

4th Grade Group
Session Plans for Sept 15

The theme for September is Expectation

NOTES FOR GROUP LEADERS: The adults in the service will learn about the Strike for the Climate to be held in Albany Fri, Sept 20. The story for the children is [The Magic Vase](#). I gave two follow up activities. Children could do one or both; encourage them to clean up their materials from one activity before going to the other.

UNDERLYING MESSAGE FOR CHILDREN: As Unitarian Universalists, each of us has a part in working for our 7 Principles. Our 7th Principle says that we are all part of the web of life. What we do makes a difference. Even small things can make a change for the good. We can start by making new friends and making others feel welcome.

THE “WIN” FOR THIS SESSION –children will express their ideas for how they can work for change, and feel welcome in their RE classrooms. The first sessions are usually a little unsettled, and unsettling for the children, and perhaps the adults too. Just try to have fun and show kindness to the children, parent/caretakers and each other. And be kind to yourselves.

SESSION AT A GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MINUTES LONG
1. GAMES	10
2. CIRCLE TIME: CHALICE LIGHTING; GOING DEEPER QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION	10
3. ACTIVITIES – DECORATING THE THRESHOLD; DECORATING NAME ROCKS	25
4. SNACK	10
5. GOODBYES	

1. The Interconnected Web –

You might do this in room B-6 – the room without furniture. I’ll leave the floor empty this week. Next week we’ll have it set up with the labyrinth.

Materials: A large ball of yarn, scissors.

Have the group stand in a circle. The person holding the ball of yarn begins by choosing someone across the circle to greet; they can say the other person’s name or ask their name. Then they throw the ball to that person, while holding on to the end of the yarn. That person catches it and chooses a new person. The process continues until everyone is holding onto part of the web. Have the group raise the web above their

heads to see how neat it is. Pass around scissors so that everyone can cut a piece of the web to keep as a memento of the community or find a place to hang up the web.

2. GOING DEEPER INTO THE STORY

Chalice lighting

Reflection on the story

Ask the children to retell the story. How did it start? What happened in the middle? How did it end? Or you could have the children re-enact the story by taking the roles of the eldest child, shopkeeper, Dad, second child, third child, fourth child, baby and Mom.

Discussion – these questions are just to get the children wondering; don't worry if they don't respond

- *Did being in the Sanctuary today make you feel a big "wow" today? Perhaps just the first day gave you some big feelings*
- *Invite discussion of the story with these or other questions:*
- *Is the vase really magic?*
- *Why is the story called "The Magic Vase?"*
- *Did the vase make something happen? Or did people in the story make something happen?*
- *Who made something happen? How?*
- *Why do you think the oldest child went across the threshold, outside his home, for what he needed to get? Was something missing from his home that should have been there? What was it?*

Meditation - Lectio Divina with the Transcendentalists Expectation of the Meaning of Life

In this form of meditation from Christian tradition, you read and notice and listen.

Invite the group to get into a comfortable position. Let the children know you will read the passage slowly, two or three times. It might be neat if 3 different adults each read one quite several times. Invite the children to notice what word or phrase speaks to them

Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better. — Ralph Waldo Emerson

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. —

Henry David Thoreau, Walden

Very early I knew that the only object in life was to grow. — Margaret Fuller

Invite the children to take a deep breath and ask for any responses.

3. Activity time

Decorating the Threshold

Materials for Activity

Colored tissue paper, cut into five-inch squares (ten squares for each flower)

Green construction paper to cut into leaf shapes

Markers

Pencils and scissors

Tape

Colored ribbon

Description of Activity

The children decorate the threshold of the meeting space to focus on this special place of entering and leaving. Each child will make a flower out of tissue paper and write their name on a green paper leaf. With leader help, participants fasten their artwork to the doorway.

Give each child approximately ten different-colored squares of tissue paper. Show the group how to make a flower:

Stack the squares.

Roll the squares up into a tight cylinder.

Tape the cylinder closed with a single piece of tape around its middle.

Fold each sheet outward and down toward the tape to bloom the flower.

Now, invite children to make flowers with tissue paper and write their names on green leaves. (In the spirit of this activity, it may be more important that children write their names themselves than that they write their names exactly correctly.)

If participants will cut out their own leaf shapes, distribute green paper, the leaf shape template, pencils for tracing, and scissors. Offer assistance as needed. Of course, the children can draw their own leaf shapes instead of using the template.

Set aside extra green paper leaves for future participants and visitors to add their names to your threshold.

Children may tie their flowers in the center with ribbons to make "stems." Tape completed flowers and leaves to mark the threshold of the meeting space. Place the decorations so they will not be damaged as people pass through the doorway.

Decorating name rocks

Materials for Activity

- Name stones, one for each participant
- Newspaper
- Permanent markers
- Arts and crafts materials, including a strong glue to affix decorations to a stone
- Optional: Paper and a pen or pencil

Preparation for Activity

- Spread newspaper to cover floor or tables where participants will decorate their name stones.
- Prepare a safe, out-of-the-way place to leave decorated name stones to dry.
- Gather markers, glue, and other arts and crafts materials and place them where participants can share.

Description of Activity

To help children find their name stones for the opening and closing rituals in future sessions, and to reinforce the idea that a name stone symbolizes each person in the group, children will personalize their name stones.

Beginning writers may not be sure how write their names. Offer to help. You can print the name on a piece of white paper, and invite the child to copy the letters onto his/her stone. Make sure you have spelled the child's name correctly!

When all the name stones are finished, collect them in the basket. If you are using paint or glue, some name stones may still be wet when your session ends. If you are leaving name stones to dry in the meeting room, lay down newspaper in a safe place and ask the children to place their stones there when they are finished decorating them.

4. **Snack time** – you might use this time to just chat with the children to get to know them and for them to get to know each other.
5. **Distribute *Guide to the Monthly Theme at the end of the session***. This is a new monthly resource for families and others in the congregation to connect with the monthly theme at home. **Dismiss children at 11:20.**