



Soul Matters

What does it mean to be a
people of INTENTION?



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Welcome

Welcome to the Soul Matters RE Packet for January's theme of "What Does it Mean to be a People of Intention?"

As part of the Soul Matters Sharing Circle support, we offer online Zoom meetings, twice a month. One is a Brainstorm Lab, to get our juices flowing on the theme. At the Brainstorm Lab on "Intention," we shared a richly fun time sparking ideas off each other, developing thoughts, and even running down a few rabbit holes together. The group represented member congregations from Massachusetts to California. We were disparate in geography but not in the enjoyment of the brainstorming. Several of the resources in this packet are the result of the Intention brainstorm. Thanks to everyone for deepening my understanding of how to "Be a People of Intention" with children, youth and families.

Here's what I discovered. Intention is different from setting goals or resolutions in that it "pulls us into" who we truly are. Goals and resolutions "push us out" into future possibilities. To set intentions, we listen to our inner voice which tells us who we truly are, and so the first session offers components for accessing our inner voice.

In addition, I was reminded that the reason so many of our resolutions fall by the wayside about January 10th is that once we fail, we lose our future possibilities. With intentions, failure is expected and a part of life. Intentions are part of who we truly are, and so when we make a mistake, we return to who we truly are and try again. Only the enlightened Buddha is perfect, says one source, so get over making mistakes. This is why mistakes are the theme of Session 2.

One of the components in Session 2 is to create a Mistakes Ritual. Other religions have rituals for acknowledging mistakes and asking for forgiveness, such as the Catholic practice of Confession and Reconciliation, and the Jewish Days of Atonement. What do we UU's have to reconcile when we make mistakes? Maybe our children and youth will start something! If you try it, I'd love to hear how it goes.

Session 3 and 4 offer opportunities to put intentions into action by "Doing the Best We Can."

As always, make these components your own. It has been my pleasure to be your packet creator, and I look forward to the New Year with you. Thanks for being part of Soul Matters!

Katie

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Calendar Connections

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

Interfaith:

- [Gantan-sai](#) - Japanese New Year (Shinto) - Jan. 1
- [Twelfth Night](#) (Christian) - Jan. 5
- [Epiphany](#) (Christian) - Jan. 6
- [World Religion Day](#) (Baha'i) - Jan. 16 (more found [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Tu BiShevat](#) (Jewish) - Jan. 30/31 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

Unitarian Universalist:

- [Thirty Days of Love](#) - Standing on the Side of Love Campaign - Jan.16 - Feb.14
- [Millard Fillmore's](#) Birthday - Jan. 7 (1800)
- [Joseph Tuckerman's](#) Birthday - Jan 18 (1778) (more [here](#))

National & Cultural:

- [New Year's Day](#) - Jan.1
- The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln - Jan. 1 (1863)
- MLK, Jr. Day - Jan. 15 (connections [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Rowe vs. Wade](#) Anniversary - Jan. 22 (more [here](#))
- International Holocaust ([Shoah](#)) [Remembrance Day](#) - Jan. 27 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Two super moons in January](#) - Jan. 2 and Jan. 31 - the Full Wolf Moon and the "Blue Moon"
Celebrate our 5th Source of Science and Reason.

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [National Hug Day](#) - Jan.21
- [I'm Not Going To Take it Anymore](#) Day - Jan. 7th
- Birthday of [Thomas Merton](#) - Jan. 31 (1915) (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Belly Laugh Day](#) - Jan. 24 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

Stories for all Ages

The Cracked Pot

<http://www.chickensoup.com/book-story/50004/the-cracked-pot>

Sometimes we act as if our intention is to be perfect. None of us are perfect. It is our flaws which make us human. When we try to live by our intentions we will not be perfect. But if we let go of the control of our intentions, we will allow outcomes which we would never be able to anticipate. In the words from Samuel Beckett's *Worstward Ho* - "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better." Tell this story with a cracked pot, or a vase with some black electrical tape mimicking a crack.

The Wise Teachers Test

From Tapestry of Faith, Moral Tales, Conscience: Hearing the Inner Voice

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session2/story1>

An intention is set which connects us to our inner lives, not just a goal. We can discern spiritual values by listening to our inner voice. Invite the children to help you act out the story, requesting two temple students who are old enough to read the speaking lines. Prepare index cards with speaking lines on them.

Mussa and Nagib

From Tapestry of Faith, Moral Tales, Forgiveness

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session5/123298.shtml>

Setting an intention means that we will return to it again and again, trying to practice our intent, but we will fail again and again. But an intention is something we can return to, and keep practicing. Our failures can be written in sand, our successes, in stone. Fill a box with sand, and another with clay to demonstrate the writing.

Song for All Ages

(Hymns and songs that can be used as a Story for All Ages)

STLT #28 View the Starry Realms

*Below is the story of the intention behind **View the Starry Realms** written in Dachau by Norbert Čapek. Chosen to honor International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Jan. 27. Adapted with permission from a sermon by Rev. Patty Willis, South Valley UU Society, Cottonwood Heights, UT*

<https://www.svuus.org/norbert-capeks-hope-rev-patty-willis-8-3-14/>

Norbert Čapek (pronounced Chapek) composed this hymn in the Dachau concentration camp during WWII, just before he was executed. He was a Czech Unitarian minister.

Čapek's path of intention was in no way linear. In a roundabout way it took him to the United States on the brink of WWI where he encountered many hardships including the death of his wife and mother of their eight children. During his years in America, he remarried a Czech expatriate named Májka Oktavec. He had been a Catholic and a Baptist. But his intention was to celebrate diversity. He found the

Unitarians. He still felt attracted to the Baptists and felt that the Unitarians lacked missionary zeal. When his children, however, began attending Unitarian Sunday School and loved it—he and his wife began attending too and he left the Baptists for good. Finally, in 1921, he received a grant from the American Unitarian Association to begin a congregation in Prague...

While fascism was gaining a stronghold in many nearby countries, Norbert Čapek saw a vision of a community that could not be more different. Instead of valuing homogeneity and exterminating what was “different,” Čapek saw the spring fields of wild flowers as his image of beloved community. While the Third Reich wanted well-ordered rows of perfectly clipped hedges, Čapek saw heaven in the mountain meadows covered in all kinds of flowers. He started our tradition of a Flower Communion. As the congregation grew, fascism was on the rise all around them and in March of 1939, Hitler declared Czechoslovakia part of the Third Reich.

He could have escaped.

In 1939, the AUA offered Norbert a position of minister-at-large for the Unitarian fellowship in the United States. Norbert replied that he did not want to desert his people, and that his intention was to remain. His wife left to continue work in the United States.

Finally, in the spring of 1941 Norbert declared, “I can bear it no longer! I must speak the truth and not be a coward!” He issued his forthright challenge to the Nazis by using his Sunday morning sermon to contradict a speech of Hitler’s.

Five days later the Gestapo came to his home, charged him with listening to a foreign broadcast and sent him to prison. At the same time a high ranking Nazi official, the Butcher of Prague was assassinated by the Czech underground. In retaliation, entire villages were decimated and people who might not have been killed were sent to the gas chamber. Norbert Čapek was sent to Dachau. Norbert was sent to Dachau in retaliation. On his papers were the fatal instructions: “return unwanted.”

In prison, Norbert kept his fellow inmates spirits up with humor, caring and cheerfulness. But, as he was now over 70 years old, he was quickly transported with other older prisoners to that part of the camp where torturous experiments were being conducted. After four months in Dachau, he died in October, 1942.

We remember him for International Holocaust Day. His life still lives on in our denomination through the Flower Communion and in the words (and sometimes music) of three songs in our hymnbook. One on page 28: View the starry realm—that he wrote while he was in Dachau concentration camp.

Norbert Čapek’s life embodied intention. He set his intention by listening to his innermost values, and went against his family’s religious traditions. He refused to change his intention even in the face of danger. Throughout his life, he urged people to see the world in a larger context. In his song, “View the Starry Realm”, he finds hope and offers his intention to the starry skies and a belief in a God as large as the universe:

Great you are, beyond conception, God of gods and God of stars. My soul soars with your perception, I escape from prison bars. You the One within all forming in my heart and mind and breath. You, my guide through hate’s fierce storming, courage in both life and death. Life is yours, in you I grow tall, seed will come to fruit I know. Trust that after winter’s snowfall walls will melt Truth will flow, walls will melt and Truth will flow.

