



Soul Matters

What does it mean to be a
people of CREATIVITY?

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Welcome

Welcome to the Soul Matters RE Packet for May's theme of "What Does It Mean to be a People of Creativity?"

We often think of creativity as connected to the arts, and indeed, self-expression is an important role for creativity. In addition, creativity can be an important part of problem solving. Children solve problems through play. Young children are naturals at solving problems by being fluid, playful and creative. Older children begin to lose their willingness to try things and make mistakes, some say because of our educational system which emphasizes correct answers. We, in Unitarian Universalist religious education, value creativity as part of our theology. We do not know the answers to life's questions and prefer to keep it that way. Our theology values thinking, wondering, and skepticism as well as imagination, fluidity, and awe - all qualities of creativity.

With this diverse understanding of creativity in mind, we invite you to explore being a people of creativity through three lenses - problem solving, justice and play. We offer the session on Creativity and Justice with a Mother's Day/Mama's Day theme, highlighting the activist work of [Innosanto Nagara](#). The Memorial Day session on Creativity and Play highlights the creative improvisation of Jazz, an American art form worth celebrating on an American holiday.

This month, we also offer a multigenerational service designed around "Merger Day." It's a celebration of the May 12, 1961 merger of our two denominations, Unitarian and Universalist. This is a way to honor not only the creative imagination it took to envision one new religion out of two, but also the creative leadership of UU youth, since the two youth groups combined nearly 10 years before the adults succeeded. The service itself is a creative one, with lovely, sensory elements in it, like artichoke and grape tasting.

May you float in the jazz of Ella Fitzgerald singing "Old MacDonald" and John Coltrane's "My Favorite Things" as you improv in the creative chaos that is Faith Formation.

Katie, on behalf of the entire Soul Matters Team

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Calendar Connections

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

Interfaith:

- [Beltane](#) (Wiccan) - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Ascension Day](#) (Christian) - May 10 (more [here](#))
- [Shavuot](#) (Jewish) - May 19 -21 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Pentecost](#) (Christian) - May 20 (more [here](#))
- [Visakha Puja](#) -the birth, the Enlightenment, and death of the Buddha.(Buddhist) - May 29 (more [here](#))
- [Ramadan](#) (Islam) - May 15 - June 14 (more [here](#))
- [Ascension of Baha'u'llah](#) (Baha'i) - May 29

Unitarian Universalist:

- [UUA Founding Day](#) (1961) - May 12
- [Emerson's birthday](#) - May 25 (1803)

National & Cultural Holidays:

- [May Day](#)/International Workers Day - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Cinco de Mayo](#) - May 5
- [Mother's Day](#) (US) - May 13
- Memorial Day (US) - May 28

Historical Events:

- [Brown v. Board of Education](#) - May 17 (1954)

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [World Press Freedom Day](#) - May 3
- [Star Wars Day](#) - May 4
- [World Laughter Day](#) - First Sunday in May

Stories for all Ages

Hare's Gifts

From Tapestry of Faith, Creating Home, Hare's Gifts

Adapted from a West African Folktale

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session8/60094.shtml>

How Hare brought the gifts of the drum and the village. Tell the story along with a drummer to celebrate creativity, music and community!

The Scratched Diamond

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

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

Unable to polish the scratch out of the diamond, the diamond carver had instead turned the flaw into something beautiful. A creative solution that captures the truth in the world that flaws can be beautiful.

Faithful Fools - Finding an Inner Clown

From Tapestry of Faith, Chorus of Faiths, Service is Our Prayer

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/chorus/workshop7/faithful-fools>

Kay Jorgensen's clown emerged from her inner creative self. When she was a girl, she witnessed Marcel Marceau offering mime, which changed her life. What creative force might we witness which will change our lives?

Rev. Kay Jorgensen died Jan. 15, 2018. Here's an article with several reflections:

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/monkeymind/2018/01/recalling-faithful-fool-kay-jorgensen.html>

Use this description of her inner clown to weave into the For All Ages Story.

"Kay Jorgensen and Carmen Barsody call themselves fools because the jester or fool is someone who lives without boundaries, someone of no social standing whatsoever but who can go anywhere and say anything... Jorgensen, in fact, was trained in street theater and mime before she attended the Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California. Her alter ego, a clown named Osgood, is never far from her work. Once, when a city official proposed eliminating shopping carts from the streets, Jorgensen qua Osgood led a procession of homeless people from their gathering place at United Nations Plaza to the nearby gilt-domed City Hall and there did his best to rouse the rabble.

Jorgensen, 5 foot 3 inches tall, looks younger than her 69 years. Her short, dark chestnut hair reinforces her youthful look. Whereas her Osgood is brash and confident, a creature very much of this world, Jorgensen herself is soft spoken, open in the quiet, slightly vulnerable way that the best listeners are."

<http://archive.uuworld.org/2001/04/feature1.html>

Meditation on Leftovers

From Tapestry of Faith, Spirit of Life, Roots Hold Me Close

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/life/workshop7/159342.shtml>

“The achievement of a satisfying and palatable meal from leftovers can be a model of how one might conduct one's own life in a creative way.” Serve up this meditation with a small box of your own refrigerator leftovers as a prop.

Emerson's Transparent Eyeball by Rev. Amy Freedman

<https://amyfreedman.net/2017/06/07/emersons-transparent-eyeball-coloring-page/>

Emerson's birthday is May 25. Rev. Freedman and [Peter Bowden](#) have generously offered a coloring page based on the comic which made fun of Emerson's quote. “As Emerson wrote in 1836, “Standing on the bare ground, — my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, — all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.” What if god is Creativity? Share the image with the children, as Rev. Freedman suggests, and invite them to finish the coloring page later.

Song for All Ages

*Hymns and songs that can be used as a Story for All Ages.
Here's a way to invite the music people into multigenerational worship.
Ask them to offer the Song for All Ages with you or instead of
the minister, lay leader or religious educator.*

We Would Be One STLT #318 - a song of the Merger

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMn0QdiTzQM>

Finlandia Hymn in Finnish on an airplane: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9Vmi2cRxsY>

The stirring tune is “Finlandia.” Composed by Jean Sibelius, a Finnish composer. To listen to it in Finnish first, play the video above, by a boys' choir returning to Finland from Switzerland, and singing it together on their flight. It is a stirring tune, “one that is strongly associated with the patriotic movement to free Finland from Russia.”

Between the Lines by Jacqui James, notes on #159 “This is My Song” which uses Finlandia as its tune.

In the story of the merger between Unitarians and Universalists, youth play an important role. In 1951, [the two youth organizations] appointed biologist and minister, Samuel Anthony Wright, to be executive director. He wrote the text of We Would Be One “to accompany the tune “Sibelius” for Unitarian and Universalist youth at their Continental Convention of 1953-54. At this conference they merged to form the Liberal Religious Youth of the United States and Canada, setting a model for the Unitarian Universalist denominational merger in 1961.”

Between the Lines, notes on #318.

The youth groups merged nearly 10 years before the adults! It took some hard work, too. “The final merger votes took place in separate business sessions. [Alice] Harrison, [advisor and director of youth activities] recalls that before the last vote in Hanover, [Indiana] discussion took 7 hours, “without eating, without sleeping, and without hardly getting up to go to the john.”

We Would Be One; History of the Unitarian and Universalist Youth Movement by Wayne Arnason and Rebecca Scott, 2005, pg. 92

https://books.google.com/books?id=OqSKTwsSk6AC&pg=PA93&dq=merger+LRY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwizpK-YnqbZAhVrzlQKHbZXA_wQ6AEIKTAA#v=onepage&q=merger%20LRY&f=false

Book Recommendations

"A Little Jar Labeled Freedom"

by Cynthia B. Johnson in *"What If Nobody Forgave?"* by Colleen M. McDonald (Ed.)

<http://bit.ly/2CTRE4k>

A light-hearted goddess adds to the mix of creation, just to see what will happen. Find a large jar, and add pinches of glitter as you tell the story of the goddess adding pizza, puppies, butterflies and a touch of fire ants! Creativity in creation.

Roxaboxen

by Alice McLerran (author), Barbara Cooney (Illustrator)

Book: https://www.amazon.com/Roxaboxen-Alice-McLerran/dp/0060526335/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518213751&sr=8-1&keywords=roxaboxen+by+barbara+cooney

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYazURngD40>

"Marian called it Roxboxen. There across the road, it looked like any rocky hill—nothing but sand and rocks, and some old wooden boxes. But it was a special place. And all children needed to go there was a long stick and a soaring imagination." - Amazon

Offer this book with a homemade box house or fort as a centerpiece. Consider offering a Recycled City activity afterwards.

The Big Orange Splot

by Daniel Manus Pinkwater

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Big-Orange-Splot-Manus-Pinkwater/dp/0590445103>

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

When Mr. Plumbeaus' house is splashed with bright orange paint, he decides a multi-colored house would be a nice change. A favorite story of creativity and expression. Project the various styles of houses.

The Gardener

by Sarah Stewart (Author), David Small (Illustrator)

https://www.amazon.com/Gardener-Sarah-Stewart/dp/031236749X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518629392&sr=8-1&keywords=the+gardener+by+sarah+stewart

"Lydia Grace Finch brings a suitcase full of seeds to the big gray city, where she goes to stay with her Uncle Jim, a cantankerous baker. There she initiates a gradual transformation, bit by bit brightening the shop and bringing smiles to customers' faces with the flowers she grows. But it is in a secret place that Lydia Grace works on her masterpiece -- an ambitious rooftop garden -- which she hopes will make even Uncle Jim smile." - Amazon. Good for an activity around planting seeds and using flowers and gardening for creativity.

The Starry Night

by Neil Waldman (Author)

Book: https://www.amazon.com/Starry-Night-Neil-Waldman/dp/1590787803/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1518630137&sr=1-4&keywords=The+Starry+night

“Neil Waldman's special book, featuring stunning Van Gogh-inspired paintings of Manhattan, speaks to that part of a child that knows no limits—the imagination.” - Amazon. The African-American boy who meets the mysterious stranger is inspired to create.

