Soul Matters

What does it mean
to be a people of

Possibility?



RE Resources

January 2019

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Welcome

Welcome to January's packet on "What Does It Mean to be a People of Possibility?"
I'm excited about the four rich angles we're taking on possibility this month:

The Sessions
Session 1. The Possibility of You
Session 2. Impossible Possibilities
Session 3. The Possibility of Change
Session 4. The Possibility of Being Wrong

I've particularly enjoyed working on Session 2. When I wrote my curriculum, Spirit of Adventure, I discovered that we have an overemphasis on fine motor crafts in our children's curricula and little or no emphasis on sports, engineering, architecture and medicine as topics which can teach about our faith. This month, we explore invention, engineering and science in Session 2, Impossible Possibilities. We suggest a Makerspace or a Take Apart Party, delving into imagination, invention and the possibilities which the future will bring. The Take Apart Party has become extremely popular in RE programs around the country. One year, in the congregation I served, the children came to me and said that if I didn't offer a second one in a few weeks, they would never come to Sunday School again, they loved it so much. Involve your engineers and scientists as co-creators to widen your pool of interested volunteers and expand the possibilities from which to build faith!

Session 4 also has my heart because it tackles such a central value to teach our children (and adults!): humility. It's never easy to contemplate the possibility that we might be wrong. It is important that we understand how to learn from our mistakes. Having grown up UU, the spiritual practice of humility was rarely taught. Yet, it is a valuable practice if we are to live together in community.

An organizational note: In advance, collect recyclables and safe junk for the Makers Space. Collect old computers, cassette tapes, VCR tapes, adding machines, cameras, and other old, destroyable tech for the Take Apart Party. In addition, small screwdrivers with Philips head and standard head are helpful.

With gratitude for ministry and many gifts you offer our children,
Katie, on behalf of the entire Soul Matters Team

Katie Covey
DRE for Soul Matters
soulmattersre@gmail.com

Calendar Connections

January 2019

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

Interfaith:

- Gantan-sai - Japanese New Year (Shinto) - Jan. 1
- Twelfth Night (Christian) - Jan. 5
- Epiphany (Christian) - Jan. 6
- World Religion Day (Baha'i) - Jan. 20 (more found here and here)
- Tu BiShevat (Jewish) - Jan. 20-21 (more here and here)

Unitarian Universalist:

- Thirty Days of Love - Standing on the Side of Love Campaign - Jan.15 - Feb.14
- Millard Fillmore's Birthday - Jan. 7 (1800)
- Joseph Tuckerman's Birthday - Jan. 18 (1778) (more here)

National & Cultural:

- New Year's Day - Jan.1
- The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln - Jan. 1 (1863)
- MLK, Jr. Day - Jan. 15 (connections here and here)
- Rowe vs. Wade Anniversary - Jan. 22 (more here)
- International Holocaust (Shoah) Remembrance Day - Jan. 27 (more here and here)

For Fun and On the Fringe:

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

Stories for all Ages

Like Me
In Tapestry of Faith, Love Surrounds Us, New Friends
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session3/169922.shtml
This would be a good skit with two dramatic readers.

"So I said to my dad, Hey, you know that new kid?
Well I've really been thinking a lot.
Some things are different... and some things are not...
But mostly he's really like me, like me,
Yes, my new friend's... a lot... like me." - from the story

Theme Connection: Celebrates the possibility of connecting across differences. If we just look a little harder, we find our commonalities.

The Sea of Pink
In Tapestry of Faith; Sing to the Power, the Power to Shine
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session9/sea-of-pink
Tell the story, then pass out pink ribbons to tie as armbands.

"Scott was nervous on his first day of junior high school. Junior high started with the fifth grade in his town. He was going to be among the youngest kids in school, and everything was new to him. He had loaded his back pack with all the things on the back to school list and his favorite lunch and snacks. He even wore his favorite pink tee-shirt for good luck." - from the story

Theme connection: Anti-bullying as an illustration of the possibility of change, and the possibility of empathy.