Book Recommendations

Beautiful Oops

by *Barney Saltzberg*

Video with Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fZjMYdQjGM>

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Beautiful-Oops-Barney-Saltzberg/dp/076115728X>

An award winning, best-selling, one-of-a-kind interactive book, Beautiful Oops! shows all ages how every mistake is an opportunity to make something beautiful. A singular work of imagination, creativity, and paper engineering, Beautiful Oops! is filled with pop-ups, lift-the-flaps, tears, holes, overlays, bends, smudges, and even an accordion “telescope”—each demonstrating the magical transformation from blunder to wonder. Even though written for children, it has inspired a movement for all ages.

Ahn’s Anger

by *Gail Silver (Author), Christianne Kromer (Illustrator)*

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vn8Rgocoq1k>

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Anhs-Anger-Gail-Silver/dp/1888375949>

In Anh’s Anger, five-year-old Anh becomes enraged when his grandfather asks him to stop playing and come to the dinner table. The grandfather helps Anh fully experience all stages of anger by suggesting that he go to his room and, “sit with his anger.” The story unfolds when Anh discovers what it means to sit with his anger. He comes to know his anger in the first person as his anger comes to life in full color and personality. Anh and his anger work through feelings together with humor and honesty to find a way to constructively release their thoughts and emotions and to reach resolve with Anh’s grandfather.

I Have a Dream

by *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Author), Kadir Nelson (Illustrator)*

<http://amzn.to/2hHG181>

From Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s daughter, Dr. Bernice A. King: “My father’s dream continues to live on from generation to generation, and this beautiful and powerful illustrated edition of his world-changing “I Have a Dream” speech brings his inspiring message of freedom, equality, and peace to the youngest among us—those who will one day carry his dream forward for everyone.” Living with intention! Play the accompanying CD to hear his voice.

Anne Frank and the Remembering Tree (for International Holocaust Remembrance Day)

by *Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (Author), Erika Steiskal (Illustrator)*

<http://amzn.to/2yL6Vae>

A story of Anne Frank, who loved a tree and the tree who promised never to forget her. This book is co-published with the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, chosen by the Anne Frank Center as the first U.S. recipient of a sapling from the tree outside of the Secret Annex window (the tree is the narrator in the book).

Sessions

Session 1

Setting Intentions; Our Inner Voice

(Epiphany/Three Kings Day options)

Young Children (P - K)

Wonder Box

Place inside: a [blowout toy](#) or other New Year's paraphernalia

What is in the wonder box? It is a blowout toy! Did you say "Happy New Year" last week? Can you say it with me? Happy New Year! It is January, the first month of the year. Since it is a new beginning, people make resolutions. They try to do something better. We also say, we set an intention. We intend to be loving, we intend to be caring.

For Three Kings Day (Epiphany): In the story of Jesus' birth, there were three Kings. They had an intent to find the baby Jesus. Our Hispanic neighbors celebrate Three Kings Day.

Story

Squirrel's New Year's Resolution

by Pat Miller (Author), Kathi Ember (Illustrator)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKMIUI6IJOI>

Book: <http://amzn.to/2ygAcJi>

"Do you know how to make a resolution?" Squirrel asked Bear. "Is it like making a snack?" Bear laughed. "Resolutions are more important than snacks." "More important than snacks?" said Squirrel. "What is a resolution?" Squirrel knows that New Year's Day is a great day for making resolutions! But what does it mean to make a resolution, anyway? As she makes visits around the forest she learns about New Year's resolutions and helps her friends get started on theirs. If only she can think of a resolution of her very own...

Shanté Keys and the New Year's Peas

by Gail Piernas-Davenport (Author), Marion Eldridge (Illustrator)

<http://amzn.to/2yhQzTg>

Shanté Keys loves New Year's Day! But while Grandma fixed chitlins, baked ham, greens, and cornbread, she forgot the black-eyed peas! Oh no--it'll be bad luck without them! So Shanté sets out to borrow some from the neighbors. A multicultural exploration of New Year traditions.

Number One Sam

By Greg Pizzoli

Book: <http://amzn.to/2xISvHt>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iXMeWuGRdg>

Sam is a race car driving dog. He learns about his true intentions when he comes in second and then has to save some chickens. He chooses the right thing to do and learns about the bigger wins in life.

Or a selection from the Book Recommendations.

Mindfulness

Listen to the bell with me until the sound disappears. We sit quietly together and put our hand over our hearts. Can you feel it beating? Sit very quietly and listen. Can you hear your heart beating? We try to listen for our inner voice, too. Can you hear your inner voice whispering something to you? Is it whispering an intention for the New Year? When I listen, I hear my inner voice saying, "My intent is to be loving and caring." Our inner voice tells us how to do the right thing. Sit quietly for a few seconds and listen for your intent. Do you have an intent for the New Year? Share them. Ring the bell one last time.

Songs and Fingerplays

I Am Special - rhyme using ASL Vocabulary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CP2BDj2YJkY>

Finding the intention to be kind.

To the Tune of "Freres Jacques"

I am special, I am special

So are you, so are you.

We can (play) together.

We can (play) together.

Like friends do. Like friends do.

I'm Unique and Unrepeatable

By Jan Evans-Tiller. In Tapestry of Faith, Love Surrounds Us, Acceptance

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session6/170030.shtml>

Another song about the uniqueness of each person. Each person has an inner voice unique to themselves. It's fun because it is a bit of a tongue twister.

Intention Dancing Song

Play the tune from Black Eyed Peas' Will.i.am "What I Am" on Sesame Street

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyVzjoj96vs>

Lyrics video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8Vd2UHBbjA>

Text Lyrics: <http://www.metrolyrics.com/sesame-street-lyrics-will-i-am.html>

Create a circle holding hands. Walk and dance around the circle to the song. Invite the children to call out the qualities of "What I am" in the bridge portion of the song. "And what I am is (musical), and what I am is (brave) and what I am is (helpful)..." . Either sing it or wait until the song is over and say the words. These are intentions!

Arts and Crafts

Intention's Inner Voice

Invite the children to draw a picture of their inner voice. What color is your inner voice? What shape? Is it all over, is it in one tiny place, is it both?

Game

Intentions Game

Make some cards with typical Sunday School choices on them, such as good intentions of “Sit quietly for Circle Time,” “Clean Up the Toys” “Say Goodbye to your teacher,” “Give a hug to your friend.” use pictures from magazines or draw a simple picture to go with the written words. Make cards for bad choices such as “Grab a toy from your friend,” “Leave a messy place,” “Interrupt a friend who is talking in circle time.” Invite the children to pick a card and read it to them. Then invite the child to choose the good intention or try not to make the bad choice that morning. Can they try? Invite the child to place it in a spot where they can see it, in a cubby, on a windowsill. The reward is a hug from the teacher, or a high five from their friends. When the child completes their good intention, offer the reward. When a child avoids a bad choice, offer the reward. If a child corrects a bad choice, offer the reward.

“Sunshine”(connection with nature and our bodies) or Movement

Intentions Follow the Leader

Take a walk outside, weather permitting, or walk around the room, playing Follow the Leader. Invite the leader to “Set the intention” of walking around a tree, or hopping down a sidewalk, or wagging their head back and forth. If inside, the leader “sets the intention” of walking around the rug, weaving between chairs, tapping their hand on their head.

Service

While following the leader, pick up trash on your walk.

Elementary Aged Children (1 - 5th)

Reflection

Prop: a blowout toy or other New Year's paraphernalia

Did you celebrate New Year's last week? How? One tradition is to think of a resolution for the year. Did you make a resolution? Want to share it?

Resolutions are sometimes helpful. After all, it is a New Year and a good time to try a new beginning.

Many people say "I want to be a better soccer player." "I want to stop a bad habit I have."

The problem is, resolutions are hard to keep. If you ask many people, the resolutions fall by the wayside in a few weeks. Resolutions are about goals or habits, and **pull us away** from who we are. They set a goal for the future and we live in the present.

The theme for the month is "What does it mean to be a people of Intention?" An intention is different from a resolution. An intention **pulls us into who we truly are**. An intention comes from an inner voice and is connected to your true self in a spiritual way. (As suggested by Doug Taylor, Tacoma UU in Tacoma, WA)

In Hinduism, the classic Vedic text known as the Upanishads declares,

"You are what your deepest desire is.

As your desire is, so is your intention.

As your intention is, so is your will.

As your will is, so is your deed.

As your deed is, so is your destiny."

Notice the "You are." An intention is rooted in the present moment. The present moment contains the seed of your actions.

There are 4 steps to "Being a person of Intention."

1. Find and listen to your inner voice, usually through meditation or mindfulness.
2. Release your intention so it can change and evolve.
3. Plan on failure and making mistakes.
4. Practice revisiting your intention after you lose track or make a mistake. Return to it.