Before John was a Jazz Giant; A Song of John Coltrane

by Carole Boston Weatherford (Author), Sean Qualls (Illustrator)

https://www.amazon.com/Before-John-Was-Jazz-Giant/dp/0805079947/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1518791969&sr=1-1&keywords=before+john+was+a+jazz+giant+a+song+of+john+coltrane

“Young John Coltrane was all ears. And there was a lot to hear growing up in the South in the 1930s: preachers praying, music on the radio, the bustling of the household. These vivid noises shaped John's own sound as a musician. ..Before John Was a Jazz Giant is a 2009 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book and a 2009 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.” - Amazon. Reflect on improvisation and play “My Favorite Things” by John Coltrane. The essence of jazz is creativity and improvisation. A jazz theme is suggested for Memorial Day in this packet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWG2dsXV5HI&list=PL23A11132CD8400CD&index=9>

(The entire piece is 13 minutes, so fade out at 2:00)

Sessions

Session 1 Creativity and Problem Solving

Young Children (P - K)

Wonder Box

Place inside: a little car

What is in the wonder box? It is a little car! What does it do? (children will probably make engine noises and tell you that it drives). What if we decided to have the car change what it does? Could we use our imaginations and think up what else a car might be? Could it be a measuring car - and tell us how long the rug is? ("measure" the rug and use a voice to say "the rug is 2 feet long.") Can it measure how tall Johnny is?

What if it is a circle drawer, and takes the crayon and draws a circle on the paper? What else can we think of? (encourage the children to come up with creative roles for the little car. Here are a few others: a friend maker - circling two friends; a kissing helper - drive on shoulders and offer gentle kisses on cheeks; a delivery car - pulling a string to deliver a block; a cook- could it fix a meal. Hey, if the movie "Cars" can use cars as the main characters, our imaginations can do it too!)

Using our imagination and thinking of new ways is called "creativity." The theme this month at our church (congregation) is creativity. We can use our imagination and come up with creative ways to draw, to play and to solve problems.

Story

Emily's Art by Peter Catalanotto (Author, Illustrator)

https://www.amazon.com/Emilys-Art-Peter-Catalanotto/dp/1416926887/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1518629648&sr=1-2&keywords=emily%27s+art

A creative girl loses her passion for art under criticism, then regains it.

Caps for Sale by Esphyr Slobodkina (Author)

https://www.amazon.com/Caps-Sale-Peddler-Monkeys-Business/dp/0064431436/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1518706897&sr=1-1&keywords=Caps+for+Sale

A peddler comes up with a creative solution for retrieving his caps from the monkeys who took them.

Mindfulness

Mindful Super Hero Posing

From <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>

We can use our creativity for meditation, too. We can pretend to be superheroes.

"One easy way for children to dip their toes into mindfulness is through the simple method of body poses. To get your kids interested, tell them that doing fun poses can help them feel strong, brave, and happy. Invite them to try one of the following two poses:

- The Superman: this pose is practiced by standing with the feet just wider than the hips, fists clenched, and arms reached out, stretching the body out as long as possible.
The Wonder Woman: this pose is struck by standing tall with legs wider than hip width apart and hands or fists placed on the hips .
- Spidey Senses: While you're on the subject of superheroes, there is a fun and easy way to introduce your kids to paying attention to the present. Instruct your kids to turn on their "Spidey senses", the super-focused senses of smell, sight, hearing, taste, and touch that Spiderman uses to keep tabs on the world around him. This will encourage them to pause and focus their attention on the present, opening their awareness to the information their senses bring in."

Songs and Fingerplays

Two Little Friends

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=49&v=Lg1xxSY8OOw

How many opposites can the children creatively think of for this finger-play?

Little Mousy Brown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeT-Qu09has>

Who can mousy brown call to? Another creative "call out" finger-play.

Clap your Hands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6CKHGirdWA>

What body movement can you do?

Creative Problem Solving with Blocks

10 Problem Solving Activities

<http://www.howtorunahomedaycare.com/articles/10-problem-solving-activities-using-blocks-for-2-7-yr-olds/>

Offer these "problems" and encourage the children to creatively work on them. Use the little car from the Wonder Box as a prop, too.

"Sunshine" (connection with nature and our bodies)

How Can We....

Use the phrase "How Can We...." and invite the children to solve problems outdoors together.

How can we...

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ● Push this heavy door open? | ● Sneak up on a squirrel? |
| ● Stay safe on the sidewalk? | ● Watch the sky? |
| ● Find a place to run? | ● Cross this log? |
| ● Run around 3 trees? | ● Climb the ladder? |
| ● Play follow the leader? | |

Service

How can the children help the nearby insects, birds and animals at your facility? Are there birds who might need some soft string for their nest? Where can you place it so it isn't litter but helps the birds? Is there a squirrel who might have babies? Could you place peanuts for her? Are there ants who could use some food? How could you leave tiny cracker crumbs without making a mess?

Elementary Aged Children (1st - 5th)

Reflections

Prop: a straw or a jar (depending on which story you tell)

In one story, the Monkey King uses his creativity to solve the problem of drinking in the Water Demon's pond. He invents a bamboo straw so the Demon King can't reach the monkeys while they drink. In the other story, the goddess creates the earth by swirling things in a large jar. One thing she adds is "Freedom" which allows people to be creative in solving problems and making choices.

The theme this month is "How are we a people of Creativity?" Creativity means.... what do you think? We often think of Creativity when we think of art. A creative author or painter, a creative musician, a creative actor. In addition to art, creativity can be applied to anything - gardening, games, cooking, as well as a creative judge, a creative peace-maker, a creative problem solver. Creativity for problem solving is something our world needs to solve some difficult problems. Today, we reflect on creative problem solving.

Story

The Monkey King and the Water Demon

A Jataka Tale from the Buddhists

http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bt1_22.htm

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQXdxTi_7tU

The Monkey King creatively solved a problem by having his monkey tribe drink from bamboo straws. The Water Demon can't eat them.

"A Little Jar Labeled Freedom" by Cynthia B. Johnson in "What If Nobody Forgave?"

https://books.google.com/books?id=7WB5b93OJJIC&pg=PA54&lpg=PA54&dq=a+little+jar+labeled+freedom&source=bl&ots=kGuOJPb-Ke&sig=FORxwqOu8u-l74VGRgKXh3QgvvU&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi2wrK0_aXZAhXJfQKHAEIAfUQ6AEIKTAA#v=onepage&q=a%20little%20jar%20labeled%20freedom&f=false

A light-hearted goddess adds to the mix of creation, just to see what will happen. Find a large jar and add pinches of glitter as you tell the story of the goddess adding pizza, puppies, butterflies and a touch of fire ants! In the end she adds from a jar labelled "Freedom" giving people a choice in how to creatively solve problems and make choices.

Mindfulness

Pebble Meditation

video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXJs9bdcnXw>

Flower fresh; mountain solid and firm; water stillness; space in me and around me. Use Thich Nhat Hanh's mindfulness exercise to stay centered for creative problem solving.

Skit

Designing Flexible and Creative Solutions

From Tapestry of Faith, Sing to the Power,

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session13/230611.shtml>

"Participants exercise creativity, flexibility, and persistence as they seek solutions to real-life situations in which people have opposing needs."

Craft Activity

Follow Up Activities for "A Jar Called Freedom"

- Create a recipe for your own planet, like the one made by the goddess Creator.
- Design your own planet.

Fantasy Name Generator

https://www.fantasynamengenerators.com/elf_names.php

Visit the site and invite the children to choose an Elf, Hobbit, Caveman, etc. name, then draw what they might look like as an elf, Hobbit, or Caveman, etc. Or create their own fantasy name for an animal. How can they use their creativity to figure out what they might look like?

Videos on Creative Problem Solving

Share these videos on various creative problem solvers - a dog, a crow and a toddler.

Dog with a Stick

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_Crlu01SnM

8-part puzzle solving by a crow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbSu2PXOTOc>

Problem-Solving Toddler Style

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBcf7syKGkY>

How to Be an Inventor - Kid President

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75okexRzWMk>

OK Go - Inside Out and Upside Down

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWGJA9i18Co>

This group filmed their song in Zero Gravity - check it out! They are over the top creative! Explore with the kids how it might be created and how they came up with their ideas.

Here's the "Behind the Scenes" video for a bit later: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsnYqu7xq9c>

Creative Problem-Solving Activities

Offer one or several of these activities using recycled/junk supplies:

Inventions

<https://www.encourageplay.com/blog/creative-problem-solving-activities-for-kids>

Using the supplies listed in the blog, or other ones around the facility, offer the following “problems to solve:”

Make a device to move a stuffed animal from one room to another without touching the ground

Devise a slide for mini figures

Make a leprechaun trap

Create a jump ramp for cars

Using at least 4 supplies, build the highest tower you can

Make up your own game - make sure you remember to make rules for how to score and win

Make a device for two people to communicate to one another

Using at least 3 supplies, make a device that can roll 3 feet

Build a house for a small figure

Make an invention that a kid would love.

Recycled City

As suggested by Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis from San Gabriel UU in Georgetown, TX, in the Brainstorm Lab on Creativity.

Read the book, *Roxaboxen*, about children who create forts from odds and ends

Roxaboxen by Alice McLerran (Author), Barbara Cooney (Illustrator)

Book: [https://www.amazon.com/Roxaboxen-Alice-](https://www.amazon.com/Roxaboxen-Alice-McLerran/dp/0060526335/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518213751&sr=8-1&keywords=roxaboxen+by+barbara+cooney)

[McLerran/dp/0060526335/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518213751&sr=8-1&keywords=roxaboxen+by+barbara+cooney](https://www.amazon.com/Roxaboxen-Alice-McLerran/dp/0060526335/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518213751&sr=8-1&keywords=roxaboxen+by+barbara+cooney)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYazURngD40>

Invite the children to create a city of boxes. Those who remember the curriculum, “Haunting House,” will resonate with this one! Collect tiny boxes, such as jewelry boxes, and school milk cartons, or huge ones, such as dishwasher boxes, depending on the availability of boxes and transportation. Or lacking boxes, use sheets and blankets over tables and chairs to create a fort. There will be lots of problems to solve. How do we make room? How do we help each other? How do we cut the boxes? Invite the children to collaborate to come up with creative ways to solve the problems which arise.