The Dog and the Heartless King
From Tapestry of Faith, Moral Tales, Justice for All
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session13/story-1

"But the enormous dog was no ordinary dog, and her bark was like the roar of thunder. The first time she opened her big mouth and barked, the awful noise shook the walls of the palace and frightened the king and all his courtiers. If the dog had stopped with one or two barks, the matter might have been forgotten. But again and again her fierce roaring shook the palace and the Earth itself. Before long there was no resting between barks." from the story

Consider the adding the song "Who Let the Dogs Out?" by the Baha Men to illustrate how incredibly annoying it was to have a loud barking dog in the castle.
Invite the congregation to bark along to illustrate the roaring bark.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJpeAlLmj78 (min :16 - :39 only)

Theme connection: The king was wrong to cause his people to starve. It took the dog to teach him humility. There is the possibility that we can be wrong, and it takes humility to accept this and learn from our mistakes.

The Traveling Chalice Program, as a Story for All Ages
Below is a Traveling Chalice Program, a creation of DRE and Soul Matters member Cory Ness. It makes for a great Story for All Ages and lays the groundwork for a January tradition.

FLAME OF LEARNING, CHALICE OF LOVE

adapted by Cory Ness from Janeen K Grohsmeyer
Message for All Ages, September 25, 2016

(Light a chalice, if there isn't already one lit, and have some matches at hand.)

Have you ever watched a candle burn? (Lean forward to impart the secret.)

The fire is alive. Watch it! It moves. It flickers. It dances like the wind. It changes with every breath of air.

Fire is alive. It is born. It grows. And it dies. (Blow out candle.)

But fire is special. It can live again and again. (Relight candle and reverently set the chalice someplace where participants can see it.)

People have always known that fire was special. Long, long ago, before people made matches or candles or even made houses, people knew that fire was special. There was the great fire in the sky, the sun, which made the earth warm and made night into day. And there were the smaller fires that people made, fires that cooked their food, and kept them warm, and brought them light.

People honored the fires, because fire was special. Fire was more than human.

Fire has power. It can create, and it can destroy. It can bring light, and it can burn. Fire can be wonderful, and fire can be terrible. We have to be careful with fire.

And so, people thought that fire was something sacred and holy. Some people even worshiped fire, and said that fire was a deity, like a goddess or a god. Other people said fire wasn't actually the deity, but just meant that the deity was there.

No matter what they believed, people all over the world gave fire a special place in their religions. They had fires in their homes, of course, to cook food and keep warm, and they also had sacred fires in their temples. They set sacred lamps on their altars. They lit sacred bonfires outside on the hilltops and in the groves. They placed sacred torches near the graves of those who died.

We still do this today. In Washington, DC, near the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, burns an eternal flame that never goes out. In churches at Christmas time, many Christians light four candles on an Advent wreath. During the eight days of Hanukkah, Jews light the eight candles of the menorah. At Diwali, Hindus set small lamps all around the house.

And when Unitarian Universalists gather, we light a chalice. This is our sacred fire. The flame gives light and warmth, just like all fires. It's also a symbol, something we use to represent the light of learning.

The chalice is a symbol, too. We use it to hold the flame. The circle of the chalice helps keep the fire small. It gives us light, so we can see all the different things in the universe. Even the invisible ones, because the Unitarian Universalist flame is a light of learning.

The circle of our family keeps us warm, both our family at home and our Unitarian Universalist family. We help each other, and we take care of each other, because that's what families are supposed to do. And we invite everyone to come be a part of our family, because the Unitarian Universalist chalice is a chalice of love.

Beginning today a family/household will take our chalice of love and learning home with them. Today, the ? Family will take the chalice home with them. A sign-up sheet is located in the Narthex so that any family/household who is a part of our church may enjoy the light of learning and love in each of your homes. Each week the chalice will travel from one home to the next where it will be cherished.

You will find in our sacred traveling chalice box everything you see here, including:
A handmade one-of-a-kind Chalice designed and created by our very own Dan Houston, specifically for this program;

- Special Cloth,
- Battery Operated Candle,
- Votive with Wax Candle,
- Pen,
- Journal,
- Chalice Lighting Readings,
- and a book titled A Cup of Light: All About the Flaming Chalice by Pamela Baxter.

The Purpose of our Traveling Chalice Program is to deepen our understanding of one of our most familiar Unitarian Universalist symbols. The light of the Chalice connects us all together and is a sacred element of our beloved community. The Chalice may also be used as a symbol of hope when one is feeling or experiencing a sense of darkness. You will learn about its history and how it brings people together through learning and love.

