody is simple and uses a mix of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "If I'm a Un-i-tar-i-an, Then I have come to know that no one creed can say it all; There's al-ways room - to grow."

If I'm a Un-i-tar-i-an, Then
I have come to know that
no one creed can say it all; There's
al-ways room - to grow.

2. If I'm a Unitarian, then I am really free
To let myself be just the person I was meant to be.

Make duplicates of this page, so the children can have a copy of the song.

IF I'M A UNITARIAN

Arr. by Betsy Roman
copyright 1977

By the Children of the
Celebration - 1977
Unitarian Community
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Santa Monica, CA

The musical score is written on four staves in a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "If I'm a Un-i-tar-i-an, Then I have come to know that no one creed can say it all; There's al-ways room - to grow." The melody is simple and suitable for children's voices.

2. If I'm a Unitarian, then I am really free
To let myself be just the person I was meant to be.

SESSION 2

Why We Need a Democratic Process.

Overview

This session will explore the need for a democratic process. While our country is set up on a democratic system and many groups work within this process, our children often don't understand the need. Households are rarely set up to work on a totally democratic process, so we need to teach our children that Unitarian Universalists decide things by voting.

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The session is broken into four portions: Introduction/Greeting; Story, Activity; and Song. The song learned in Session 1 is used throughout the four sessions.

Introduction/Greeting

While in the first session, the children said their names and a favorite activity, ect. To introduce themselves. A good greeting for the second session may be to have each child say their name and a "value" they possess. This connects this session to the previous session. Any variation on this will work just as well.

Story

Read or tell: *Harambee: The Story of the Pull Together Morning.*

Lead a discussion to discuss:

1. How the animals join together to accomplish a task.
2. How decisions are made in your family and school.
3. How decisions are made in our Fellowship.
4. Briefly discuss the leadership of the Fellowship and who does what.
5. Ask the children what would happen if there were no president or board of trustees for the Fellowship.

Activity

The activity for this session is to have the minister come to the class. Typically, he will bring his robe and stole and let the children try it on. This is his time to be with the children. This activity can be changed and have Board members or the RE Director visit with the class.

Song

If I'm a Unitarian from Session 1.

SESSION 3

What Is Truth and Right?

Overview

This session will explore the perspectives of truth and right. Although as adults, we often see truth and right as concrete. Children often see these as abstract and fluid. In other words, one child might see truth and right only for some situations. Others might see it as changing. This is due to maturity levels. Be sure to put all your explanations on their level.

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The session is broken into four portions: Introduction/Greeting; Story, Activity; and Song. The song learned in Session 1 is used throughout the four sessions.

Introduction/Greeting

Just as in the previous section, it is a good idea to connect this session with the previous. The previous session dealt with the democratic process or everyone pulling together. Have the children tell their names and tell about an incident when they thought their family, their class or another group “pulled together” during the last week. Any variation on this will work just as well.

Story

Read or tell: *Seven Blind Mice*.

Lead a discussion to discuss:

1. How the mice found out the truth or what was right.
2. How each person knows what the truth is or what is right about any given situation. (NOTE: You may have to get the children to pick a situation first, then get them to tell how they knew the truth or what was right about that particular situation.)
3. What Principle and Purpose do Unitarians rely on for determining what is right or true. (See page 15 for Principles and Purposes.)

Activity

The activity for this session is a group activity. Ask the group how they know what is true or right?

The methods for determining this include:

1. ask someone
2. read a book
3. do an experiment
4. decide for yourself

Write on a blackboard or easel paper the class' list of "Truths."

For example:

- ◆ The scout meeting has been changed from Tuesday to Thursday.
- ◆ The whole world began with a big explosion.
- ◆ Your parents love you.
- ◆ The Red Sox are in 3rd place.

Song

If I'm a Unitarian from Session 1.

SESSION 4

We Need a Peaceful, Fair and Free World

Overview

This session will explore what peace means and that Unitarian Universalists believe in a world of love, justice and peace. Although we live in “peace times” now in the 1990s, there are still things in the world that interrupt our peaceful worlds, disturb our sense of justice and keep our world from being a free place to live. Children, today, may view the world as a more dangerous place to live, because of the violence that takes place in our schools and on the streets. Be supportive.

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The session is broken into four portions: Introduction/Greeting; Story, Activity; and Song. The song learned in Session 1 is used throughout the four sessions.