Junk Sculpture

Using duct tape and recyclables, such as oatmeal boxes, egg cartons, and plastic, invite the children “to create junk sculpture.” Make sure to have a large trash can handy for scraps.

Games

Augusto Boal's Arsenal of Games from Theatre of the Oppressed

As suggested by Leah Purcell, Albany, NY in the Brainstorm Lab

<https://organizingforpower.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/games-theater-of-oppressed.pdf>

There are myriad games listed starting on pg. 5 which Boal uses to warm up participants in his workshops. Leah says, "The problem-solving role play invites everyone to take a role. The ministerial intern at our congregation is familiar with it and we've played "Bombs and Shields..." We changed the name of this one to "Raindrops and Bumbershoots."

"Sunshine" (connection with nature and our bodies)

How Can We....

Invite the children outdoors to creatively solve some problems. How can we....

- Get our whole group across this plank/log/see-saw?
- Hang upside down together?
- Create a path to a fantasy land?
- Play a game with everyone?
- Find a place to rest?
- Hide?

Also, can the children make the letters "UU" out of their bodies on the grass? Here's an example shared from Peter Bowden from Star Island RE Week: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0sCD2vPx4I>

Service

Extend the "How Can We" problem solving to ways they can be responsible and show leadership by helping out in the outdoor area. How can we:

- Dig up weeds around the area?
- Make something more beautiful?
- Create a place to sit?
- Help others enjoy the area?
- Help something grow?

Session 2

Creativity and Justice (Mama's Day)

Young Children (P - K)

Wonder Box

Place inside: a flower

I wonder what is in the box... (pull out the flower) Here is a flower! It is Mother's Day today, and we want to celebrate all of the people who take care of us. Sometimes we give them flowers, sometimes we give them a hug. There are many ways to show we love them. When we say, "I love you," we show that we care for them.

Story

Various Books for Mother's/Father's Day

In Tapestry of Faith, Chalice Children

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session37/299992.shtml>

Mindfulness

Say something like this:

Ring the bell. We put our hands on our hearts and feel the beating. Can you feel it? We breathe in love and breathe out peace. Our breath is coming out of us. It is emerging from us. We let it go.

Offer the following simple Meditation.

May I be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be free.

May you be happy. May you be peaceful. May you be free.

May we be happy. May we be peaceful. May we be free.

This is what we wish for the people who we love.

Songs and Fingerplays

Happy Loving Day (for Mama's Day)

Sing "Happy Loving Day," to the tune of "Happy Birthday":

Happy Loving Day to you,

Happy Loving Day to you,

Happy Loving Day, dear mommy/daddy/[name]

Happy Loving Day to you.

Take turns inserting the names of people you know who love each other.

Make a heart with your hands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObvuZzRiA2k>

Show this to those you love!

Sesame Street Make Your Own Art

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrLJh62VN24>

Prepare for making something for Mother's Day and sing-a-long with the video.

Activities

Mother's Day Themed Activities and Games

<https://www.kidssoup.com/activity/preschool-mothers-day-crafts-activities-games-and-rhymes>

Arts and Crafts

Flower Corsages

From Tapestry of Faith, Chalice Children, Mother's/Father's Day

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session37/299993.shtml>

Movement

Make a Giant Love Card

"You need a large sheet of newspaper print to cover a table and any music from CD or tape. Allow the children to walk around the table with marker or crayon in hand, making movements on the paper to the beat of the music. Vary types of music, or play a stop and go "freeze" game. Combines art, music, and movement together. Ask children to draw what the music sounds like!"

<https://perpetualpreschool.com/music-and-movement-activities/>

When the parent(s) are picking up their children, play the music and invite them to look at the Giant Love Card the children have created.

"Sunshine" (connection with nature and our bodies)

Parents in Nature

Go outside and look for places where there might be birds or animals who have made a nest or home for their babies. What kind of places might animal mothers want for their babies? A safe place, a warm place.

Service (to others)

Create extra flower corsages for others in the church/congregation, such as the minister or an elder. Or how about a flower corsage for the parents of a new baby?

Elementary Aged Children (1 - 5th)

Reflection

Props: multi colored skin tone markers <https://www.amazon.com/Crayola-Multicultural-Colors-Washable-Markers/dp/B000F8V2GS>

Everyone put your hands in the center of our circle. Take a look at all of the skin tones which are represented. (Even if everyone is White, there may be olive, beige and peach tones present.) These markers weren't around for a long time. They were invented in 1992. There was no way to draw all of the different skin tones. Now there are. The same thing happens for Mother's Day. There seems to be only one way to be a family on Mother's Day, according to many of the cards. There is a group of people who are using their creativity and working to make this more fair, more just. They are calling Mother's Day - Mama's Day.

"Mamas Day is a celebration of all mamas, everywhere! We know that mamahood is not one size fits all. But most popular images of mothers exclude mamas based on their sexual orientation, race, income, immigration status and more. And Mother's Day, one of the biggest commercial holidays in the United States, often reinforces traditional ideas of family and motherhood that there's only one way to be a family.

That's why we created "Mamas Day" in 2011 to highlight the contributions of the many mamas around us, and to work for recognition, rights and resources for our mamas and families.

Each year, we commission artists to create original art that reflects the various ways our mamas and families look. The result is a collection of beautiful and unique cards that better reflect the families we know and love."

Story

The Wedding Portrait

by [Innosanto Nagara \(Author\)](#)

https://www.amazon.com/Wedding-Portrait-Innosanto-Nagara/dp/1609808029/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1517504073&sr=1-1&keywords=A+wedding+portrait

Some of the Mama's Day art was made by the author.

"The Wedding Portrait is an essential book for kids about standing up for what's right. Here are stories of direct action from around the world that are bookended by the author's wedding story. He and his bride led their wedding party to a protest and were captured in a photo by the local newspaper kissing in front of a line of police just before being arrested. "We usually follow the rules. But sometimes, if you see something is wrong--more wrong than breaking the rules and by breaking the rules you might stop it--you may need to break the rules." - Amazon

A is for Activist

by Innosanto Nagara (Author)

https://www.amazon.com/Activist-Innosanto-Nagara/dp/1609805399/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518803698&sr=8-1&keywords=a+is+for+activist

"A is for Activist is an ABC board book written and illustrated for the next generation of progressives: families who want their kids to grow up in a space that is unapologetic about activism, environmental justice, civil rights, LGBTQ rights, and everything else that activists believe in and fight for.

The alliteration, rhyming, and vibrant illustrations make the book exciting for children, while the issues it brings up resonate with their parents' values of community, equality, and justice. This engaging little book carries huge messages as it inspires hope for the future, and calls children to action while teaching them a love for books." - Amazon

Videos

Make a Heart with your Hands and More

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObvuZzRiA2k>

Here are some harder ones to learn:

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

Mindfulness

Mindfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shR8DLyOkcg>

Becoming aware of body, breathing, feelings using a flashlight symbol for awareness.

Game

The Everything Ball

<https://divinetheateranddance.com/2015/04/22/the-everything-ball/>

This is a basic imagination, creativity and mime game. Before the exercise prepare by getting used to miming a ball that can be changed... Begin by getting the participants into a circle or surround the space. Tell them that you are going to give them an amazing gift. An Everything Ball. Take the everything ball out of your pocket or out of an empty bag. Explain that this is your everything ball and that it is amazing because it can be anything and everything. Take a moment to rip off a small piece of your ball and give it to each of the participants. Asking them to hold out their hand to receive it.

Try not to use the words imagine or pretend. It should be as if the ball was a thing that really existed, and it is not a question. Here are some things you can do with your ball to start:

Side coach: Let's make our ball the size of a tennis ball. You will need to stretch it from the piece I gave you.

Let's throw our ball up in the air and catch it.

Let's bounce our ball on the ground.

Let's make our ball the size of a beach ball. Bounce it up in the air on your hand.

Now our ball is as heavy as a bowling ball. Wow that is heavy. Now it feels like a small boulder. Remember to lift with your legs.

Once you have gone through some basics of the ball you can begin to make it into anything that fits your purpose. For example:

Side coach: Let's make our ball into a hammer to build a new home for someone that needs it. Use your hammer.

Let's make our ball into sandbags to stop a flood. Stack your sandbags.

Let's make our ball into a machine that will end hunger.

Let's make our ball into something that make bad actions good ones.

And so on for as many as you would like. Make sure at the end of the exercise participants put their Everything Ball into their own pocket or bag to take with them.

In reverence, talk about the power of the Everything Ball. What other problems could it fix? Do you have a visible tool that you could use?

Arts and Crafts

Send a Mama's Day Card online

<https://mamasday.org/>

You will need to collect emails from the parents in advance.

Make a Mama's Day Card

After reviewing the Mama's Day cards online, use the multicultural markers to create their own Mama's Day Cards.

Movement

Wintergatan - Marble Machine (music instrument using 2000 marbles)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvUU8joBb1Q&index=17&list=RDIVPLluBy9CY>

Watch the machine first, then invite the kids to create a movement to the beat. Can they make a sculpture together as creatively moving human machine? How can they make it fair and just, so everyone can fit in to the machine?

"Sunshine" (connection with nature and our bodies)

Mindful Looking

Invite the children to find a Mother's Day gift from nature. Might it be an unusual rock, a perfect leaf or blade of grass? Or maybe it is their hand warmed in the sunshine? When looking mindfully at nearly anything, it becomes an art form. Two slender pine needles attached at one end become a symbol of togetherness.

Service

Share the movement you've created with the parents as they arrive. It can be a Mother's Day gift. Share the video of the machine as well!

Make some extra Mama's Day cards for the minister or congregants.

Session 3

Creativity and Our Faith

Merger Day, May 12

*Since the theme for May is “How are we a people of Creativity,” here’s a suggestion for a Multigenerational Core UU Holiday which we need **to create!** Other specifically UU holidays include the Flower Service, Bread Service, and Chalice. Their adoption rate has varied. But as we strive to be a mature faith, we need to celebrate our own history and heritage. Often, we honor our UU history through celebrating individual people -the famous UU’s. But it is important to capture the collaborative and creative aspects of our heritage - when **groups of people** have changed our living tradition. One example is the women who added our Sixth Source. It is my hope that we add a Seventh Source of our own UU history and heritage, as well as other sources which capture our living, breathing, changing and creative tradition. The purpose of celebrating the times of collaborative creativity in our faith is to recognize how we, the people, create and form our free church, unbound by dogma and creed. These celebrations are needed because they reflect our theology.*

We hope that all ages will help create and participate in this, but as always, feel free to use it just with children, or youth, or in any way you wish.