How the Program Works
Each week a family/household (not just those with children) will take home the Traveling Chalice, which will be inside a special Chalice Box.

You may want to use the Chalice during your meals, family meetings, or as a bedtime ritual. Choose a reading from the materials provided or make your own.

Take a photo of the chalice and post it on the UUCSV Facebook page or send it to me…(is the Chalice on your dining room table, mantle, next to a bedside table?)

Record your experience in the included journal.
How did the chalice enrich your experience?
In what ways was the chalice used?
if you created your own reading, you may share it in the journal.

Bring the box and all of its contents back to church the following week and place it here on the podium so that our next family/household may use it.

And finally: Much gratitude goes to Dan Houston for his vision and his creation in our sacred symbol - our Chalice, which will serve our beloved community for generations to come. Thank you!

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.

STLT #170 We are a Gentle Angry People - the possibility of change
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=johabhyURIw

Use this hymn to illustrate the possibility of change, as illustrated in this story of going to a Holly Near concert and hearing Near change the lyrics to reflect our better understanding of gender and sexuality.

"We sang the first couple of verses, and then she began to speak. I must say that once I realized what she was doing, I started transcribing furiously on my phone, so this isn't exact, but it's pretty close:

"I wrote this song when Harvey Milk and George Moscone were assassinated. We originally sang 'we are gay and lesbian together' but then we were surrounded by the support of allies and so I changed it to 'we are gay and straight together.' And now we are learning more and more about gender and sexuality and it now requires many more syllables than I can fit into the song, and so let us now sing 'we are all in this together."

In that 30 second riff, she updated her lyrics to expand the circle of love that this song holds.

We've talked a lot in the course of this practice about expansive language and who gets to change it. It didn't happen on the post for this song, but in at least two different Facebook posts, there have been debates about the "gay and straight" language that lives in STLT. It meant the world to me to hear her rewrite her lyrics herself to meet the moment."

by Rev. Kimberley DeBus
http://farfringe.com/hymn-by-hymn-extra-singing-for-our-lives/

Book Recommendations

Good People Everywhere
by Lynea Gillen (Author), Kristina Swarner (Illustrator)
https://www.amazon.com/Good-People-Everywhere-Lynea-Gillen/dp/0979928982/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1539373198&sr=8-1&keywords=good+people+everywhere
"A colorful picture book that will warm the hearts of children and adults alike, each of its pages contain endearing examples and vibrant illustrations to inspire children to grow into grateful, caring, and giving people. It provides a wonderful way to calm children before sleep, ease their fears, and help them develop an appreciation for good work." - Amazon

Theme Connection: We believe in the possibility of good in all people.

Oh, The Places You'll Go
By Dr. Seuss
https://www.amazon.com/Oh-Places-Youll-Dr-Seuss/dp/0679805273/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1539881013&sr=1-1&keywords=oh+the+places+you%27ll+go+by+dr.+seuss
"From soaring to high heights and seeing great sights to being left in a Lurch on a prickly perch, Dr. Seuss addresses life's ups and downs with his trademark humorous verse and illustrations, while encouraging readers to find the success that lies within." - Amazon

Theme Connection: Each person has potential. The possibility of you.

Honoring UU Identity

Resources to celebrate the relationship between UU identity and the theme.
*Each month we highlight history, wisdom tales and liturgy that are widely embraced among UU congregations. This section also strives to honor the way UU Identity is changing and needs to change. Ultimately, the centerpiece of our UU identity **is** the willingness to evolve and question "our identity." So we include people, history and resources that do just that.*

UU History

Paul Newman
Actor and member of the Unitarian Church in Westport CT, born on Jan. 26, 1925
Use Paul Newman's January birthday to talk about the possibilities created by generosity. Newman's Own brands have contributed $485 million to charities.

Your Own Historical Figure
Honor a member from your historical past who has contributed to your congregation being a people of possibility. Maybe it's someone who that helped your congregation open itself to the possibility of change or the possibility of being wrong. Maybe it is a person who started something that seemed impossible but became possible. The key is to deepen your congregation's engagement with the monthly theme by identifying and celebrating someone from your church's history helped shape its identity as a community of possibility.