Story

The Third Gift - for Epiphany/Three Kings Day

by Linda Sue Park (Author), Bagram Ibatoulline (Illustrator)

<http://amzn.to/2hFBXW2>

The boy in this story sets an intention to do the best he can. The three wise men, or the three kings, are the story of the Epiphany tradition. In this story we meet a boy who is learning his father's trade; a man who gathers resin from certain trees; a merchant in the marketplace; and three strangers in brightly colored robes who are shopping for a gift for a baby. This simple, moving tale of ordinary people involved in an extraordinary event brings new resonance to the well-known gift list of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Or a select a book from the Recommended Books.

Mindfulness

Loving Kindness Walking Meditation

From Tapestry of Faith, Love Surrounds Us, Acceptance

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session6/activity4>

Walk outdoors or indoors. Ring the bell to signal an end. By meditating on loving kindness, we are setting an intention.

Arts and Craft Activities

Make an Inner Voice Intention Meter

Imagine a meter which asks these questions. Draw the imaginary meter and write in these questions. Where does this meter reside? A cave, a heart, the brain, on top of a mountain, in a waterfall, in an inner voice tree fort? Here are questions which the Inner Voice Intention Meter asks. Include them in some way as part of your meter. What does my inner voice say about it? Is it fair? How would I feel if somebody did it to me? Deep down how do I feel about it?

Wrinkled Hearts

From Squarehead Teachers

<https://squareheadteachers.com/2013/09/13/wrinkled-hearts-bully-prevention-lesson/>

Invite each participant to make a wrinkled heart to take home and remind them of their intention for loving kindness.

Intention's Inner Voice

Invite the children to draw a picture of their inner voice. What color is your inner voice? What shape? Is it all over, is it in one tiny place, is it both?

Intention Skits

Doing the Right Thing (<http://amzn.to/2xISvHt>)

In small groups, create a skit of scenarios listed. Try out various outcomes. Try out success, failure, and then making up a failure.

“Sunshine”(connection with nature and our bodies) and Movement

Simon Says, indoor or out

<https://playtivities.com/30-funniest-simon-says-ideas/>

Practice close listening, just as you would with listening to your inner voice, and play Simon Says. This site has some hilarious instructions!

Simon says start singing.

Simon says walk on your knees.

Simon says act like a monkey.

Simon says tickle your friend.

Simon says yawn.

Simon says hide your head in your shirt

Service

Play Simon Says with a younger group.

Session 2 Fail Again. Fail Better. (MLK birthday)

Young Children (P - K)

Wonder Box and Puppet

Place inside: a piece of paper to tear

I wonder what is in the box... It is a piece of paper. (Tear it “by mistake.”) Oh, Oh, I tore the paper. Maybe I will just throw it away because I don’t want to make mistakes. I hate making mistakes. In a different voice - “Hey there, don’t feel bad. We all make mistakes.” Who said that? Why it is [the puppet!]

Place the puppet on your hand and introduce it to the children.

Puppet voice continues.

We all make mistakes, even when we try really hard not to. It is part of life. It hurts. Then we learn and try again.

Teacher voice... OK, that makes me feel better to know everyone makes mistakes. Thank you, puppet. Does anyone want to tell puppet about a mistake? ... We all make mistakes.

Story

The Dot

by Peter H. Reynolds

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5mGeR4AQdM>

Book: <http://amzn.to/2kLSkoC>

It is hard to feel like a failure, or that you can’t paint. Try and try again. Give some encouragement. Failing is part of life. As suggested by Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis, DRE at San Gabriel UU Georgetown, TX

It’s OK to Make Mistakes

By Todd Parr

Book: <http://amzn.to/2ynZuES>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqp5kvnKg5k>

It's Okay to Make Mistakes embraces life's happy accidents, the mistakes and mess-ups that can lead to self-discovery.

Ruby Bridges Goes to School: My True Story (Scholastic Reader, Level 2)

by Ruby Bridges (Author)

<http://amzn.to/2xlz0yQ>

Even our country can make mistakes, and try to fix them.

Beautiful Oops

by Barney Saltzberg

Video with Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fZjMYdQjGM>

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Beautiful-Oops-Barney-Saltzberg/dp/076115728X>

An award winning, best-selling, one-of-a-kind interactive book, Beautiful Oops! shows all ages how every mistake is an opportunity to make something beautiful. A singular work of imagination, creativity, and paper engineering, Beautiful Oops! is filled with pop-ups, lift-the-flaps, tears, holes, overlays, bends, smudges, and even an accordion “telescope”—each demonstrating the magical transformation from blunder to wonder. Even though written for children, it has inspired a movement for all ages.

Or a story from the Book Recommendations section.

Mindfulness

Say something like this:

When I ring the bell, we will close our eyes, sit very still and listen until we can't hear it anymore.

Remind yourself that it's OK to make mistakes while we listen to the sound of the bell. Can you say it silently? It's OK to make mistakes. Breathe in and out with silently saying the reminder, “It's OK to make mistakes.” Ready? Ring the bell.

Now the bell is quiet. Were you breathing and reminding yourself? How did it feel? Sharing quiet is a part of being together in our congregation. Now we can move into another kind of being together.

Songs and Fingerplays

The Dot Song Motions Song with Emily Arrow

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_l43cxDQ-o

The Mistake Chant

We all make mistakes!

I went upstairs to make my bed

And by mistake I bumped my head!

I went downstairs to cook my food

And by mistake I cooked my shoe!

I went downstairs to hang some clothes

And by mistake I hung my toes!

I went downstairs to go to a shop

And by mistake my bag I dropped!

Make up your own!

Arts and Crafts

Beautiful Oops Ideas

https://blog.workman.com/share-ideas/?utm_source=workman-website&utm_medium=brand-page

Tons of ideas!

“Sunshine”(connection with nature and our bodies)

Game, to play outdoors or indoors.

Ring Around the Rosie.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2KMnpD46jl>

We all fall down! And then, we get back up, return to our intention, and try it again. Falling down and making mistakes is a part of the game and a part of life.

Service

Invite others to join in your game of Ring Around the Rosie. Provide chairs for adults who may not be able to get up off the ground!

Elementary Aged Children (1 - 5th)

Reflection on Mistakes and Intention

Props: a torn piece of paper, a broken toy

What do you think of when you hear the word “Intention?” The theme for the month is ‘What does it mean to be a people of Intention?’ Have you ever heard people say, “I intend to...?” Intention is to listen to your inner voice and make choices according to your values. “I intend to practice caring.” The intention pulls us into our true selves. Another way of saying an intention is “I am caring.” It describes who you are.

That’s fine, isn’t it, but what happens when you aren’t caring? We are not perfect. Nobody is perfect. There will always be times when we make mistakes, whether on purpose, to be mean, or by mistake, because we didn’t know.

Hold up the broken toy or torn paper.

Mistakes happen. A man named Samuel Beckett wrote these words:

"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better." They don’t make perfect sense, but the words capture the endless learning from mistakes. One thing about intentions. We can always try to return to them. Our mistakes don’t mean total failure. They just mean we have the opportunity to try again. It takes practice to live by intentions.

Intention Story

The Wise Fool

From Tapestry of Faith, Spirit in Practice, Life Practices

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/practice/workshop8/60540.shtml>

We go out searching for Allah, Truth, our Intentions when we are “sitting right on top of them.” We fail and must return again and again to them, as part of our lives.

Beautiful Oops

by Barney Saltzberg. Even though this book is for young children, all ages have learned from it.

Video with Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fZjMYdQjGM>

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Beautiful-Oops-Barney-Saltzberg/dp/076115728X>

An award winning, best-selling, one-of-a-kind interactive book, Beautiful Oops! shows all ages how every mistake is an opportunity to make something beautiful. A singular work of imagination, creativity, and paper engineering, Beautiful Oops! is filled with pop-ups, lift-the-flaps, tears, holes, overlays, bends, smudges, and even an accordion “telescope”—each demonstrating the magical transformation from blunder to wonder. Even though written for children, it has inspired a movement for all ages.

Steps and Stones: An Ah's Anger Story

by Gail Silver (Author), Christiane Kromer (Illustrator). Goes well with the Path of Intention activity.

<https://www.amazon.com/Steps-Stones-Anhs-Anger-Story/dp/1935209876>

When Anh’s friends leave and he feels left out at school, his anger shows up to keep him company. Anh the protagonist of Gail Silver’s previous book Anh’s Anger, is a typical and easy-to-relate-to elementary school-age boy. His anger, personified as a red hairy impulsive creature, teaches him some valuable lessons about not getting carried away by his strong emotions. By counting his steps and coordinating them with his breathing Anh is able to slow down and take his anger for a peaceful and magically transformative walk.