There are elements here appropriate for just the Preschool/Pre-K age group, or just the Elementary Aged children. In addition, there are elements you might use in the traditional commemorative services for youth held at this time of year, such as Bridging, Graduation, and the culmination of a Coming of Age Year or OWL year. What might Bridging or Youth Sunday look like with an angle of “Creativity” and “merger” in it?

Decor Suggestions

Altar

Woven cloths symbolizing “weaving together/merging,” a small loom, translucent color paddles merging to form new colors, grapes and artichokes, photos of Ballou and Channing, tray of mud,

Walls

- Project colored lights during the color elements, or at other time, such as before or after the service. <https://www.amazon.com/Moving-BLUE-GREEN-RED-Landscaping/dp/B01M23VBCN>
- Create linked chains during the service, or before, to hang. A chain of people holding hands is especially appropriate.

Pre-service Music

Classics from 1961 (the year of the merger)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReMwlboqMNY&list=PLTFzQIK7fWk-yqOhKLBnteS452s2kyUml&index=26>

A few VERY appropriate titles for the merger:

- At Last by Etta James
- Stand by Me by Ben E. King
- Hit the Road Jack by Ray Charles
- I Count the Tears by The Drifters

- I Just Don't Understand by Ann Margret
- Together by Connie Francis

Early History - Who were we?

Show or project photos of [Ballou](#) and [Channing](#)

The two greatest leaders in the early 19th century, Universalist Hosea Ballou and Unitarian William Ellery Channing, lived within easy walking distance of each other and had prominent Boston ministries that overlapped for 24 years, yet they apparently never met professionally or socially, even though they certainly knew of each other. Thus it was that the two religions were separated, too.

Early Universalist preachers were often self-educated and generally preferred to roam the countryside, speaking to small groups about their loving God. Unitarian ministers of that era all came through the gates of Harvard and became the intellectual and social aristocracy of Boston.

Thomas Starr King, the self-educated son of a Universalist minister, crossed these lines in mid-century by leaving his Universalist post and serving two Unitarian churches, the second of which was in San Francisco during the Civil War. His personal experiences with each denomination qualified him to make a classic observation that noted the difference in attitude between Universalists and Unitarians of his day: *"The one thinks God is too good to damn them forever; the other thinks they are too good to be damned forever."*

Wonder Box

Place inside: 2 letter "U's" or two blocks with the letter "U"

What is in the wonder box? Two letter U's! We call ourselves "UU's" which is short for Unitarian Universalists. We weren't always Unitarian Universalists. For a long time we were just Unitarians OR Universalists. Then we decided to join together, to merge and become Unitarian Universalists.

Video

Sesame Street "Letter U" with Smokey Robinson

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ws_vnXup7so

We are attached to the letter U, too!

Story about Unconditional Love, the Gift of Universalists

The Story of Muddy Hosea Ballou

From Tapestry of Faith, Faithful Journeys, Unconditional Love

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session2/muddy-children>

The Humanist Movement brought us together

Video - Symphony of Science - The Secret of the Stars

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuxFXHircal&index=200&list=PLsxOhszLWkHH80xAgpxk3amdVwKqfjGDl>

After showing the video, share the following words: Meanwhile, religious humanism had taken steadily stronger root out west, and 1933 was a significant year in its development. Unitarian ministers Curtis Reese and John Dietrich led that movement toward ever greater visibility and understanding, with eventual publication in 1933 of the influential document "A Humanist Manifesto." From that point on,

the Unitarian context sponsored a very active humanist perspective affirming that our human experience and reason in this world can be the locus of truth and morality. There were also Universalist ministers signing on to the Humanist Manifesto, signaling a growing coherence between them and the Unitarians.

Honoring the Creative Youth

It took 100 years to accomplish that but the youth groups of each made that decision before the adults managed it!

We honor and celebrate the creative, responsive youth who saw the sense in combining the Unitarian and Universalist congregations.

"In 1954, after several years of joint conferences, the separate Unitarian and Universalist youth organizations disbanded to form Liberal Religious Youth (LRY), with a college-age program called the Channing Murray Foundation (named after the acknowledged founder of each denomination). The LRY Hymn #318, "We Would Be One" (written by Sam Wright, one of the first leaders of LRY), remains in our hymnal as a testimony to the sentiment for merger:

We would be one in building for tomorrow
a nobler world than we have known today.
We would be one is searching for that meaning
which binds our hearts and points us on our way"

-Sermon by Rev. Jaco B. TenHove

<http://www.pbuuc.org/sermons/archive/sermons0102/towardsmerger.html>

Invite the youth who are present to stand and give them a hand for bringing creativity and responsiveness to the story!

Song - #318 We Would Be One in STLT (see the "Song for All Ages" for further information)

Tasting

Grapes and Artichokes

In honor of the metaphors of the two denominations described below, offer grapes and artichoke leaves to the congregants. Pass them in a basket. In addition, include them on the altar.

"The widely divergent structural traditions were another problem. The Universalists were so reluctant to recognize any central organization that they had only recently changed their name from Universalist General Convention to Universalist Church of America. Despite the name change, their state conventions retained most of the money and much of the power. The loosely federated [Universalist] State Conventions were somewhat like a bunch of grapes, connected but clearly distinct, while the Unitarians were more like an artichoke, a cluster of leaves that at least gave the appearance of a single entity" [The Premise and the Promise, pg. 11] <https://books.google.com/books?id=KXGK9P-v324C&pg=PA11&lpg=PA11&dq=Universalists+conventions+like+grapes&source=bl&ots=XqgMFiwxaa&sig=sa3l5xwpZX3BoCgP9ggNrQhGfxc&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjuiNCs8M3ZAhUCjFQKHbbJD5AQ6AEILDAA#v=onepage&q=Universalists%20conventions%20like%20grapes&f=false>

Ninety Percent

“There were Unitarians and Universalists who didn’t like the idea of merging.” So they managed to add a provision that not only would a 75% majority be required for passage, but that 75% of the congregations had to participate. Such response and participation for a general vote was so unheard of that the opponents of merger left this assembly peacefully, convinced that they had actually won the day.

Well, they didn't count on the determination—and telephone skills!—of the Merger Commission chair, Universalist minister Raymond Hopkins, who managed to engage **more than 90% of the churches and fellowships in the vote**, which went for merger by 9:1 among Unitarians and 8:1 among Universalists.”

<http://www.pbuuc.org/sermons/archive/sermons0102/towardsmerger.html>

Count up from 10 percent to 90 percent together - a phenomenal feat and passed with an overwhelming majority.

Did it pass at 10%? NO!

Did it pass at 20%? NO!

Did it pass at 30% NO!

40? 50? 60? 70?

Surely, by 75% NO!

Surely, by 80% NO!

Surely, by 85% NO!

Surely, by 90% YES!

Meditation

Invite a bell or gong. Invite those present to get comfortable and focus on their breathing. Use this time to connect with your inner self...In what ways have you experienced merging? Perhaps you have merged with nature in a beautiful forest, or on a lonely beach.... Perhaps you have merged with love and held another person in your arms...or merged into a symphony playing or another beautiful piece of music...merge your own fingers together (or invite them to join their fingers to the person sitting next to them if appropriate). Give that person a thank you smile and return your hands. We merge together all through our lives until our final merging at death with the wider universe. We come out of stardust, and merge back into stardust and elements. Spend a few moments of silence reflecting on the ways we merge throughout our lives.

Invite a bell or gong to signal the end of silence and reflection.

Video - who are we now?

We are Unitarian Universalists

<https://www.uua.org/beliefs/who-we-are/video>

Use this video to illustrate a creative way of animating what our faith is about.

Weaving

Since the Unitarians and Universalists “wove” their congregations together, how about a weaving element?

- One simple way is to use a stand up [hand loom frame](#) with various strips of fabric, or use natural elements like grasses and leaves from your grounds. Invite all ages to add a strip to the loom and create a wall hanging to commemorate “Merger Day.”
- Or invite a weaver to weave a pattern while telling one of the stories.
- Or invite congregants to tables with various “merging” crafts:
 - [Links of paper strips](#) to create a “merger chain” to decorate the door, similar to Christmas paper chains.
 - Cut out paper people to create [chains of people holding hands](#).
 - [Woven heart baskets](#)
 - [Finger weaving](#), as taught by the children for whom it is part of “kid culture.”

Who could we be in the future?

Music for the Future

Love Reaches Out

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvIPa28cVfA&list=PLTN2iQtY_OlgIYBOo3PjdXsNSbm90_6R9&index=55

Can we reach out and embrace the diversity in the world and create commonalities as Unitarian Universalists?

A New Name

Just as the two faiths became one- Unitarian Universalist, is it time to think of a new name which captures the new religion that has been formed since 1961? Some Universalist leaders had moments of believing Universalism could encompass a universal world religion.

Are we ready to be one? What would be the name?

Begin the brainstorm by offering “LaRunis - Love and Reason UU’s;” “the Free Congregation,” etc. After 50+ years are we ready to acknowledge Merger Day by giving our faith a new name, reflecting the new direction we have taken?

Color Merging

Locate some [translucent color paddles](#) and use them to illustrate how we might find a new name. If red and yellow merge they make a color called “orange” not “red yellow.” If red and blue merge they make a color called “purple” not red blue. When the Unitarians and Universalists were thinking about merging, they were nervous about giving up their name. Each religion loved its name and it meant a lot to the people, just as your own name means a lot to you. So the name of the association became a combination of both names - Unitarian Universalist. We have grown and changed a lot in the 50+ years since the merger. Since it took 100 years to merge last time, we might start now, to give everyone lots of time “to dialogue and reflect on considering the possibility of starting to think about a new name.” (That is a joke.)

Merger Playdough

Cook up some homemade [playdough](#). Do not color it, keep it white. At a station with plastic gloves and table covering, Invite congregants to drop a few drops of [gel food coloring](#) into their white playdough

and knead it in. Drops of red and blue will merge into purple playdough, etc. Either take it home or donate it to the congregation's RE preschool program.