UU Wisdom Tales

The Parable of "Maybe"
On hope, humility, acceptance and never being able to control the possibilities...
Story: http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=1011
Spoken - Alan Watts, with reflection: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byQrdnq7_H0
Modern retelling: https://vimeo.com/215111799
Song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRfw3iklJok&index=2&list=RDKrdlYftMn94

Beloved UU Liturgy

STLT #55 Dark of Winter

Commentary at http://farfringe.com/stlt55-dark-of-winter/

STJ #1074 Turn the World Around

Video: Harry Belafonte and the Muppets https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=24&v=tPaKWihFs_Q

Commentary: http://farfringe.com/stj1074-turn-the-world-around/

> "The question is: Do I know who you are, or who I am? Do we care about each other? Because if we do, together we can turn the world around."
> - from the interview with Belafonte
> Celebrate the possibility of you and the possibility of change.

"Soon-to-Be Beloved UU Liturgy"

The Traveling Chalice Program

By Corenna Ness, UU Church of the Shenandoah Valley, Stephens City, VA

As Family Ministry grows, we are searching for ways to bring faith formation into family life. We explored that topic in the webinar, "Bringing Theme-Based Ministry Home" with Kim Sweeney, available on the Soul Matters Webinar Recordings webpage. The Traveling Chalice program caught our attention and seems an ideal ritual to begin in January, our month of possibility. Being a people of possibility means making it possible to build our faith at home. So while the Traveling Chalice isn't an established tradition, we suggest that it become one. Many thanks to Corenna Ness for sharing her program documents:

- The Unveiling, suggested as a Story for All Ages above
- An Information Sheet, below

The Traveling Chalice:
Bringing the Light Home

by Cory M. Ness, Director of Religious Education
from the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Shenandoah Valley
Stephens City, VA

Purpose

The Purpose of the **Traveling Chalice Program** is to deepen our understanding of one of our most familiar Unitarian Universalist symbols. The light of the Chalice connects us all together and is a sacred element of our beloved community. The Chalice may also be used as a symbol of hope when one is feeling or experiencing a sense of darkness. We will learn about its history and how it brings people together through learning and love.

How the Program Works

Each week a family/household (not just those with children) will take home the **Traveling Chalice**, which will be inside a special **Chalice Box**. A sign-up sheet will be located in the Narthex at the Lifespan Faith Development counter.

You may want to use the Chalice during your meals, family meetings, or as a bedtime ritual. Choose a reading from the materials provided or make your own.

Take a photo of the chalice and post it on the UUCSV Facebook page or send it to me…(is the Chalice on your dining room table, mantle, next to a bedside table?)

Record your experience in the included journal.
How did the chalice enrich your experience?
In what ways was the chalice used?
if you created your own reading, you may share it in the journal.

Bring the box and all of its contents back to church the following week so that the next family/household may use it.

The Box Includes

A handmade one-of-a-kind Chalice designed and created by our very own **Dan Houston**, specifically for this program; Special Cloth, Battery Operated Candle, Votive with Wax Candle, Pen, Journal, Chalice Lighting Readings, and a book titled **A Cup of Light: All About the Flaming Chalice** by Pamela Baxter.

Much gratitude goes to Dan Houston for his
vision and his creation in our sacred symbol - our Chalice,
which will serve our beloved community
for generations to come.
Thank you!

Chapel

Here's a template 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.

Possibility Centerpiece

Choose a color for a cloth, a chalice, an offering box, a way of sharing Joys and Sorrows (candles or rocks in water).

For "How are we a people of possibility?"

- Cloth Color: beige
- Chalice: pottery
- Items: A variety of ways of expressing possibility
- A paper white or other flower bulb to force and watch grow
- A winter dried seed pod and grasses arrangement in a vase
- A toy airplane, "fortuneteller" or other prop from the sessions

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."

Centering Music for possibility

It's In Every One of Us
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xd1QnNBZQ2A

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

New Year's Ritual: Hand Blessing

Prep and materials**:** If your church has a tradition of keeping "living waters" ask the minister for approximately a teaspoon of that water. Place the living water in a large container and use tap water to "stretch" the living waters. Distribute the water in small cups/bowls, one bowl for each pair of students. Feel free to play solemn music to help the students find the sacred during this meditation. Explain that this is a serious exercise, that we need to remember we don't aren't alone when things get hard.