Dance Video

We Gonna Make Mistakes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4-Hve9RKtq>

Shake It Off tune by 3rd graders

Create a Ritual

Mistakes Ritual

What do you do when you make mistakes and want to make up? Many faiths have a ritual. UU's don't - YET. Create one because we all make mistakes and need a way to return to our intentions. What can the group create? Use these steps as a general guideline and invite the group to come up with their own ritual.

A mistake hurts and reminds us we are failing. How do we return to our intentions?

- Opening words. Tell the story about the mistake.
- Meditation. Imagine what it would be like if it got better..
- Action Plan. Make a plan. Do something to help make it better.
- Express Gratitude. Song, poem, art. Give thanks and gratitude for what you do have.
- Music. Set aside anger to be free from its poison.
- Celebrate a return to Intention. Permission to heal.

Games

Horrible; Beautiful Game

From Tapestry of Faith, Love Will Guide Us, We are Loved, Flaws and All

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session5/168606.shtml>

Even though our intentions are good, we create some nasty things.

Over Under Intention Game

Over, under, over, under... just like intentions, sometimes we make it, sometimes we don't, we exceed our intentions or we miss the mark.

Be the fastest team to weave the ball over and under each person.

Needed: two items to pass over and under, representing intentions - two stars, two balls, two balloons.

1. Split everyone into two equal teams. Have both teams line up in parallel lines. Hand the item to the first person in line.
2. Everyone in line needs to be facing the front. When you say "go", the first person of both lines needs to pass the item over their head to the person behind them, while shouting "Over!"
3. The second person in line must pass the item between their legs to the third person behind them while shouting "Under!"
4. The third person passes the item over their head to the next person while shouting "Over!", and so forth in the same "over-under" pattern.
5. At the very end of the line, the last person has to pass it forward in the same pattern as before. The first team that passes the ball back to the first person wins the game.

Variation: the last person has to switch the pattern to the opposite way, i.e. over, under becomes under, over.

Mindfulness

Take Five Breathing to return to Intention

http://www.teachpeaceofmind.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/POM_lesson6.pdf

Take Five means to take a break—usually it mean a five-minute break. We are going to use Take Five in a different way. We can use Take Five as a way to return to Intention.

Hold up your hand like you are going to give someone a high five with your palm facing out and your fingers spread wide. Now take the index finger of your other hand and trace the outline of your hand. What does it feel like when your finger runs between your fingers? Maybe it's a little tickly? We're going to do this again, but this time we are going to breathe in when we are tracing up and breathe out when we are tracing down. Starting with your index finger down by your wrist on the outside of your thumb as you trace up your thumb, slowly breathe in, and as your trace down the inside of your thumb slowly breathe out. Repeat this motion with all of your fingers until you are back down at your wrist on the outside of your pinky finger. At this point you will have taken five deep breaths. Take Five is a great way to help you calm down any time you feel angry or scared or nervous or worried or stressed out or just need a break. See if you can try it a few times this week.

Arts and Crafts

Intention Path

Use permanent markers to write the words on smooth rocks or on large tongue depressors. Decorate the stones or sticks with pictures as well as write the words from Samuel Beckett's *Worstward Ho* -
"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better."

"Sunshine"(connection with nature and our bodies) and Service

Walk the Path of Intentions

Go outside and create a path outlined with the decorated and written rocks or the large tongue depressors. Make a path to remind congregants young and old to keep trying to fulfill their intentions. Invite people to walk the Path of Intention.

Session 3

Doing the Best We Can with Intentions

(National Hug Day)

Young Children (P - K)

Wonder Box

Place inside: a Velcro strip with both hook and loops, or a short piece of rope or two pipe cleaners (aka chenille stems)

What is in the wonder box? It's some Velcro! They stick together, one side had tiny loops and one side has tiny hooks, you can feel the different sides. Our shoes sometimes have Velcro on them. Are there any Velcro straps today? Velcro is like a hug. When we intend to be loving, we give a hug. When people hug, they grab onto each other, just like Velcro. Can you be Velcro? Today is hug day. We can say, "Would you like a hug?" and then give everyone a hug who wants one. If we do the best we can, we ask first. If they don't want a hug, we can say, "OK" and send them love with a handshake or a smile. When you are given a hug, a shake or a smile, say, "Thank-you." Can you practice that with me?

Invite the children to turn to each other and ask,

"Do you want a hug, a shake or a smile?"

then perform the choice.

Hugee says, "Thank-you!"

Story

Hug Machine!

by Scott Campbell

Video Song - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yligbZFg5eM>

Book - <http://amzn.to/2yh00UP>

Who have YOU hugged today? Open your arms to this delightfully tender, goofy, and sweet tale. Watch out world, here he comes! The Hug Machine! Whether you are big, or small, or square, or long, or spikey, or soft, no one can resist his unbelievable hugs! HUG ACCOMPLISHED!

Mindfulness

Listen to the bell with me until the sound disappears. In the silence we close our eyes and imagine the best hugs we've ever received. Can you wrap your arms around yourself and give yourself a hug? Hugs make us feel loved. When we hug, it is our intention to share love and care with someone else. Now open your eyes and share who you were thinking of when you imagined the best hugs you've ever received? Was it from your pet, a grandparent, a lovely tree branch?

Hug Fingerplays and Rhymes

Rhyme: Criss Cross

Criss, cross, applesauce (draw an X on child's back with fingers)

Spiders running up your back (walk fingers up child's back)

Cool breeze (blow gently on back of child's head)

Tight squeeze (give child a big hug)

Now you've got the shivers! (tickle child gently all over)

Movement: I Can Hug!

I can hug, hug, hug

I can hop, hop, hop

I can kiss, kiss, kiss

I can stop, stop, stop

I can nod my head for yes,

And I can shake my head no,

And I can sit down very slow.

<https://dtdlstorytimes.wordpress.com/tag/hugs/>

Where is Thumbkin?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouFjfxrs4cE>

Give a big hug for all fingers at the end.

Arts and Crafts

Mail-a-Hug

<https://sunflowerstorytime.com/2013/10/04/hugs/>

Outline the children's two hands. Invite them to decorate their hands. Cut them out. Add a piece of yarn between the two hands. Place them in an envelope to send home, along with this saying:

Wrap these hands around you,

Whenever I'm away.

So you can have a hug from me,
anytime of the day!

Hug Day Poster

Draw the outline of the children's hands on a large sheet of paper, and write the names in the hands. Make a circle around the words "Happy Hug Day!" "Do you want a hug, a shake or a smile?" Invite the children to decorate it with markers.. Hang it on the door.

"Sunshine"(connection with nature and our bodies) and Movement

Winter hugs

Take a walk outside. It is our intention to be loving! Can you hug big things, small things, cold things, spiky things? Can you hug the sun, can you hug the air? How many children can be in a great big hug? Can you hug a friend? Remember to ask if your friend needs a hug and then hug them if they say yes.

Duck, Duck, Hug

Play like Duck, Duck, Goose

It's Hug Day! Sit in a circle.

IT goes around the circle, tapping each head and saying "Duck"

It silently chooses a child and taps their head, saying “Hug!” instead of “Duck.” The chaser (tapped child) jumps up and chases IT.

It runs around the circle to try to make it to the chaser’s empty seat. The chaser jumps up and tries to tag IT before they reach the empty spot. If IT makes it to the empty seat, IT sits down and the tapped child becomes IT.

Whether IT makes the empty seat or not, the tapped child says, “Do you want a hug, a shake or a smile?”

IT stands up, chooses and they perform the chosen action.

Whoever is IT goes around the circle and taps out Duck, Duck, Hug, again.

Service

Intend to spread love. Ask someone if they would like a hug, a shake or a smile. If they say yes, give them one!

Elementary Aged Children (1 - 5th)

Reflection

Prop: a strip of Velcro, or Velcro on a shoe or closure.

Who has Velcro on their shoes or clothing? It is a way of holding things together. We can be Velcro for National Hug Day and give people hugs. Here's the thing. Velcro can drive some teachers nuts, the rip, rip, rip going on in class isn't right when you are supposed to be concentrating. Some people don't want a hug. So we must do the best we can with our intention to spread love, but also realize that sometimes we do things which have a different impact. Here's how we can do the best we can with our intention to spread love. We can ask, "Do you want a hug?" Then we let the person decide. If they say, "Yes!" we give them a hug. If they say no, you might say, "OK. That's OK. Would you like a handshake or a smile?" If they still say no, we say "OK, bye" and don't bug them anymore. Or we can offer a handshake or a smile if they chose.

Just remember to do the best you can. There will be mistakes. Just keep trying, because love is worth it.