Brainstorm a New Name

Invite all to scribble, draw, and brainstorm on paper with markers, pens and pencils and come up with a possible new name for our denomination.

Invite them to share in small groups the names they have come up with.

Name Communion

Communion means "sharing in community." Invite those who wish, to line up at one or two microphones and one at a time, share the name which they have created. Allow the names to float into everyone's consciousness.

Movement - a Video

Old Movie Stars Dance to Uptown Funk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1F0IBsnkE>

Celebrate the merger with creative movement. Invite the dancers in your congregation to dance while the video is playing. Invite the congregants out of their seats to dance. Dancing is a form of merger!

Epilogue

From the Report of the Commission on Appraisal to the 14th General Assembly of the UUA, 1975, Minneapolis, MN.

And so the seeking continues as our living tradition morphs into a new expression....

"In its statement of philosophy, the Coordinating Committee on Consolidation asserted, 'A viable organization requires a tradition, a corporate personality, clear goals, clear assignments of responsibility, effective coordination through constant communication, and a vast amount of goodwill.' Our Commission is convinced that this philosophy is equally valid today. Implementing it is a shared responsibility which should involve all those who are committed to the assumption that a continental organization of some sort is vital to the enhancement and expression of our religion." Pg. 43

https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/75_uu_merger.pdf

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.

Service/ Offering

Consider a collection to benefit the Friends of the UUA: <https://www.uua.org/giving/areas-support/friends>

Or the LREDA Endowment Fund: <http://www.lreda.org/endowment>

Session 4

Creativity and Play (Memorial Day Weekend)

Young Children (P - K)

Wonder Box

Place inside: a small U.S. flag

What is in the Wonder Box today? A flag. It is the flag of the United States of America. This weekend we honor the people who fought in wars and were killed. On Monday, we will celebrate Memorial Day. When someone dies, it is important to remember them.

The other part of the weekend is to celebrate the beginning of summertime. Many people have a picnic, a BBQ, or spend time outdoors. Today we will also listen to some jazz. Jazz is music that is creative and playful. It is a good time to be creative and play!

Story

The Most Beautiful Kid in the World

by [Jennifer A. Ericsson](#) (Author), [Susan Meddaugh](#) (Illustrator)

<https://www.amazon.com/Most-Beautiful-Kid-World/dp/0688139418>

"Grandma is coming for dinner, and Annie wants to be the most beautiful kid in the world. But she doesn't feel beautiful in the scratchy dress and droopy tights Mama's picked out for her, so she makes a few minor adjustments..." - Amazon. A creative version of beautiful!

Jazz Baby

by Carole Boston Weatherford (Author), Laura Freeman (Illustrator)

https://www.amazon.com/Jazz-Baby-Carole-Boston-Weatherford/dp/1584302739/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1518791781&sr=1-1&keywords=Jazz+Baby+by+carole+Boston+Weatherford

"A celebration of music and movement, this story in verse is inspired by the riffs, rhythms, and freedom of jazz." - Amazon

More Jazz Picture Book Suggestions

<http://sarahpicciuolo.wixsite.com/jazzpicturebooks>

Mindfulness

Invite the children to sit and listen to the sound of a bell, a gong, or singing bowl until it disappears. Say something like this:

"We let go of our busy things. We sit so still. We invite the sound of the bell.

We listen to some jazz, a smooth, creative sound into which we can relax for a while....

(play a bit, then fade away. Smooth Jazz for Kids - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZH53G7YjIE>)

We listen until the sound is gone. We breathe in and breathe out peace. We feel peaceful. We breathe out and feel love. Breathe in, feel peace. Breathe out, love." Sit with me for a few more breaths. Now return to us there in this room.

Ring the bell to signal an end to the mindfulness.

Finger-Plays

5 jazz musicians playing music at night
one gets hungry and leaves to get a bite

4 jazz musicians playing music so sweet
1 gets a craving so he leaves for a treat

3 jazz musicians playing music in the city
1 leaves quickly to feed his pretty kitty

2 jazz musicians left performing on stage
until 1 leaves to clean his guinea pig's cage

One jazz musician left bopping his head
until he gets sleepy and goes home to bed

Now there are zero jazz musicians anywhere in sight!

They're all home sleeping for it's late at night!

- From Miss Sarah's Storytime Blog <http://thesarahstorytime.blogspot.com/2014/07/jazz-storytime-for-3-5-year-olds.html>
-

Arts and Crafts

Draw to Jazz

Invite the children to draw while playing a Jazz recording, such as Coltrane's "My Favorite Things" (13 min.)

John Coltrane - My Favorite Things

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWG2dsXV5HI&list=PL23A11132CD8400CD&index=9>

Make flags

<http://www.coloring.ws/t.asp?t=http://www.coloring.ws/usa/map.gif>

Color the U.S. flag. With preschoolers, it will be creative! Have a few golden star stickers to stick on. Then, tape onto a dowel. Use these to fly outside.

Movement

Old MacDonald

Dance and wiggle to “Old MacDonald” in the Ella Fitzgerald jazz version!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bHfxKEYe0w>

What a swinging farm!

This Jazz Man

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnzywl8FXXQ>

Sunshine (connection to Nature and our Bodies)

Flag Flying

Take your flags outside and fly them!

Service

This Jazz Man Preschool Flash Mob

Share “This Jazz Man” video with your parents and/or congregation. Invite the preschoolers to share their movement dance. Parents and adults won’t be able to resist tapping their feet after the service or in the coffee hour.

This Jazz Man

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnzywl8FXXQ>

Elementary Aged Children (1 - 5th)

Reflections

Props: *a U.S. flag.*

This weekend is Memorial Day Weekend, when we have a 3-day holiday. Some people go camping, some have a picnic or BBQ. It marks the start of summer for many people. There's another reason it is a holiday. Does anyone know?

It is called Memorial Day because Monday is a day to remember the soldiers who have been killed in a war. People visit cemeteries and place flags on the graves of those who served in a war and were killed. It is a U.S. holiday. To celebrate America and creativity, we will surround ourselves with a purely American music called jazz. Jazz uses improvisation. That means making up musical variations on one theme. The roots of jazz come from Africa and the experience of slavery.

Story

The Sound That Jazz Makes

by Carole Boston Weatherford (Author)

https://www.amazon.com/Sound-that-Jazz-Makes/dp/0761457321/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1518791082&sr=1-1&keywords=the+sound+that+jazz+makes

"This book traces the evolution of jazz in a poem of four-line stanzas that begins with an African drum beat and ends with a rapper who still hears "the age-old, far-off beat/of Africa drumming on every street." Each stanza accompanies a full-spread oil painting outlined with a crayon line and bordered in white. On many pages, one figure—an African kalimba player, a Delta bluesman, etc.—is featured in front of the painting, breaking the frame and extending into the white space below. The animated African animals and dancers depicted in warm golds and browns contrast sharply with the still figures and somber tones of the scenes on slave ships and in plantation fields. These, too, contrast with the bright colors and movement of the cakewalkers, gospel singers, and swing and bebop musicians with their arms or instruments lifted joyously upward. The final illustration of a young African-American trumpet player with his family against a background that incorporates many elements from the previous paintings is a satisfying synthesis of both the visual and written elements of the book..." - Ginny Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Santa Rosa, CA from Amazon

Story building drawing

As suggested by Lynnie Lee, Topeka, KS

Each person starts with a blank paper, allow them to draw for 15-30 secs, then pass the paper to the next person. Keep passing for however many turns, then go around the room and allow each person to tell a story about the picture they ended with.

Treasure Stones

From Tapestry of Faith, World of Wonder, Beauty in Nature

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session12/treasure-stones>

Mindfulness

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We listen to some jazz, a smooth, creative sound into which we can relax for a while....

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We listen until the sound is gone. We breathe in and breathe out peace. We feel peaceful. We breathe out and feel love. Breathe in, feel peace. Breathe out, love.” Sit with me for a few more breaths. Now return to us there in this room.

Ring the bell to signal an end to the mindfulness.

Videos and Songs

ABC song to John Coltrane's "Giant Steps" feat.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yqa4Mc_ApZl&index=4&list=PLv1qYYmGN5rye995TNn6bRMvfh8VOM_Ss

John Coltrane - My Favorite Things

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWG2dsXV5HI&list=PL23A11132CD8400CD&index=9>

Reflect on the creative way that John Coltrane “improvises” the tune.

Arts and Crafts

Offer arts and crafts while the jazz plays in the background.

Plasti-Make Moldable Beads - Creative Sculpture

https://www.amazon.com/Pwhite-Plastimake-Moldable-Plastic-500G/dp/B073TX1C65/ref=sr_1_26_sspa?ie=UTF8&qid=1518027607&sr=8-26-spons&keywords=plastic+beads&psc=1

As suggested by Leah Purcell, Albany, NY

Responding to Music with Paint - Creative Painting

From Tapestry of Faith, Toolbox, Expression

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/session6/109605.shtml>

“By this age, participants' schools have usually put away the painting trays. Bring them out and let the children try it again! Try using paintbrushes and tempera, or finger paints and allow participants time for exploring movement using the paint instead of concentrating on a finished product. Invite participants to lay paint any way they want to directly on their individual trays, and improvise and change their designs easily, responding to the music.”

Skits in a Bag - Creative Theatre

From Tapestry of Faith, Toolbox, Expression

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/session6/109604.shtml>

“Form groups of four or five participants, and hand each group one of the filled grocery bags. Invite the groups to invent and then act out a very short, one-minute tale based on the items in the bag.”

Make U.S. Flags

<http://www.coloring.ws/t.asp?t=http://www.coloring.ws/usa/map.gif>

Color the U.S. flag. Invite the children to take them home to place in their window or on the grave of a fallen soldier. Tape on a dowel, optional.

The Transparent Eyeball Coloring Page by Rev. Amy Freedman and Peter Bowden

<https://uuplanet.org/2017/06/07/ralph-waldo-emerson-transparent-eyeball-coloring-page/>

Invite the children to color the page, generously offered for free use, in honor of Emerson's birthday on May 25. See also the "For All Ages" story suggestion.