Have the children find or assign a partner.
Sit near your partner and take a few deep breaths. You may want to use the relaxation technique from September:

Sit upright as you are willing and able.
In-breath: Tighten all of your facial muscles and body muscles but not so tight that it is uncomfortable. Take a look at your friend's scrunchy faces.
Out-breath: Release and relax
This is a new year, there are many new possibilities for each of you this year. You can change what you don't like, become better at your favorite things, and discover something new this year.
One person in each pair dips their fingers in the living waters and places a bit of water on their partner's hand. They then touch hands and bless each other.
Use these words or something similar: "As your friend, I bless your journey this year, I genuinely hope that you become all that you want to be this year. I am cheering you on." or this blessing, adapted from Laila Ibrahim's words, "It's a blessing you were born. And it matters what you do, what you know about God, is a piece of the truth. Let the beauty you love, be what you do....and you don't have to do it alone."
Reverse and have the other partner administer the blessing.

From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Story, optional

Use one of the recommended stories/songs For All Ages, or a book from the book recommendations. This would be a good time to introduce the Traveling Chalice Program to the children.

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.

Preschool and Kindergarten Sessions

Session 1
The Possibility of You

Introduction
Message: You can be anything.
Spiritual Focus: The Spirituality of Individual Potential
This session lifts up our first principle, the inherent worth and dignity of each person. Worth also signifies that possibility inside each of us is the possibility of anything, we say. We practice the spirituality of potential, which gives us hope for a new beginning in the new year. With our young children we notice the possibilities in babies, and how far the preschoolers have grown. Notice, too, that the last session for the theme of possibility is the Possibility of Being Wrong and the spiritual practice of humility. This first and last session offer a balance between potential and arrogance, humility and hubris.

Wonder Box
Place inside: a lima bean seed, or other seed large enough to hold
What is in the wonder box? A seed! This little round white thing that I can hold in my hand has the possibility of being a whole plant with roots and leaves and even some beans to give us food. What is in you? Do you have a whole plant with roots and leaves? No, but you do have a whole person with a heart and a mind and a spirit, who will grow up and be the best you that you can be.

Stories

The Wonderful Things You Will Be
by Emily Winfield Martin (Author)
https://www.amazon.com/Wonderful-Things-You-Will-Be/dp/0385376715/ref=pd_bxgy_14_img_2?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=0385376715&pd_rd_r=f675f9c3-d2f4-11e8-a0dd-5f2429a49a3d&pd_rd_w=sUUJC&pd_rd_wg=0Bc2y&pf_rd_i=desktop-dp-sims&pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_p=6725dbd6-9917-451d-beba-16af7874e407&pf_rd_r=9D7DTR339EY433FA10G0&pf_rd_s=desktop-dp-sims&pf_rd_t=40701&psc=1&refRID=9D7DTR339EY433FA10G0
"Childhood is a time full of potential, and Martin celebrates this promise in this work. The general premise of Dr. Seuss's classic, Oh, The Places You'll Go is pared down to elegant simplicity. "Will you stand up for good/By saving the day?/Or play a song only you/Know how to play?" While the rhyming text falters a bit in spots, the word choice overall is spare, inspiring, and accessible to preschoolers. Children are encouraged to be kind, clever, and bold, to take care of the small, and to help things grow. Martin's oil paintings have the same retro, mid-century feel as her other illustrations, with large-eyed children of many ethnicities playing, gardening, and sharing together." - School Library Journal Review

Theme Connection: What is the possibility of you?

The Empty Pot
From Tapestry of Faith, Creating Home
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session13/60162.shtml
"Only one child cared for the seed even when it did not grow," the Emperor said. "Only Chen gave the seed all it needed and asked for nothing. Only Chen was honest enough to show me an empty pot. Chen will be the new Emperor." - from the story

Theme Connection: Living up to the possibility of you means trying your best and being true and honest.

Books about Babies and their potentials
From Tapestry of Faith, Chalice Children, Babies
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session15/298467.shtml

Theme Connections: The babies in the nursery (or a part of our congregation) have all sorts of possibilities for who they are going to be.

Meditation

New Year's Ritual: Hand Blessing
Prep and materials: If your church has a tradition of keeping "living waters" ask the minister for approximately a teaspoon of that water. Place the living water in a large container and use tap water to "stretch" the living waters. Distribute the water in small cups/bowls, one bowl for each pair of students. Feel free to play solemn music to help the students find the sacred during this meditation. Explain that this is a serious exercise, that we need to remember we don't aren't alone when things get hard.