Story

The Scratched Diamond

Based on a tale told in the 1700s by the Jewish teacher, Jacob ben Wolf Kranz, Maggid of Dubno. In Tapestry of Faith, Love Will Guide Us, We are Loved, Flaws and All.

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session5/168619.shtml>

Reflect on the story with the following questions:

Have you ever had a time when you saw something get changed in a way that made you feel a big "wow" of wonder and awe?

I wonder what it means to say a person can have scratches like a diamond?

I wonder how people's scratches could be made beautiful? What are some "scratches" on us? What could they be turned into?

Have you ever worked really hard to learn a new way to behave or to learn a new skill? Is that awesome?

We fail at our intentions. The only way to live in the world is to dust ourselves off after we fail, and do the best we can. We are scratched diamonds, and can work to make our flaws into flowers.

Music

Heart Song Chant

From Tapestry of Faith, Wonderful Welcome, The Gift of Ourselves

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session15/120910.shtml>

Music Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJe-W_pD_6Y

Learn a simple song and movements that embody the intention of being present, being aware, and being authentically responsive to others.

Mindfulness

Metta Meditation

<https://www.mettainstitute.org/mettameditation.html>

To practice loving-kindness meditation, sit in a comfortable and relaxed manner. Take two or three deep breaths with slow, long and complete exhalations. Let go of any concerns or preoccupations. For a few minutes, feel or imagine the breath moving through the center of your chest - in the area of your heart.

Metta is first practiced toward oneself, since we often have difficulty loving others without first loving ourselves. Sitting quietly, mentally repeat, slowly and steadily, the following or similar phrases:

May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease...
Invite the bell.

In this meditation, we begin with ourselves, because without loving yourself it is almost impossible to truly love others. Then, extend it to a friend or a person in your family.
May you be happy. May you be well. May you be safe. May you be peaceful and at ease....
Invite the bell.

Then we extend it to all.

May we be happy. May we be well. May we be safe. May we be peaceful and at ease...
Invite the bell.

Repeat it in your mind for several seconds.

Invite the bell, to return to the present.

Song

May I Be Happy

With Betsy Rose

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RU_Vj0kytFo

The metta meditation as a song.

Craft Activity

Metta Meditation for Home

Make copies of the Metta Meditation words above for each participant. Invite them to decorate the page to hang somewhere in their home, to remind themselves to practice the lovingkindness meditation.

Clean Velcro and Remove Lint

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

Use a pocket comb and fix the Velcro loop on shoes and clothing in the group! Make it more “huggable” for National Hug Day! While you are working, watch the video about Why Velcro works and how it was invented from a burr. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgclivxODHO>

Role Play

Daily Choices Help Us Grow in our Intentions

From Tapestry of Faith, Love Surrounds Us, Peaceful Choices

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session13/170301.shtml>

How peaceful choices can help us grow. We do the best we can to live our intentions.

Game

Relish Mistakes! Game (name suggested by Connie Goodbread, Congregational Life Staff, UUA Southern Region)

Adapted from <https://www.mindsetkit.org/practices/BUU1z2ft2eVy8YZ1>

Participants engage in a game where they intentionally make mistakes and see if others can spot their mistakes. This is to encourage participants to feel comfortable making and learning from mistakes, doing the best they can and trying again. This game uses arithmetic problems because of how clear the mistakes are, and how much anxiety they can produce.

- 1) Gamers work individually to complete a set of arithmetic problems (8 or 9) suitable for the age group. See <http://www.k5learning.com/free-math-worksheets> for worksheets.
- 2) Gamers are put into small groups and assigned one of the problems to present to the large group.
- 3) Gamers share their individual solutions with their small group and choose a solution to share with the larger group on a whiteboard, chalkboard, or piece of paper.
- 4) IMPORTANT! The small group must plan one intentional mistake in their solution. They can choose a mistake one of their members made (this leads to a discussion of who had "the best mistake") or they can think of a mistake other gamers might make. They can make as many unintentional mistakes as they like.
- 5) As each group shares their solutions, the rest of the group listens and attempts to find their mistake. When they find their mistake, they MUST ask a question in order to get the group to admit their mistake: "Why did you...?" "Can you explain how you did....?"

"Sunshine"(connection with nature and our bodies)

One Word Intentions Game

As suggested by Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis, DRE at San Gabriel UU Georgetown, TX. Play outside, weather permitting.

Invite the group to stand in a circle. Explain the game of One Word Intentions something like this: Living by intention means finding our inner voice and our true self, then making choices which help us express our true selves in the world the best we can. I'm going to ask you to come up with an intention, and it should be expressed in one word and a movement. Take a moment to think of one word which comes from your true self and expresses an intention to live it the best you can. Think of a way to move when you say that one word to the group. Include your name. For instance, I say My name is Mary. I intend to be "curious" and I make binoculars over my eyes. Each person repeats the name, word and movement of the people before them. The first person repeats the entire group.

Service

- Create a group poster of the Metta Meditation to hang in the RE hall.
- Teach the song to a younger group.

- Offer a Velcro loop cleaning for anyone!

Session 4

Acting on our Intentions (Full Blue Moon)

Young Children (P - K)

Wonder Box

Place inside: a small [moon keychain](#), picture of the moon, a ping pong ball as the moon

What is in the Wonder Box today? A moon! Do you ever see the moon? Sometimes it is a small silver sliver, sometimes it is big and round. Just like our intentions! Sometimes we remember to be kind and caring, sometimes we forget, but we can always try again. The moon will be full, big and round in a few days (Jan. 31). This one is called a Super moon because it will look so big when it comes up. We can be Super kids, too, and be super kind and super caring on the Super Moon!

Story

Papa, Get the Moon For Me

by Eric Carle)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lewuMMalC8A>

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Papa-Please-Moon-World-Carle/dp/B008GATQ1A>

A fantasy story but also describes the waxing and waning of the moon.

Mindfulness

Invite the children to sit and listen to the sound of a bell, a gong, or singing bowl until it disappears. Put towels around the circle, one for each child. Say something like this:

“We let go of our busy things. We sit so still. We invite the sound of the bell. We listen until the sound is gone.” We close our eyes and find we are in a magical place. It is so pretty. We see the big round super moon. It turns us into super kids. We have big hearts, we have big muscles, we have big smiles.

Now open our eyes. We are going to be super kind and caring! We open our eyes and find our super cape!

Superman Song Dance

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9vrfEoc8_g

Put on the towel capes and let them fly around the room, Super kids for the Super moon. Children may hold their capes shut around their neck or use a clothespin.

Fingerplay and Song

We're Flying to the Moon
(tune: “The Farmer in the Dell”)

We're flying to the moon.

We're flying to the moon.

Blast off, away we go,
We're flying to the moon.
Repeat with these verses:
We're going in a spacecraft...
We're walking out in space...
We're landing on the moon...
We're collecting moon rocks...
We're flying back to Earth...
We're landing on the Earth...

Super Kids Fingerplay

To the tune of "[Open, Shut Them](#)"

Kindness, Caring
Kindness, Caring
Give a great big clap!
Kindness, Caring
Kindness, Caring
Lay them in your lap.
Fly them, fly them
Fly them, fly them
Be a super kid! (bicep curl)
Open wide your great big heart (throw arms wide)
And let the kindness in! (hug yourself)

Arts and Crafts

Decorate the full Super moon. Give each child a [cardboard cake round](#) or a paper plate. Use markers, and glue sticks. Add silver and gold paper. Add a note on the back of each moon, to be a Super kid and look for the Super moon on Jan. 31. Make an extra for the congregational coffee hour.

Sunshine (or Movement)

Take your capes and moon outside and fly! Sing the Super kids fingerplay and clap and play it with your whole body and the moon and cape!!

Service

Make a Super moon for the Coffee Hour. Decorate it and write "Look for the Super moon, Jan. 31."

Elementary Aged Children (1 - 5th)

Reflection

Props: a conch shell, a stethoscope, a set of earbuds or headphones (something for listening)

Here are things we use for listening. Pass them around and invite the participants to listen. We listen to our inner voices. Can we use these things to listen to our inner voice? Not really. Our inner voice speaks inside of us, in ways which can't be heard with ears. But the inner voice is just as beautiful as our heartbeat, the whisper of the ocean in the shell, our favorite music playing.

When we set an intention according our deepest values and inner voice, we try to live out the way of our intention. If our intention is to value living things, we may try to walk gently on the earth. We may try to make choices which help us live simply. One of the things about intention is that when we fail, we can always return to our intention and try again. That is because intention is connected to our deepest values and inner voice. Living with intention takes practice. Each time we fail, we return to practice again. We can't expect to be perfect, nobody is perfect. But we can keep practicing.