Movement

Dance and wiggle to "Old MacDonald" in the Ella Fitzgerald high energy jazz version!

Mono: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=OWAAYMYcy_Q

Stereo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bHfxKEYe0w>

Different versions, both fun!

Now try moving to the lilting rhythm of "My Favorite Things."

John Coltrane - My Favorite Things

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWG2dsXV5HI&list=PL23A11132CD8400CD&index=9>

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

Celebrate the Warmth

It's Memorial Day Weekend, and a time to mark the beginning of summer. How will you celebrate the summer this morning? Make sun shadows? Offer water play? Enjoy snack outside as a picnic? How will you improvise on a sunny morning?

Service

My Favorite Things Elementary Flash Mob

Share John Coltrane's "My Favorite Things" with the congregation, by playing the recording during coffee hour or for the parents. Those who are comfortable can share movement to the rhythm.

John Coltrane - My Favorite Things

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWG2dsXV5HI&list=PL23A11132CD8400CD&index=9>

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). multicolored cloth or sarong, several items for creativity - a weaving, a sculpture, something made.

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."

Music

Creativity Thinking Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsqgjaoHq74>

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

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.
Listen to this poem:
I have no name
Until you name me.
I have no form
Until you shape me.
I don't exist
Until you make me,
I am creativity.
I am waiting deep inside you
Touch my spark
And let me light you,
Give me life
And I'll revive you
I am creativity.
- Jane <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/creativity#ixzz2wcYbOQeZ>

Remain in the poem's imagery for 10 more breaths.
Ring the bell.
Return slowly to this room, to your body, open your eyes when you are ready. Feel the spark of creativity with you this month!

Story, optional

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

Songs, 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.

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 Creativity"*

Reflections

Reflection on Merger Day

Unitarian Universalism is the accepted name of our denomination. But it wasn't always so. The Unitarians and the Universalists merged on May 12, 1961. It took 100 years to accomplish that but the youth groups of each made that decision 10 years before the adults managed it! Check out the special "Merger Day" suggested program in this packet and participate in creating a UU Core Holiday!

"In 1954, after several years of joint conferences, the separate Unitarian and Universalist youth organizations disbanded to form Liberal Religious Youth (LRY), with a college-age program called the Channing Murray Foundation (named after the acknowledged founder of each denomination). The LRY Hymn #318, "We Would Be One" (written by Sam Wright, one of the first leaders of LRY), remains in our hymnal as a testimony to the sentiment for merger:

We would be one in building for tomorrow
a nobler world than we have known today.
We would be one is searching for that meaning
which binds our hearts and points us on our way"

-Sermon by Rev. Jaco B. TenHove

<http://www.pbuuc.org/sermons/archive/sermons0102/towardsmerger.html>

Creativity and God; What if god is Creativity?

Do you believe in God? Over and over, the Coming of Agers I knew thought that was the question their UU church community wished them to answer. And over and over the answer would be simply "No" or very occasionally "Yes." What I wanted them to know is that "Do you believe in God?" is not the most important part of UU. Instead, reflecting on the notion of God is more like writing poetry. It creates word images we can share and reflect on.

How can we encourage our youth to deepen and be creative in relation to the word "God?" That "God" isn't necessarily the "able-bodied middle aged white man sitting on the clouds." That the word might mean nothing, but could also mean a mathematical Mandelbrot equation. Or the act of being creative. Or Sacred Mystery, or Ultimate Reality. What if God is Creativity? Share the following ideas about the word "God." Some of the resources are children's books, some are quotes. The purpose is not to make anyone believe or not, it is to be creative, fluid and reflective about an ancient, common word.

What Is God?

by Etan Boritzer (Author), Robbie Marantz (Illustrator)

<https://www.amazon.com/What-God-Etan-Boritzer/dp/0920668887>

What is God? compares different religions -- Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism -- and their holy books, looks at misunderstandings and arguments among people of different religions, and talks about praying as well as feeling connected to everything in the world. - Amazon

The God I Don't Believe In

In a Joseph Heller's classic novel, "Catch-22," Yossarian and Lt. Scheisskopf's wife...have a heated confrontation about God. Yossarian says, "Don't tell me God works in mysterious ways. There's nothing mysterious about it. He's not working at all. Or else he's forgotten all about us." As his comments about God get coarser and harsher, she gets very upset and lashes out at him. "Stop it!" she demands. "What ... are you getting so upset about?" he asks, bewildered. "I thought you didn't believe in God." "I don't," she said, sobbing. "But the God I don't believe in is a good God, a just God, a merciful God. He's not the mean and stupid God you make Him out to be." Yossarian replies, "Let's have a little more religious freedom between us. You don't believe in the God you want to, and I won't believe in the God I want to. Is that a deal?" https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-richard-a-block/the-god-i-dont-believe-in_b_3408535.html

God as metaphor from a Rabbi

We must keep in mind that when our traditional prayers address God as Sovereign, Parent, Creator, Judge, Savior, Shield, Healer, Helper, Rock, Redeemer, Teacher — these are metaphors, not doctrine or dogma. And the prayers within which they are contained are not prose, but poetry. Their aim is not to limit or define, but to evoke, to help us express the inexpressible, to say Wow! And Help! And Thanks! https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-richard-a-block/the-god-i-dont-believe-in_b_3408535.html

God beyond our comprehension from an atheist

"What I noticed is that God's characteristics are mostly derived from human traits. Humans have emotions; God has emotions. Humans have a strong sense of justice; so as God. Humans communicate; God communicates. Humans love; God loves. See, what I'm trying to say here is that if God really exists, I firmly believe that he is someone beyond our comprehension. We can never tell what God wants or don't want. Just like ants can never understand we don't want them to bite us."

"Our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark."

— Carl Sagan

<https://thecoffeeelicious.com/5-reasons-why-i-dont-believe-in-god-3aa6460e7e5c>

God from a former UUA President and Director of Amnesty International

Every religion is confronted with two great tasks: First, to teach human beings how to be in right relationship with each other and the world, and second, to help us be at peace even in the face of death. ... as to the second, Unitarian Universalism begs us to be so engaged in life that—paradoxically—we may even look kindly upon the letting go. For we know that the best way to meet death is to have looked upon the routines of our daily-ness through the prisms of surprise and to have found in the **utterly unexceptional the very evidences of God**. The more we love and the more we mourn, the more acceptable becomes the letting go. (Finding Time and Other Delicacies, p. 48, by Rev. Bill Schultz)

In God's Name - Children's Book

by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (Author), Phoebe Stone)Illustrator(

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

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/Gods-Rabbi-Sandy-Eisenberg-Sasso/dp/1879045265>

God is named Source of Life, Shephard, Giver of Light. Doesn't leave room for if there isn't a God, but it is a nice introduction to God.

I Wonder - Children's Book

by Annaka Harris (Author), John Rowe)Illustrator(

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

Helps readers feel comfortable saying "I don't know."

Your God - video

By Cheryl Wheeler

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wlgWQwD_0Y&list=PLTN2iQtY_0lgIYBOo3PjdXsNSbm90_6R9&index=15

Irreverent, straightforward criticism of misuse of "God."

Atheists Have No Songs - Steve Martin on David Letterman Live

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wogta8alHiU>

Hilarious bluegrass for Atheists.

Story

Pablo Casals

From *Tapestry of Faith, Spiritual Practices, Personal Spiritual Practices*

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/practice/workshop2/59194.shtml>

Play Yo Yo Ma playing Bach's Cello Suites <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2ZHjSA8mkY>

Videos

Season 1 Reunion - Have a Little Faith with Zach Anner

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_qJnpZd-qE

Zach creates video interviews with a variety of faiths. He is agnostic, creative and open, and happens to have CP. In this video, he invites the interviewees from his first year - B'ahai, Mormon, Baptist, Quaker, Muslim to reflect on their episodes. Check out the discussion on God!

How Frustration Can Make Us More Creative TED talk

https://www.ted.com/talks/tim_harford_how_messy_problems_can_inspire_creativity

Great examples from Rock 'n Roll of thinking outside the box. "Challenges and problems can derail your creative process ... or they can make you more creative than ever. In the surprising story behind the best-selling solo piano album of all time, Tim Harford may just convince you of the advantages of having to work with a little mess. _ - Ted Talk (use with the online Oblique Strategies "cards" in Games, below)

Shots of Awe with Jason Silva

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIYb9NpXnRemxYoWbcYANsA>

The whole month of July, Jason Silva created videos about Creativity. Scroll down to check them out! “These videos are going to razzle your imagination and put you into a state of cognitive ecstasy. Get ready to talk about the creative urge, the madness of losing your mind, of dissolving boundaries” - Jason Silva

OK Go - Inside Out and Upside Down

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWGJA9i18Co>

This rock group filmed their song in Zero Gravity - check it out! The lyrics capture the meaning of “Gravity is just a habit.... “Letting unfamiliar feelings guide you.” They are over the top creative! Here’s the “Behind the Scenes” video short: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsnYqu7xq9c>

Here’s the 20-minute-long version of how they got to Russia and then filmed this. Tip: They didn’t puke. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwyXLBQUECO>

Arts and Crafts

Wreck This Journal

by Keri Smith (Author), suggested by Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis from San Gabriel UU in Georgetown, TX

[https://www.amazon.com/Wreck-This-Journal-Black-Expanded/dp/0399161945/ref=dp_ob_title_bk?dplD=41G0jqY0BcL&preST= SY291 BO1,204,203,200 Q](https://www.amazon.com/Wreck-This-Journal-Black-Expanded/dp/0399161945/ref=dp_ob_title_bk?dplD=41G0jqY0BcL&preST= SY291 BO1,204,203,200 Q L40 &dpSrc=detail)

[L40 &dpSrc=detail](https://www.amazon.com/Wreck-This-Journal-Black-Expanded/dp/0399161945/ref=dp_ob_title_bk?dplD=41G0jqY0BcL&preST= SY291 BO1,204,203,200 Q L40 &dpSrc=detail)

“...Through a series of creative and quirky prompts, acclaimed guerilla artist Keri Smith encourages journalers to engage in destructive acts—poking holes through pages, adding photos and defacing them, painting pages with coffee, coloring outside the lines, and more—in order to experience the true creative process. With Smith's unique sensibility, readers are introduced to a new way of art- and journal-making, discovering novel ways to escape the fear of the blank page and fully engage in the creative process.” - Amazon

The Way of the Artist

From Tapestry of Faith, Spirit in Practice, Soul Practices

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/practice/workshop7/59911.shtml>

For Emerson’s Birthday, May 25 - Transcendent Eyeball Coloring Page

<https://uuplanet.org/2017/06/07/ralph-waldo-emerson-transparent-eyeball-coloring-page/>

Another way to look at God.