Have the children find or assign a partner.
Sit near your partner and take a few deep breaths. You may want to use the relaxation technique from September:

Sit upright as you are willing and able.
In-breath: Tighten all of your facial muscles and body muscles but not so tight that it is uncomfortable. Take a look at your friend's scrunchy faces.
Out-breath: Release and relax
This is a new year, there are many new possibilities for each of you this year. You can change what you don't like, become better at your favorite things, and discover something new this year.
One person in each pair dips their fingers in the living waters and places a bit of water on their partner's hand. They then touch hands and bless each other.
Use these words or something similar: "As your friend, I bless your journey this year, I genuinely hope that you become all that you want to be this year. I am cheering you on." or this blessing, adapted from Laila Ibrahim's words, "It's a blessing you were born. And it matters what you do, what you know about God, is a piece of the truth. Let the beauty you love, be what you do....and you don't have to do it alone."
Reverse and have the other partner administer the blessing.
* Please allow students to opt-out of the physical contact aspect of this meditation. As an alternative, students can choose to dip their own fingers in the bowl and "gassho" (Japanese folded-hand position) to each other during the blessing.
- From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Activities

Our Special Gifts Paper Dolls
From Tapestry of Faith, Creating Home, Our Worship Home
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session13/59746.shtml

In this activity, children will identify two of their own special gifts.

Planting Bean Seeds
Invite the children to plant a bean seed similar to the one you used in the Wonder Box, using potting soil and a cup. Label them with their names to take home.

Baby Visit
From Tapestry of Faith, Chalice Children, Babies
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session15/298468.shtml

"Contact a family with a baby and invite them to attend the session, whether for a brief time or for the whole morning. Discuss what you will need to make the baby and parent comfortable, for example: Can the baby be fed? Diapered? Bathed? Will the baby want to crawl around? When is the best time for the baby to visit? How long can the baby stay in the meeting room? How can the preschoolers interact with the baby? Will they be able to play with the baby, or to gently touch the baby-pat the baby's head, touch its hands or feet, hand it toys?" - from the activity
Ask the parents what they hope for their baby.
How has the baby shown its personality already? Is it calm, does she like to see people? What do they think the baby will be like when they grow up?

Playing with Baby Toys
Collect some baby toys for the preschoolers to explore and play with. Which ones might babies really like?
As the children play, invite them to share about who they wish to grow up to be. Look how far they have come from being babies!

Welcome Song
From Tapestry of Faith, Chalice Children, adapted
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session15/298469.shtml

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":
Welcome, all the Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Welcome, all the Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Welcome, All the Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:
We are All the Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are All the Children!
Clap, clap, clap!

We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

We are All the Children!
Let's all welcome… [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

"Sunshine" (connection with nature and our bodies)

Go outside and sing and march to the Welcome Song! Celebrate the possibility of you!

Service
Make or offer a gift for the nursery or for the babies in the congregation. Suggestions might include: A picture to decorate the wall or washing the nursery toys.

Session 2
Impossible Possibilities

Introduction
Message: The future is wonderfully impossible to predict
Spiritual Focus: The Spirituality of Surprise
Celebrate our love of science and reason with our youngest children. Invite them to invent something impossible.

Wonder Box

Place inside: a toy airplane
What is in the Wonder Box today? A toy airplane! People used to think that a machine that could fly in the air was impossible. Can you say that with me - impossible! Then some brothers invented the airplane. So it was possible to fly in a machine. Who has flown in an airplane? Did you really go up in the air? Yes! So now it could be called an "Impossible Possibility." Because first it was impossible and then it was possible.

Can you say that with me? Impossible possibility. That means something that is really crazy, but we are going to try. There are other impossible possibilities. Folks used to think that a machine that washed clothes was impossible. But now we have a what? A Washing Machine. Do you have a washing machine! Folks thought that it was impossible that a computer could fit in a pocket. Now many of us have smartphones which fit in our pocket!
Today, we want to think about inventing some fun "impossible possibilities."