There's an astronomical event coming up which can help us remember to act on our intentions. On January 31, we will be able to see the second full moon of the month. This doesn't happen very often, only once in every 32 months. Astronomers call these second full moons "Blue Moons." The moon won't really be blue, though. It will be a Super moon, too, which means it will appear extra bright and large when it comes up. No matter the color, two full moons in a month is rare, and that is what the phrase "Once in a blue moon" means. So try to see the moon on Jan. 31 in the morning for the perfect full moon 8:27 a.m. EST, 7:27 a.m. CST, 6:27 a.m. MST, 5:27 a.m. PST.

And whenever you see the moon this month, let the moon be a reminder to practice intention more than "once in a blue moon!"

Here are two stories about acting on our intentions. Both involve inner voice, both involve letting go of the outcome.

Story

The Answer is in Your Hands

Adapted from an Indian folk tale. In Tapestry of Faith, Moral Tales, Do No Harm.

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session11/story1>

Invite a discussion to encourage an understanding of the intentions for all of the characters in the story, while helping the children to understand and integrate the idea of taking action on your intentions, whether harmful or of goodwill. By allowing his intentions to change, the boy prevented harm.

How do you suppose the bird felt, when it was in the boy's hands?

How do you suppose the old woman felt, when the children were testing her? When the boy had the bird behind his back?

How do you suppose the boy was feeling? Why do you think he wanted so badly to prove the old woman wrong?

What would you have been feeling if you were one of the children standing with the boy?

Why did the old woman answer the boy's question by saying, "The answer is in your hands?"

What would you have done, if the bird was in your hands?

It wasn't the boy's intention to learn to value the life of the bird, it was his intention to disprove the old woman's wisdom.

Trees for Kenya

From Tapestry of Faith, Circle of Trees, Come Be with Trees

Text: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop8/288840.shtml>

Book: Wangari's Trees of Peace, a True Story from Africa

By Jeannette Winter

<http://amzn.to/2yo7w0a>

As a young girl growing up in Kenya, Wangari was surrounded by trees. But years later when she returns home, she is shocked to see whole forests being cut down, and she knows that soon all the trees will be destroyed. So Wangari decides to do something—and starts by planting nine seedlings in her own backyard. And as they grow, so do her plans. . . . This true story of Wangari Maathai, environmentalist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is a shining example of how one woman's passion, vision, intention and determination inspired great change. It wasn't Wangari's intention to win a Nobel Prize, it was her intention to save her people.

Mindfulness

Heart Song Chant

From Tapestry of Faith, Wonderful Welcome, The Gift of Ourselves

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session15/120910.shtml>

Music Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJe-W_pD_6Y

Learn a simple song and movements that embody the intention of being present, being aware, and being authentically responsive to others.

Craft Activity

What Would UU Do? Intention Bracelet

From Tapestry of Faith, Moral Tales, Do No Harm

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session11/123537.shtml>

Create a reminder of good intentions.

“Sunshine”(connection with nature and our bodies)

<http://earthsky.org/astronomy-essentials/10-surprising-things-to-see-in-the-daytime-sky>

Take a walk, if the weather allows. See if you can spot space objects in the morning sky. The sun, the moon, the planet Venus, earth-orbiting satellites can sometimes be visible.

Games

In Your Hands Intention Ball Game

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session11/123536.shtml>

Every day we all make decisions to hurt or help the people, other living beings, or the Earth around us. We can practice intentions of peacefulness and doing no harm, and help to create peace.

Service

Create extra “What would UU Do” bracelets and give them to someone else.

Chapel

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

Welcome Centerpiece

Choose a color for a cloth, a chalice, an offering box, a way of sharing Joys and Sorrows (candles or rocks in water). Brown candles for brown trees, smooth stones for the groundedness of intentions, brown twigs. As part of the meditation, you will be inviting the participants to take home a smooth stone.

Entering

Invite the singing bowl. (Ring the bowl)
"To this quiet place of beauty, we come from busy things
Pausing for a moment for the thoughts that quiet brings."

Songs/ Music

Sing this as a song or play the video to set the mood for the Chapel.

Find your Inner Voice

Listen, Listen, Listen to My Heart Song

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJe-W_pD_6Y

Fail. Fail Again. Keep Trying

Return Again

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkxWD2p9cxs>

Chalice Lighting

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

Offering (optional)

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

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

"We listen to each other, it is a holy act
To share our joys and sorrows, with grace it flows on back."
You may always say, "Pass."
If you wish to share, say your name, then light a candle or drop a rock in the water for your joy or

concern.

“For all the joys and concerns which remain unspoken, we light this candle/add this rock.”

Meditation on Intention

Move into a comfortable position and close your eyes if you are comfortable.

Relax your toes, your calves, your knees, your hips, your torso, your shoulders. Feel the tension in your fingers and hands be released. Feel your elbows and biceps relax. Take a deep breath and feel your lungs move deeply and slowly. Move your tongue from the top of your mouth, relax your jaw, and ears, and eyebrows.

Imagine walking down a path. What is around you? ...

You meet a living thing on the path. It is the image of your inner voice. What does it look like?

Imagine your inner voice whispering to you about your true self. What does it say?

Imagine that you have been given an intention. What is it?.....

The intention becomes a smooth stone. You put it in your pocket and keep walking down the path.

You forget about your inner voice, and it disappears.

You walk along and trip over a rock jutting up in the path. You fall and then sit up rubbing the place where you landed....

Your inner voice returns and helps you up, and sets you back on your path. It reminds you of your stone.

You reach in your pocket and feel the smooth stone which is your intention. You smile because you can always find it again, and be reminded of your intention. Feel that deep satisfaction of knowing you can trip up, but always return to your intention....

Remain in this place of Intention and peace for ten breaths. Then I will invite the bell.

Ring the bell.

Return slowly to this room, to your body, open your eyes when you are ready. Carry the smooth stone of Intention with you this month!

Invite them to choose a real smooth stone from the centerpiece to take home.

Story, optional

Use one of the recommended stories/songs For All Ages, or a book from the book recommendations.

Songs/ Videos, redux

Extinguishing the Chalice

We gather the warmth of love, the light of truth,

and the energy of action into our hearts

Back into the world of do and say

Carry it forward into the dawning day.

Go Now in Peace, Amen.

Move your arms to express the actions: gather using a cupping motion from the flame of the chalice to your heart, spread that outward again.

Add Ons

Resources to expand or deepen your programming. For those who have a longer program, a second hour or a Wednesday Family Night.

Calendar Connections & links

Interfaith:

- [Epiphany](#) (Christian) - Jan. 6
 - <http://www.freekidstories.org/parents/free-epiphany-stories-videos-coloring-pages-and-activities-for-children>
 - <http://www.catholicinspired.com/2013/01/lots-of-epiphany-crafts-and-ideas.html>
- [Tu BiShevat](#) (Jewish) - Jan. 30/31 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
 - http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/819712/jewish/The-15th-of-Shevat.htm

Unitarian Universalist:

- [Thirty Days of Love](#) - Standing on the Side of Love Campaign - Jan.16 - Feb.14
 - https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/lfd/ssl_mg_resource.pdf
- [Millard Fillmore's Birthday](#) - Jan. 7 (1800)
 - <http://www.ducksters.com/biography/uspresidents/millardfillmore.php>
- [Joseph Tuckerman's Birthday](#) - Jan 18 (1778)
 - <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session5/161801.shtml>

National & Cultural:

- [New Year's Day](#) - Jan.1
 - <http://www.parents.com/holiday/new-years/resolution/smart-new-years-resolutions-kids-can-make/>
- The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln - Jan. 1 (1863)
 - http://www.ducksters.com/history/emancipation_proclamation.php
 - <http://www.pbs.org/video/american-experience-emancipation-proclamation/>
- MLK, Jr. Day - Jan. 15 (connections [here](#) and [here](#))
 - Martin's Big Words Picture Book <http://amzn.to/2gkmGNC>
- International Holocaust ([Shoah](#)) [Remembrance Day](#) - Jan. 27 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
 - http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/lesson_plans/index.asp
 - http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/learning_environments/my_doll_razner/index.asp
- [Two Super Moons in January](#) - Jan. 2 and Jan. 31 - the Full Wolf Moon and the "Blue Moon" Celebrate our 5th Source of Science and Reason.
 - <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/observing/celestial-objects-to-watch/once-in-a-blue-moon/>

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [National Hug Day](#) - Jan.21

- [I'm Not Going To Take it Anymore](#) Day - Jan. 7th
- Birthday of [Thomas Merton](#) - Jan. 31 (1915) (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Belly Laugh Day](#) - Jan. 24 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

Resources For General Theme Exploration:

Intention and Inner Voice

26 Things to Say to Nurture Your Child's Inner Voice

<http://schoolmum.net/parenting/parenting-tips/26-things-say-nuture-childs-inner-voice-free-printable/>

Fail Again. Fail Better.