Role Play

Brown Bag Skits from Deep Fun

Materials: Interesting clothing items or props, pillowcases, and children’s books.

Break the group into teams of two to five people and distribute the pillowcases among them. Have each member of each team find and bring back one unusual item (toothbrush, can opener, banana, guitar pick) and put it in the bag. Gather the bags. Redistribute the bags among the teams and give them instructions; to create a skit using all of the items. Establish whatever guidelines you want—everyone

must have a line; the skit must include a certain phrase—but don't give them too much time to prepare. Bring everyone back together and have each team perform.

Variation: Include a children's book or the title of a well-known fairy tale to act out in each bag.

Mindfulness

Guided Meditation on Art

From Tapestry of Faith, Spirit in Practice, Soul Practices

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/practice/workshop7/59914.shtml>

"Let yourself relax. Take in a nice, slow, deep breath. And then let it out. Breathe in. And out. Deep. Slow. Breathing in. And breathing out. (Pause)

And let your bodies relax. Let your muscles relax. Let your face relax. Let your mind relax. Whatever you've been carrying around with you all day that you don't need right now, let it go. Let all of you—body, mind, and spirit—deeply and fully relax. Keep breathing. (Pause)

And now, in your mind's eye, imagine a place that you love. A place where you feel loved. A place that is special. A place that feels safe. And happy. It might be a real place that you know from your own experiences. It might be somewhere that you've seen in a picture or that you've heard about. It might be somewhere imaginary. Wherever it is—whatever it is—call it to mind. Try to see, to feel, all the little details. (Pause)

And when you feel that you've noticed all there is to see about this place, imagine that next to you there is a large basket that's full of paper, and crayons, and chalk, and paints, and clay, and every other kind of artistic media you've ever heard of. And imagine that in this special place you know you have the ability to create. So create. Draw a picture. Or paint. Or sculpt. Or do whatever it is that you feel called to do, but try to capture the sights, the sounds, the mood, the feel of this place. Take your time. You can do it; you have no limitations here. It's as if the artistic expression is making itself. (Pause for at least 30 seconds.)

If you finish one piece, make another. (Pause for at least 30 seconds.)

Now bring the piece you're working on to a close. Step back and look at it. Take in what you've created. And then slowly, as you're ready, come back to this room and open your eyes.

How to be a Poet

A Column by Parker Palmer on Wendell Berry's poem, How to Be a Poet. Read the poem aloud, then invite the group to write a poem or simply write their thoughts on creativity.

<https://onbeing.org/blog/parker-palmer-how-to-be-a-poet/>

Games

Oblique Strategies

<http://stoney.sb.org/eno/oblique.html>

In the [TED talk](#) referenced above in Videos, Ted Hartford shares how producer Brian Eno helped many Rock and Roll bands overcome their "block" and create famous albums using a deck of cards called "Oblique Strategies." These strategies are designed to create "a bit of mess" and be uncomfortable so that out of frustration comes a creative solution.

Watch the video, then pick a problem which the group or an individual is encountering. Then visit the website and use the first “card” which appears to brainstorm a new approach. Be prepared for frustration and messiness. Frustration can make us more creative.

Buffalo - The Name-Dropping Game

As suggested by Lynnie Lee, Topeka, KS along with Lila and Bodhi at the Brainstorming Lab

Game: https://www.amazon.com/Buffalo-The-Name-Dropping-Game/dp/0984416528/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?s=arts-crafts&ie=UTF8&qid=1518033161&sr=8-1-fkmr0&keywords=Buffaloed+card+game

NPR review on how this game reduced bias:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/01/09/575952575/fighting-bias-with-board-games>

A creative game that might just overcome bias. You start with two decks of cards. One deck contains adjectives like Chinese, tall or enigmatic. The other contains nouns like wizard or dancer... Challenges stereotypes because it forces players to think of people that buck those stereotypes. So for example, think of a physicist. Albert Einstein or Isaac Newton may automatically come to mind. But what if you have to think of a female physicist or a black female physicist? You may have to think a bit harder... So it starts to work on a conscious level of reminding us that we don't really know a lot of things we might want to know about the world around us. But it also unconsciously starts to open up stereotypical patterns in the way we think.

Deep Fun games for the theme of “Creativity”

<https://www.uua.org/youth/library/adults-ministry/deepfun>

Mural or Collage

Materials: Every kind of art supply you can rustle up.

Here is a great way to decorate your youth group or conference space while bonding. Put out the magazines, paints, pencils, paper, scissors and glue, put on some good music (not too loud, so that people can talk), and go for it. Encourage people to make their corner of the project their own, but to interact with and respond to what others are doing.

Variation: Create your art in silence.

Variation: Offer a topic for the art like “Going home” or “Breaking down the Walls.”

Calvin Ball

Materials: A beach ball, Frisbee, baseball and bat, tennis racket and ball, or whatever assorted sports equipment you can find.

This game has a few more rules than the one Calvin and Hobbes play, but it can be just as open to improvisation. Divide the group into two equal teams, called the Batters and the Fielders, and have each team stand in a loose circle opposite the other. Elect a referee to stop anything dangerous and to call for the teams to switch. When teams switch, the new Batters can make up new rules, but here are some to start: Fielders choose a pitcher, who can choose which item he is going to throw. Batters are up to “bat” (or catch and throw) one at a time. When the ball is hit, the batter must run around the entire group of Batters, while the pitcher retrieves the ball and it is passed through the legs of the entire group of Fielders. The last fielder to receive the ball holds it up and yells “Stop!” to the batter. The Batters goal is to accumulate as many complete “runs” as possible.

Group Story Variations

Speaking:

Sit in a circle. Start telling a story. When you reach a critical point, break off and let the person sitting on your right take over. Keep the story going until someone finds a way to end it.

Variation: Have a few people in the middle pantomiming the story as it is told.

Writing:

Materials: Pencils and paper for each member of the group.

Arrange the group in a circle. Distribute paper and pencils. Have each of them start a story on their sheet of paper, introducing the main character(s), the setting, and an introductory action. Give them about five minutes and then ask them to pass the story on to the person to their left. Let the stories be passed around until each person has contributed to each story. Then have the person who started the story finish it. Let the originators of each story share theirs with the group.

Variation: (for any size group) Write down the beginning of a story in two lines, then fold the paper over so that only the second line is showing. Pass it around the circle with instructions to add two lines and refold the paper so that only the last line is showing. Read the whole story at the end.

Drawing Version

As suggested by Linnie Lynn, Topeka, KS

Sit in a circle. Start with a blank page. The first person draws for 15 seconds then passes it to the right. The next person draws for 15 seconds, then passes it to the right, and so on. The person who receives the picture at the end tells a story based on the picture.

Mailbags

Materials: Paper lunch bags, arts and crafts supplies, masking tape

Set up a table with these materials. Encourage people to make themselves a mailbag, decorating it with their names and representations of themselves. Have wall-space available for the bags to be taped up, within reach. Encourage people to fill one-another's mailbags with messages of love and affirmation, presents, poems, cookies.

Challenge Week - Bored and Brilliant

<https://www.wnyc.org/series/bored-and-brilliant>

"In 2015 Manoush Zomorodi, host of WNYC's popular podcast and radio show Note to Self, led tens of thousands of listeners through an experiment to help them unplug from their devices, get bored, jump-start their creativity, and change their lives." - Amazon review of "Bored and Brilliant" book
Take the same 6-day challenge then report next Sunday on how you did and what happened.

Movies with a theme of Creativity

This Beautiful Fantastic (PG)

<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/this-beautiful-fantastic>

"THIS BEAUTIFUL FANTASTIC tells the story of Bella (Jessica Brown Findlay, Lady Sybil of Downton Abbey), a quiet, obsessive-compulsive librarian who lines up her peas and cuts her waffles into linear bites. It's suggested that her issues are related to the fact that she was left in a park as an infant and only survived because ducks sat on her to keep her warm until she was found. Now, as an adult on her own, Bella checks and re-checks the many locks on her door before heading to work each morning. She only embarks on these outings out of necessity, to pay the bills; she'd much rather stay secluded in her safe, neat rented apartment. She's not quite agoraphobic, but her distrust of nature has led to a severe neglect of her garden -- to the point that it triggers an eviction clause in her lease. Unless she can get over her fear of dirt and sun and make the garden beautiful in a month, she'll be kicked out." - Common Sense Media

Tickling Giants

<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/tickling-giants>

How a creative force, such as comedy can be a voice for justice.

"TICKLING GIANTS tells the story of Bassem Youssef, an Egyptian surgeon who, in the face of the Arab Spring uprising in 2011, decided to start a comedy show a la The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. Directed by a Daily Show producer, Sara Taksler, the documentary chronicles how Youssef left his lucrative medical career behind and risked everything to start his edgy show, first out of a personal home and then out of a studio, backed by a network." - Common Sense Media

Article for Memorial Day

The Other Decoration Day Speech

By Ta-Nehisi Coates, Atlantic Magazine, 2011

<https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/01/the-other-decoration-day-speech/69782/>

Decoration Day was started to honor Union soldiers after the Civil War. It then became Memorial Day for all veterans in 1971. Read this speech given by Frederick Douglass in 1871. Reflect on the role of war in changing society.

“Sunshine”

Take Your Thoughts for a Walk

https://www.ted.com/talks/marilyn_oppezzo_want_to_be_more_creative_go_for_a_walk#t-312911

“When trying to come up with a new idea, we all have times when we get stuck. But according to research by behavioral and learning scientist Marilyn Oppizzo, getting up and going for a walk might be all it takes to get your creative juices flowing. In this fun, fast talk, she explains how walking could help you get the most out of your next brainstorm....