Stories

Rosie Revere, Engineer
by Andrea Beaty (Author), David Roberts (Illustrator)
https://www.amazon.com/Rosie-Revere-Engineer-Andrea-Beaty/dp/1419708457/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1540562667&sr=1-1&keywords=rosie+revere+engineer
"Rosie may seem quiet during the day, but at night she's a brilliant inventor of gizmos and gadgets who dreams of becoming a great engineer. When her great-great-aunt Rose (Rosie the Riveter) comes for a visit and mentions her one unfinished goal--to fly--Rosie sets to work building a contraption to make her aunt's dream come true. But when her contraption doesn't fly but rather hovers for a moment and then crashes, Rosie deems the invention a failure. On the contrary, Aunt Rose insists that Rosie's contraption was a raging success. You can only truly fail, she explains, if you quit." - Amazon

Theme Connection: Impossible possibilities take imagination and perseverance.

Galimoto (Reading Rainbow Book)
by Karen Lynn Williams (Author), Catherine Stock (Illustrator)
https://www.amazon.com/Galimoto-Reading-Rainbow-Karen-Williams/dp/0688109918/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1540562912&sr=1-1&keywords=Galimoto

"Kondi is determined to make a galimoto—a toy vehicle made of wires. His brother laughs at the idea, but all day Kondi goes about gathering up the wire he needs. By nightfall, his wonderful galimoto is ready for the village children to play with in the light of the moon." - Amazon

Theme Connection: Building something from scratch is a way to explore possibility.

Weiner Dog Magnet (online illustrated story)
http://www.magickeys.com/books/wienerdog/index.html

A very simple story about a monkey who invents a Weiner dog bridge.
Theme Connection: Sometimes inventions can be silly and imaginative.

Meditation

Hanging Prayer Flags for the New Year

Materials and Prep: Purchase black prayer flags
https://www.amazon.com/Blank-Prayer-Flags-surged-Edge/dp/B075NYRTKB/ref=asc_df_B075NYRTKB/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=222333483536&hvpos=1o1&hvnetw=g&hvrand=14192998806572650685&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9033269&hvtargid=pla-393619780695&psc=1

or make your own with cloth and rope/string/yarn https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS_dGnaE7mU
Each string of flags should have 7 flags representing the 7 principles and be large enough to write messages and decorate. (optional) Decorative materials for fabric art.

Not all meditation involves sitting quietly. Today we will do meditation in action. The meditation is to be mindful of our best intentions for the new year and create sacred prayer flags (a meditative practice of Tibetan Buddhism.)
Take a moment to center and breathe. (Feel free to use the relaxation technique offered in the previous week.)
Create prayer flags either as a group or individually. Each flag represents a possibility that you would like to see made manifest this year. You may use words based on the seven principles, e.g., "May all people be seen as important this year"...and etc. You may also choose to use symbols that represent your hope for the world.
After you have created the prayer flags, enter into a time of silence.
Remembering your breath, your body, your hopes for the world, hang the prayer flags.
After the flags are up, take a few moments and imagine that the winds of the earth blow your prayers of hope and possibility to every end of the world.

- From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Activities

Songs and Fingerplays
Robot Song from Fingerplays and Action Rhymes. (To the Tune of: The Wheels On The Bus)
http://fingerplays-b3ok.blogspot.com/2013/08/robot-song.html

The arms of the robot swing up and down,
Up and down, up and down,
The arms of the robot swing up and down,
All around the room.

The legs of the robot move back and forth…
The head of the robot turns side to side…
The buttons on the robot blink on and off…
The voice of the robot says beep, beep, beep…

Invent with Blocks or Manipulatives
Engineering Song
Lyrics from Preschool Express (which they say they adapted from a poem by Peggy Sloan).
http://www.preschoolexpress.com/music-station14/block-songs.shtml
Can be sung to the Final Jeopardy theme music. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3lLYOGDsts

Pick a block to put on top.
Careful now, don't let it dro-o-o-o-op!
Higher, higher – up you go.
Take your time, just do it slow.
Balance one block, two blocks, three
See how tall your stack can be-e-e.

Invite the children to invent something using wooden blocks or other manipulatives, such as Legos. Sing the song while the children invent.

Pipe Cleaner Play
What can the children invent with pipe cleaners?

Junk Play
Collect a variety of safe recyclables such as paper towel tubes and cereal boxes. Provide masking tape and invite the children to invent something impossibly possible.