Introduction/Greeting

Just as in the previous section, it is a good idea to connect this session with the previous. The previous session dealt with truth or what is right. Have the children tell their names and tell about a “truth” that they discovered during the past week. Any variation on this will work just as well.

Story

Read or tell: *Sadako* (and the Thousand Paper Cranes).

Lead a discussion to discuss:

1. How did the children help make Sadako’s wish come true?.
2. What can you do to help make life more peaceful? More fair? A world where freedom lives?
3. In our Fellowship, we have a Social Action Committee. Unitarian Universalists have a Principle and Purpose that honors outreach into our communities to make it a better community. What social action project can you think of that would make our Fellowship or our city a better place to live? Discuss how this could come about.

Activity

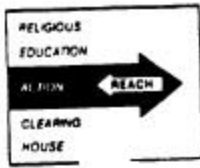
Lay out the *directions and the origami paper prior to the activity.

The activity for this session is to fold paper cranes.

* Direction follow on the next two pages

Song

If I'm a Unitarian from Session 1.



Directions for Origami Crane

39

1

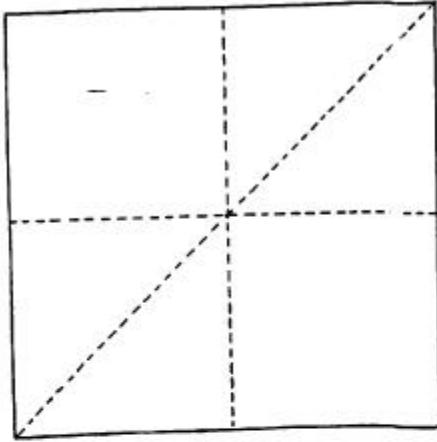


FIG. 102

Fold a square on the dotted lines as in Fig. 102. Crease. Unfold.

2

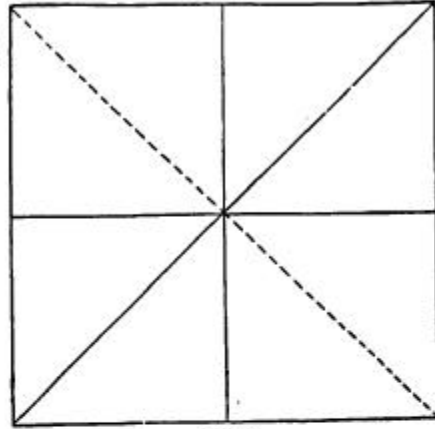


FIG. 103

Fold on the dotted line.

3

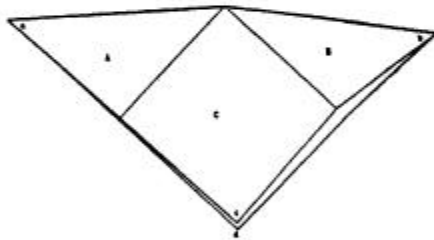


FIG. 104

Bring points b and a between points c and d by pushing triangle B and triangle A into square C. Folds will fall easily on previously formed creases.

5

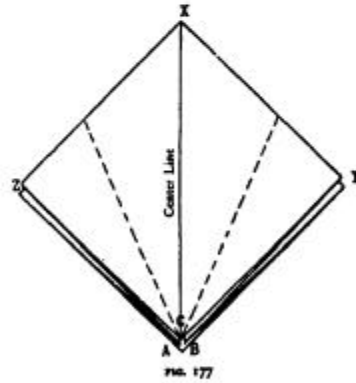


FIG. 177

Bring line C-Z and C-Y to center line. Crease on the dotted lines. Unfold.

Turn Fig. 177 over to the other side and repeat the above directions.

4

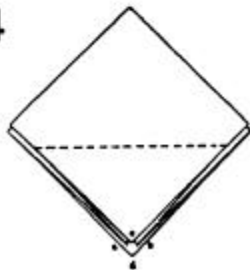
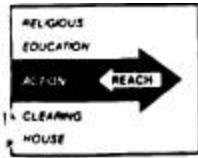


FIG. 105

Bring point c up, folding on dotted line. (Upper sheet only.)



6.

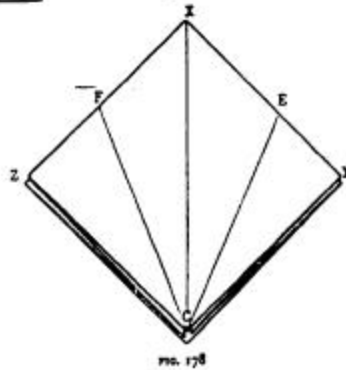


FIG. 178

Push triangle C Y E inside triangle C E X and fold on the creased line C-E.