4 Steps to Forgiveness

<http://www.oprah.com/spirit/4-Steps-to-Forgiveness-Dr-Ned-Hallowell>

Making Mistakes

<https://www.tes.com/lessons/dK3NDivX3oQX2w/making-mistakes-3-part-lesson>

Intention and Doing the Best We Can

We are All Doing the Best We Can

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-robbins/compassion_b_1164090.html

Moral Intent

<http://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/video/best-self-part-3-moral-intent>

Intention and Action

A Ritual of Letting Go, Cleansing, intention and Hope by Rev. Lois Van Leer

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/ritual/ritual-letting-go-cleansing-intention-and-hope>

Celebrating the New Year

<https://www.uua.org/worship/holidays/new-year>

Youth and Young Adult

Here are a variety of components for use in your Middle School/Sr High/Young Adult Groups. In addition, check out:

- *the Stories for All Ages section*
- *this month's Soul Matters Small Group Packet (after all, isn't Youth Group a Small Group Ministry?!)*
- *an adult worship service on "Being A People of Intention"*

Intention Practice

Practice coming home to your intentions. Align with the deepest part of yourself.

Set an intention at the beginning of your time together. Each person writes it on their arm. "I intend to... (something that aligns with the deepest part of yourself.) Throughout the time together, ask yourself if you are being true to your intention. If not, start doing so immediately, as best you are able. If you get lost or overwhelmed, simply come home to yourself. Start over. Each time you start over, you are taking one more step toward finding your own authenticity and freedom. In that moment, you are remembering yourself and grounding your life in your heart's intention. Adapted from Dharma Wisdom, The Heart's Intention by Phillip Moffitt <http://dharmawisdom.org/teachings/articles/hearts-intention>

Reflections

What Guides Me?

From Tapestry of Faith, What We Choose: Ethics for UU's, Locus of Moral Authority
<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/ethics/workshop1/191692.shtml>

Intentions come from our inner voices. Spend some time journaling and/or drawing about a story from science, folktale, your experience, etc. which guides you when making difficult choices. Then, share these stories. Finally, share the story of Emerson's choice not to serve communion to his Unitarian congregation. <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/ethics/workshop1/191693.shtml>

Resolutions and Intentions

Did you celebrate New Year's last week? How? One tradition is to think of a resolution for the year. Did you make a resolution? Want to share it?

Resolutions are sometimes helpful. After all, it is a New Year and a good time to try a new beginning. Many people say "I want to be a better soccer player." "I want to stop a bad habit I have."

The problem is, resolutions are hard to keep. If you ask many people, the resolutions fall by the wayside in a few weeks. Resolutions are about goals or habits, and **pull us away** from who we are. They set a goal for the future and we live in the present.

The theme for the month is "What does it mean to be a people of Intention?" An intention is different from a resolution. An intention **pulls us into who we truly are**. An intention comes from an inner voice and is connected to your true self in a spiritual way. (As suggested by Doug Taylor, Tacoma UU in Tacoma, WA)

In Hinduism, the classic Vedic text known as the Upanishads declares,

“You are what your deepest desire is.
As your desire is, so is your intention.
As your intention is, so is your will.
As your will is, so is your deed.
As your deed is, so is your destiny.”

Notice the “You are.” An intention is rooted in the present moment. The present moment contains the seed of your actions.

There are 4 steps to “Being a person of Intention.”

5. Find and listen to your inner voice, usually through meditation or mindfulness.
6. Release your intention so it can change and evolve.
7. Plan on failure and making mistakes.
8. Practice revisiting your intention after you lose track or make a mistake. Return to it.

Spiritual Intentions Fill in the Blank.

Read the Spiritual Intentions as a total piece, including the italicized words. Then invite the group to write their own spiritual intentions at the appropriate break points.

I ask for.....

grace, authenticity, deeper meaning, positive growth, reverence and awe, transcendence, a blazing life and a glorious death,

in harmony with.....

Sacred Mystery, Ultimate Reality, Spirit of Life, God, the Universe

and filled with

unexpected and unfathomable blessings,

as I move into

ever new, ancient, exciting and restful waves of life

as an...

inspired human being on this earth and a pure soul.

May everyone be blessed with...

everything they deserve in a kindly, forgiving, and loving way.

Videos

21 Pilots - Truce

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

Now the night is coming to an end
The sun will rise and we will try again

[Chorus]

Stay alive, stay alive for me
You will die, but now your life is free
Take pride in what is sure to die

- Suggested by Connie Goodbread, Congregational Life Staff UUA Southern Region

Find your Inner Voice

Listen, Listen, Listen to My Heart Song

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJe-W_pD_6Y

Fail. Fail Again. Keep Trying Return Again

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkxWD2p9cxs>

Create a Ritual

Mistakes Hook Ritual

What do you do when you make mistakes? Many faiths have a ritual. UU's don't - YET. Create one because we all make mistakes and need a way to return to our intentions.

A mistake is like a sharp, rusty hook. It stabs into us and reminds us we are failing. How do we flatten the hook, remove it, and return to our intentions? As you review these steps, think of ways to create a ritual with them. Elements in other rituals of forgiveness include prayer, music, candles, tasks, mantras, incense, body position, communion, and celebration.

- What set the hook? - A way to acknowledge what happened. Deep listening and speaking truth.
 - a. A storytelling, a candlelight vigil
- Imagine life without the hook - What do you want once the hook is flattened and removed? - What do you want to turn the mistake into? Meditation and Visualization.
 - a. A song of hope (Return Again)
- Flatten the hook - give thanks and gratitude for what you do have. Make a plan to make things better. Analyzation and Atonement.
 - a. Light incense to clear the air
 - b. Perform some tasks
- Remove the hook - renounce the anger, move forward to remove the poison from the anger. Stay centered. Mantra and Expression.
 - a. Think of a way to symbolically remove the hurt, poison and anger. Writing on paper and burning it, throwing a stone over a cliff, using dissolving paper in water.
- Permission to heal - actively create the life without the hook. Intention and Action. Celebration and sharing.
 - a. Re-gather, recommit to your intentions. Reconcile with the universe. Song (Listen to My Heartsong) Handshake or hug.

Arts and Crafts

Intention Stepping Stone Path

Buy kits to make cement stepping stones: <http://amzn.to/2hFwq1G>

Buy a kit to paint: <http://amzn.to/2hFS5H1>

Or paint rocks to line a path.

Make a stepping stone path to remind congregants young and old to keep trying to live their intentions.

Write the words from Samuel Beckett's *Worstward Ho* -

"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better."

Science and Sunshine

How Many Trees Do you Need?

Calculate your carbon imprint on this Botany site.

<https://botany.org/PlantTalkingPoints/CO2andTrees.php>

Have you set an intention to live a less consuming life? Find out how many trees you need to offset your CO2 production on this site. Then, go outside, weather permitting, and consider the trees you see. It takes, very roughly, 7 or 8 trees to produce the amount of oxygen a person consumes in 1 year. As you walk, open your mind to the awareness of your breath, and the breath of the trees.

Mindfulness

Discerning Intentions

Quote from Parker J. Palmer, Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation

“Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent.”

Get into a comfortable position. Allow your body and mind to relax. Imagine walking down a path... The path is the path of your life. Listen to the sounds around you while you walk on the path. You hear a voice. It whispers in your ear. Let your life whisper what it intends to do with you. You listen more deeply. Let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent.

Play some meditative music.

Invite the participants to return to their bodies, to this room and when they are ready, open their eyes.

Invite them to draw an image from their visualization. Invite them to share, if they are willing.

Silent Vigil

From Parker Palmer’s *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*

“The soul is like a wild animal — tough, resilient, savvy, self-sufficient, and yet exceedingly shy. If we want to see a wild animal, the last thing we should do is to go crashing through the woods, shouting for the creature to come out. But if we are willing to walk quietly into the woods and sit silently for an hour or two at the base of a tree, the creature we are waiting for may well emerge, and out of the corner of an eye we will catch a glimpse of the precious wildness we seek.”

Take a tarp and sleeping bag outside, along with some journaling materials. Sit for an hour, or as long as you have. Give your shy and wild soul a chance to emerge. Write or draw what comes out.

Meditation

Two-Minute Meditation for Crazy-Busy People With Waylon Lewis

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=33&v=U5WT9eU2Qal

Waylon Lewis of Elephant Journal leads Meditation.

Games

Forced Choice Game

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/windows/session16/143959.shtml>

We can make choices to keep our intentions or leave them behind.