1. Pick a problem or topic to brainstorm.
2. Walk at a comfortable pace.
3. Come up with as many ideas as you can.
4. Speak and record your ideas.
5. Cap your time.” - Ted Talk

Service

May is often a month of “recognition services” such as a Bridging Service, a service recognizing Coming of Agers or OWL graduates. Use these services not only to honor those youth, but also to remind all ages of transitions in their own lives. How might you weave “being a people of creativity” into the Youth Services?

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 Creativity” or “What does it mean to be a family of Creativity?” 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.*

Apps

Mac, Izzy and Friends

<https://www.common sense media.org/app-reviews/mac-izzy-friends>

“Parents need to know that Mac, Izzy & Friends is a collection of activities designed to encourage creative exploration and expression. Kids can explore videos, stories, and drawing tools; they can also manipulate audio recordings and visuals, create and put together puzzles, and more. Once kids get the hang of how to navigate the app, they can play on their own, but this is also a really great app for parents and kids to play together, on- and off-screen. Free.” - Common Sense Media review

Toontastic 3D

<https://www.common sense media.org/app-reviews/toontastic-3d>

“Parents need to know that Toontastic 3D has all the fun features of the original, but the developer has partnered with Google, and this updated version has new scenes and 3D characters. Kids choose a scene and characters -- or design their own -- and are then given some basic guidance on constructing their own animated stories.” - Common Sense Media review

Videos

Sir Ken Robinson on Education and Creativity

RSA ANIMATE: Changing Education Paradigms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U>

Do Schools Kill Creativity? TED talk with Sir Ken Robinson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY>

How Boredom Can Lead to your most brilliant ideas - TED talk

https://www.ted.com/talks/manoush_zomorodi_how_boredom_can_lead_to_your_most_brilliant_ideas

By doing nothing, we are actually being our most creative selves. “Learn to love being bored as Manoush Zomorodi explains the connection between spacing out and creativity.”

Danish Forest Kindergartens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jkij9dJfcw>

How do these outdoor kindergartens teach creativity and problem solving?

Create an Exhibit on Family Diversity

Family Diversity Projects

<https://familydiv.org/about/>

Family Diversity Projects has created seven award-winning traveling photo-text exhibits that tour communities nationwide and internationally. YOU CAN BRING one or more of the easy-to-display exhibitions to your community venue: school (K-12), college, house of worship, library, workplace, corporate headquarters, conference, etc.

Resources for staying creative in UU about racism

<https://medium.com/embrace-race/using-splcs-10-ways-to-fight-hate-in-the-classroom-18bc23e8202>

“My co-teacher and I are moving from 5th grade to 3rd grade, and although our students will be younger and even more literal in their thinking and understanding, we will continue to talk about current events. We don’t have a choice. This work is too important to stop because it is scary, uncomfortable, or difficult.”

Book

Bored and Brilliant

by Manoush Zomorodi (Author)

<https://www.amazon.com/Bored-Brilliant-Spacing-Productive-Creative/dp/1250124956>

“In 2015 Manoush Zomorodi, host of WNYC’s popular podcast and radio show Note to Self, led tens of thousands of listeners through an experiment to help them unplug from their devices, get bored, jump-start their creativity, and change their lives. Bored and Brilliant builds on that experiment to show us how to rethink our gadget use to live better and smarter in this new digital ecosystem. Manoush explains the connection between boredom and original thinking, exploring how we can harness boredom’s hidden benefits to become our most productive and creative selves without totally abandoning our gadgets in the process.” - Amazon

Articles

10 Ways to Teach Your Kids to be Problem Solvers

<http://www.allprodad.com/10-ways-to-teach-your-children-to-be-problem-solvers/>

“Kids of all ages learn most in the context of play. Make sure their play involves enough challenge and requires imagination...” - from the article.

The Vital Obstacles in the Creative Process by Parker Palmer

<https://onbeing.org/blog/the-vital-obstacles-in-the-creative-process/>

““Artistry” is not confined to folks who create verbal, visual, or musical forms of beauty. I know people who are artists at parenting, friendship, gardening, manual labor, teaching, leadership, problem-solving, care-giving, peace-making, or just plain living!” - Palmer

Celebrating All Who Mother (for Mother’s Day)

UU World article by Michelle Richards

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/celebrating-all-who-%E2%80%9Emother%E2%80%9999>

Divine Questions (about God)

UU World Article by Michelle Richards

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/divine-questions>

Remembering Liberation on Memorial Day

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/remembering-liberation>

The very first Memorial Day, the story goes, was originated by newly freed slaves in Charleston, South Carolina, who gathered May 5, 1865, to express their gratitude to the Union soldiers who had perished in an open-air Confederate prison.

How Adults Can Encourage Kids to Be Original Thinkers

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/03/12/467976865/how-adults-can-encourage-kids-to-be-original-thinkers>

The author, Adam Grant “writes about the importance of getting kids to take risks, to embrace their own curiosity and to be confident in where their minds wander. So how can adults create spaces and cultures of originality to breed these new ideas?”

The Arts and Creative Problem Solving

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/music-arts/the-arts-and-creative-problem-solving/>

“Engagement in the arts offers a wonderful starting point for parents who want to develop and exercise their children’s creative problem-solving skills. It might seem counterintuitive to think of the arts as a place for critical thinking and problem solving, as we typically associate softer qualities such as appreciation of beauty, encouragement of personal expression, and nurturing talent with artistic pursuits.”

Movies for families about Creativity

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs

<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/cloudy-with-a-chance-of-meatballs>

“Based loosely on the popular children’s book *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*, this animated adventure takes the book’s story about a town where weather provides fully cooked meals and turns it into a 3-D fantasy about Flint Lockwood (voiced by Bill Hader), a young inventor who creates a device that transforms water into food.” - Common Sense Media

Mary Poppins

<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/mary-poppins>

Mary Poppins is one creative problem solver!

Hugo (PG)

<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/hugo>

Best for 8+. “In this 1930s-set adaptation of Brian Selznick’s Caldecott-winning novel, 12-year-old HUGO (Asa Butterfield) is an orphan who lives in a Paris train station. His prized possession is an automaton (mechanical man) that his late father rescued from museum archives before his death. Hugo steals from the various shops at the train station to get by, but when he attempts to swipe a wind-up mouse from eccentric toy seller Georges (Ben Kingsley), he embarks on an adventure that leads him to uncover exactly what the automaton is and why it’s important.” - Common Sense Media

Program Add Ons

Resources to expand or deepen your programming.

Calendar Add Ons

Unitarian Universalist

- Bridging Ceremony
 - <https://www.uua.org/worship/holidays/bridging>
 - <https://www.danielharper.org/blog/?tag=bridging-ceremony>
 - <https://sites.google.com/site/jeffliebmannhome/Home/publications/bridging-ceremony-homilies>
- Merger Day
 - <https://www.uua.org/beliefs/who-we-are/history>
 - <https://transientandpermanent.wordpress.com/2008/03/17/there-was-a-consolidation-but-no-merger-the-answer-to-the-uu-trivia-question-of-the-day/>
 - https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marilyn-sewell/unitarians-and-universalists_b_873972.html

National & Cultural:

- Mother's Day
 - <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/mothers-day-peace-as-julia-ward-howe-intended>
 - <https://www.uua.org/pressroom/stories/radical-roots-mothers-day>
 - <http://juliasvoice.org/foruuchurches.html>
- Memorial Day - May 25
 - <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/return>
 - <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/remembering-well>
 - <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/remembering-liberation>
 - <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/military-chaplains-tribute-memorial-day>

Theme Add Ons

Creativity and Problem Solving

<https://www.npr.org/programs/ted-radio-hour/351538855/the-source-of-creativity>
https://www.ted.com/talks/adam_grant_the_surprising_habits_of_original_thinkers
<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/life-tips-pottery-wheel>

Creativity and Justice

<https://esuc.org/east-shore-uu-mission-4-calls-to-creative-action/>
<https://blog.americansforthearts.org/2016/08/16/creative-justice>
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90776483>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/04/opinion/sunday/kids-would-you-please-start-fighting.html>

Add On 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 Creativity.

Elementary ages

From Spirit of Adventure:

Session #27 - Daniel Chester French, Unitarian sculptor
Session #28 - Try Something New - Vilmar Stephansson
Session #32 - PT Barnum and Circus Arts

From Picture Book UU:

Session #32 - From Lava to Life
Session #33 - Love You Forever
Session #34 - Miss Rumphius

From Picture Book Bible Tales

Session #12 - The Wisdom Bird: A Tale of Solomon and Sheba
Session #3 - Cain and Abel; Finding the Fruits of Peace

From Picture Book World Religions

Session #3 - Hinduism: Savitri
Session #14 - Buddhism: Zen Shorts

Youth

From Lodestone, Magnetize Your Middle School

Race Unit

Session R#1 - The Danger of a Single Story

UU Unit

Session #UU2 - Mentos Geyser Explosion

Session #UU7 - UU Rosaries

Death Unit

Session #D3 - Death Clarifies Life

Session #D4 - Choosing the “Before I Die” Wall Art Project

Money Unit

Session #M3 Commercial Break

Leader Resources

Come play and think together!

May Online Zoom Labs

RE Brainstorming Lab on Soul Matters themes

TBA for the end of summer. Have a good one everyone!

RE Implementation Lab for Blessings (June Packet)

Wednesday, May 16, 2018, 1 p.m. ET

Katie offers highlights of the Creativity/May Packet and we share ideas on how we are implementing the theme.

Note: The above Soul Matters RE Labs are on the First and Third Wednesdays of each month. We set them at a consistent time, so you can put them into your calendar and plan ahead.

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

RE Leader Facebook Page

Don't forget about our RE Leader Support Facebook page. Here is where our colleagues post bulletin board pictures, share books, and ideas. 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/54520225591601/>

Pinterest Page

Check out the Pinterest page on Creativity. Images and links to the books, videos, activities and more as mentioned in this packet.

<https://www.pinterest.com/soulmattersre/20018-creativity-may/>

Inspiration Facebook Page

Offer your teachers and parents spiritual nourishment and inspiration by encouraging them to join the Soul Matters Inspiration Facebook Page. Use the memes for your congregational FB page, as well:

<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>



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