Push triangle C Z F inside triangle C F X and fold on the creased line C-F.

Turn it over to the other side and repeat the above directions.

When finished on both sides, model appears as illustrated in Fig. 179.

7.

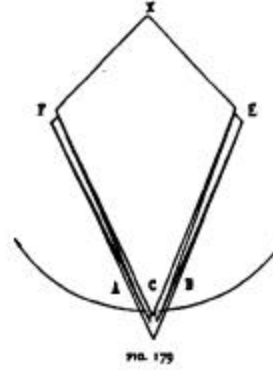


FIG. 179

Bring point B out and up, reversing the crease down its center as it is being pulled out. Bring it up into position at an angle as indicated in Fig. 180. Before creasing it into position, examine edges inside. They must be flat and smooth the whole length of the crease, especially at the center of the bird.

Repeat the above directions with point A.

8.

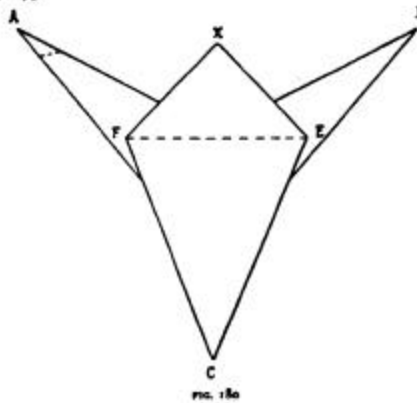


FIG. 180

The head of the bird is made by reversing the crease at the tip of point A and folding on the dotted line indicated there.

The wings are brought into position by bringing point C upward and creasing on the dotted line E-F. Repeat same directions on the reverse side.

9.

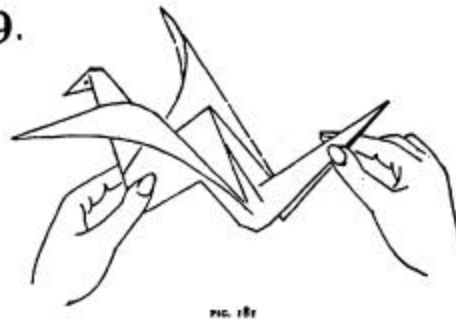


FIG. 181

Finished bird.

Hold it in position as in Fig. 181. Pull and push the tail in and out to make the wings flap.



From: The Art of Chinese Paper Folding for Young and Old, Maying Soong, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1948.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- ◆ The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- ◆ Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- ◆ Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- ◆ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- ◆ The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- ◆ The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- ◆ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part;

The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- ◆ Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- ◆ Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- ◆ Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- ◆ Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- ◆ Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- ◆ Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

The Unitarian Universalist Association shall devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for religious, educational and humanitarian purposes. The primary purpose of the Association is to serve the needs of its member congregations, organize new congregations, extend and strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutions and implement its principles.

The Association declares and affirms its special responsibility, and that of its member societies and organizations, to promote the full participation of persons in all of its and their activities and in the full range of human endeavor without regard to race, color, sex, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or to any particular religious belief or creed.

Nothing herein shall be deemed to infringe upon the individual freedom of belief which is inherent in the Universalist and Unitarian heritages or to conflict with any statement of purpose, covenant, or bond of union used by any society unless such is used as a creedal test.

SOURCES:

Beginning Unitarian Universalism: A curriculum for grades three through six by Mary Ann Moore and Helena Chapin, developed for the Winchester Unitarian Society in Winchester, Massachusetts, published in 1984.

Unitarian Universalist Association REACH Packet: Directions for Origami Crane.

If I'm a Unitarian by the Children of the Celebration, Unitarian Community Church, Santa Monica, CA, published in 1977.

Unitarian Universalist Association for *The Principles and Purposes*, published on the Internet at <http://www.uua.org>, 1998.

Stories used in curriculum:

The Boy Who Loved Morning by Shannon K. Jacobs, published by Little Brown & Co, 1993.

Harambee: The Story of the Pull Together Morning is included in a collection of stories entitled *Sun Stories: Tales from Around the World to Illuminate the Days and Nights of Our Lives* by Carolyn McVickar Edwards, published by HarperSanFrancisco in 1995.

Seven Blind Mice by Ed Young, published by Scholastic Inc.

Sadako by Eleanor Coerr, published by G.P.Putnam's Sons in 1993.

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