UU Sorts and Mingle Game

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/windows/session16/143960.shtml>

If we are to try to be a people of Intention, we make choices about how we live our Unitarian Universalism.

Intention Paradox Juggling

From a quote by Parker Palmer

To be a people of intention we want to live with faith, hope and love. But there are paradoxes to those intentions.

“The deeper our faith, the more doubt we must endure; the deeper our hope, the more prone we are to despair; the deeper our love, the more pain its loss will bring: these are a few of the paradoxes we must hold as human beings. If we refuse to hold them in the hopes of living without doubt, despair, and pain, we also find ourselves living without faith, hope, and love.”

Needed: Three things to juggle - balls for those with some juggling experience, or silk scarves or balloons for those for whom slow catching is helpful.

Embody the Intention Paradox of faith/doubt, love/pain. hope/despair and juggle 3 items. Life is a circus- learn with intention to juggle these paradoxes.

How to Learn Juggling with Balls

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2_j6kMg1co

How to Learn Juggling with Scarves

<http://bit.ly/2yGnkNe>

Virtual Juggling

Or do it virtually! After trying the real juggling, pretend to juggle and be a successful juggler of the intention paradoxes. You can accomplish virtual tricks, virtually juggle with a partner, virtually speed up or slow down, juggle virtually huge objects, or tiny objects.

Movies

Big Fish (PG-13)

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319061/?ref=fn_tt_tt_1

A frustrated son tries to determine the fact from fiction in his dying father's life. Illustrates how intention flourishes when we give up control.

Patch Adams (PG-13)

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0129290/?ref=nv_sr_1

The true story of a heroic man, Hunter Patch Adams, determined to become a medical doctor because he enjoys helping people. He ventured where no doctor had ventured before, using humor and pathos. How intention to become a doctor created something bigger than anyone could have imagined.

Pursuit of Happiness (PG-13)

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0454921/?ref=nv_sr_1

Based on the real life of Chris Gardner, this movie stars Will Smith as a single father struggling with homelessness while raising a toddler. The struggles of the father-son duo and his perseverance to follow his dream, even during the toughest of times, will motivate you to keep pursuing your own.

Pay It Forward (PG-13)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0223897/>

Trevor McKinney, a seventh grader from California, is being given a challenging assignment by his social studies teacher. The objective is to plan and implement a strategy that changes the world for the better. Trevor comes up with the inspirational plan to encourage others to pay a favor forward three times, instead of paying it back. The charitable plan starts with Trevor doing three major favors to three people, always asking them to pay the good deed forward to three other people.

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http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0453562/?ref =nv_sr_1

Jackie Robinson is recruited to hit the balls for the Brooklyn Dodgers, which would make him the first African-American player in Major League Baseball. This causes racist hostility against the player from both fans and his teammates. Despite his struggle, Jackie Robinson is able to endure what is happening, which allows him to tunnel his focus onto his goals. Robinson was born on January 31, 1919.

Service (as in service to others)

Enough Stuff Birthday Party

From Tapestry of Faith, World of Wonder, Enough Stuff

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session14/276854.shtml>

In the beginning of the year, support intentions to live a simpler life. Sponsor and lead an “Enough Stuff” Birthday Party and Workshop for all ages. Invite people to sit at tables by birthday month. Discover and share resources for suggesting birthday plans which do not depend on acquiring “more stuff.” How can a birthday be a time of living out intentions to heal a hurting world?

Family and Parent Resources

These resources support parents as they try to live out and engage our themes with their children. We can ask “What does it mean to be a parent of Intention” or “What does it mean to be a family of Intention?” As you use these resources to engage these questions, keep in mind some additional ways to use them with other parents or your church community:

- *Reflect with those in your family.*
- *Share and discuss them with other parents or another family.*
- *Use them in a Parent Circle that meets on Sunday afternoon or mid-week.*

A Book

The Power of Intention: Learning to Co-create Your World Your Way

By Wayne Dyer, suggested by DRE Bob Meiss, Livermore, CA

<http://amzn.to/2hBV9E3>

Reflection

How to Create a Sankalpa

by Kelly McGonigal, Yoga International

<https://yogainternational.com/article/view/how-to-create-a-sankalpa>

The yoga tradition offers a profound formula for realizing your heartfelt desires—without asking you to change who you are. It’s the practice of sankalpa (resolve), as suggested by Rev. Rebecca “Beckett” Coppola, Minister, Kingston Unitarian Fellowship, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Right Intention (Samma Sankappa)

From The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering by Bhikkhu Bodhi

<http://www.vipassana.com/resources/8fp3.php>

A reading from the Vipassana tradition in Buddhism for those interested in more depth, as suggested by Rev. Rebecca “Beckett” Coppola, Minister, Kingston Unitarian Fellowship, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

26 Things to Say to Nurture Your Child’s Inner Voice

<http://schoolmum.net/parenting/parenting-tips/26-things-say-nuture-childs-inner-voice-free-printable/>

Meditation

Two-Minute Meditation for Crazy-Busy People With Waylon Lewis

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=33&v=U5WT9eU2Qal

Waylon Lewis of Elephant Journal leads Meditation.

Video

Dora Celebrates Three Kings Day (30 min)

<http://amzn.to/2xH77SP>

Outlines the celebration of Three Kings Day.

A Family Game

Game of Choices

<https://chaimommas.com/the-game-of-choices-a-fun-way-to-teach-kids-to-make-good-choices>

Help young children learn about choices and intentions.

Movies

Field of Dreams (PG)

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0097351/?ref=fn_tt_tt_1

A farmer is called to change his life and follow a dream—an inner voice—that guides him to turn his cornfield into a baseball field where extraordinary and magical things happen.

Ratatouille (G)

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0382932/?ref=nv_sr_2

Remy, a resident of Paris, appreciates good food, and has quite a sophisticated palate. He would love to become a chef so he can create and enjoy culinary masterpieces to his heart's delight. Despite the fact that he is, well ... a rat, he never lets that stand in the way of his pie-in-the-sky dream.

October Sky (PG)

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0132477/?ref=nv_sr_1

The future of the young Homer Hickam seems predetermined. Just like his father he is supposed to work in the mine – a fate that he shares with almost all men that live in his town. That is until Homer watches the rocket launch of the Sputnik satellite and is inspired by this to build rockets for the science fair.

Additional Resources from Katie Covey

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

Elementary ages

From Spirit of Adventure:

Session #8 - Clara Barton

Session #27 - Daniel Chester French, Unitarian Sculptor of the Lincoln Memorial

Session #31 - Henry David Thoreau

From Picture Book UU:

Session #2 - Old Turtle

Session #17 - On the Night You Were Born

Session #19 - Maria's Comet

Session #20 - Henry Climbs a Mountain

From Picture Book Bible Tales

Session #8 - Queen Esther

Session #9 - Daniel in the Lion's Den

Session #12 - The Wisdom Bird: A Tale of Solomon and Sheba

From Picture Book World Religions

Session #3 - Savitri

Session #10 - Tenzin's Deer

Session #12 - Buddha in the Garden

Youth

From Lodestone, Magnetize Your Middle School

UU Unit

Session #UU5 - Heresy Sunday

Money Unit

Session #M4 - Giving and Values

Death Unit

Session #D3 - Death Clarifies Life

Upcoming Support & Collaboration Opportunities

Come play and think together!

January, 2018

RE Brainstorming Lab on Balance (March theme)

Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2018, 1 p.m. ET

Rich sharing for one of religious educators' favorite pastimes - idea building!

General brainstorm, then use the Theme Matrix to cover all possibilities. We spark off each other.

RE Implementation Lab for Perseverance (February theme)

Wednesday, Jan.17, 2018, 1 p.m. ET

Let's help each other think about using February's packet on Perseverance in our programs!

Using the Guided Conversation approach, we share challenges, opportunities and solutions in this recorded online meeting.

Note: Soul Matters RE Labs are on the First and Third Wednesdays of each month.

- First Wednesday - Brainstorming Lab on theme in 2 months
- Third Wednesday - Implementation Lab on the upcoming month's theme. Recorded and posted on the Soul Matters YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe2pmT_ATh-pbkjF2m7rFOA

On-Going Resources and Support

1. Don't forget about our RE Leader Support Facebook page.

It's a great on-going source of support. Your colleagues are available to support you at the click of a button and with the ease of a post: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/545202255591601/>

2. Check out the Pinterest page on Intention.

Images and links to the books, videos, activities and more as mentioned in this packet.

<https://www.pinterest.com/soulmattersre/2018-intention-january/>

3. Offer your teachers and parents spiritual nourishment and inspiration by encouraging them to join the Soul Matters Inspiration Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>



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