"Sunshine" (connection with nature and our bodies)
Impossible Possible Hunt
Invite the children to find impossible possibles around your facility. Windows were once thought impossible, then someone invented glass from melted sand. Doors that shut by themselves needed inventing. Special crash bars were invented so folks could exit in case of a fire. Cement was an impossible possible and now is all around us! Sawn wood for a fence or play structure, or chain link fence was once impossible. Bolts and screws were once impossible now they are so common we don't even see them.

Service (to others)
Share the creations at coffee hour sculpture exhibit.

Session 3
The Possibility of Change

Introduction

Message: It is possible to make a difference
Spiritual Focus: The Spirituality of Becoming Whole by Serving Others
Our young children know that it is love which makes the difference. In their uncomplicated world, we love each other and that makes us safe and happy. Kindness and love make change possible.

Wonder Box

Place inside: a heart
What is in the Wonder Box today? A heart! What does the heart stand for? Love. When we feel love and kindness, it is possible to change. With love, it is possible to make people happy and feel safe. When we share our hearts with each other, we share our love.

Stories

Be Kind
by Pat Zietlow Miller (Author), Jen Hill (Illustrator)
https://www.amazon.com/Be-Kind-Pat-Zietlow-Miller/dp/1626723214/ref=pd_sim_14_2?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=1626723214&pd_rd_r=9d3c6454-ce56-11e8-ab44-9143b7b890b1&pd_rd_w=QyTem&pd_rd_wg=AzD51&pf_rd_i=desktop-dp-sims&pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_p=18bb0b78-4200-49b9-ac91-f141d61a1780&pf_rd_r=B8FSY5YRS3EAXVP1TAJ4&pf_rd_s=desktop-dp-sims&pf_rd_t=40701&psc=1&refRID=B8FSY5YRS3EAXVP1TAJ4

"When Tanisha spills grape juice all over her new dress, her classmate wants to make her feel better, wondering: What does it mean to be kind?..." - Amazon

Theme Connection: Being kind is a simple way to create the possibility of change.

The Gift of Love
From Tapestry of Faith, Wonderful Welcome, The Gift of Love
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session1/118116.shtml

"You made me so happy when you welcomed me into your home. I wanted to spend special time with you making something and we did that. The real gift was the time we spent being together. We will always treasure that time and our love for each other and our family." - from the story.
Theme Connection: Change is hard. The gift of love makes change possible.

Books about Weddings
From Tapestry of Faith, Chalice Children, Weddings
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session14/298421.shtml

Read one of the books about weddings to illustrate a change - that now anyone can marry! These books would support the Wedding activity below.

Meditation

Orbiting the Sun

Materials: DVD/PC/Laptop to play the following video: https://www.pbs.org/video/religion-and-ethics-newsweekly-sufi-whirling-dervishes/.

Play music, preferably a UU hymn or song. (Please don't play "sufi-esque" music, we want to be careful not to misappropriate the practices of other.)

We will practice the contemplation of change/turning, not exactly as the Sufi's do it, but inspired by their practice of using the body to experience a great turning or change in life.
It is important that we remain silent during this meditation.
Start slowly, imagine your limbs are planets and your body is the sun. (If spinning doesn't work for your body, you may adapt this and mimic turning with your arms/bodies and in your own way.) Spin clockwise, slowly and careful not to harm others, and notice how you feel.
Does the repetitive motion make you feel dizzy, does it make you happy, does it make you peaceful?
- By Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Activities

Celebrate a Wedding - now that all can marry

From Tapestry of Faith, Chalice Children, Wedding
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session14/298422.shtml

Sometimes we believe that things can't change for the better. When that is the case it helps to remember surprising changes from the past. There was a time when two moms or two dads couldn't marry even if they loved each other. Today we celebrate the wedding of two stuffed animals and hear wedding stories from parents and others. Note that there is the possibility of change, in that now anyone can marry.

"Sunshine"(connection with nature and our bodies)

If you are able to outdoors, look for what is changing in the outdoor world. Is there snow? Are there dried plants? What has changed?

Service

Share some of the wedding snacks with the parents as they enter. Invite them to tell the story of their weddings.

Session 4
The Possibility of Being Wrong

Introduction

Message: It is possible we might not see the whole picture
Spiritual Focus: The Spirituality of Humility
Helping young children understand that we all make mistakes is an important life lesson. Comparing mistakes to owies helps young children understand the process of hurting and healing.

Wonder Box

Place inside: two flowers, one of which can be bent or broken. (This would be an ideal skit for a puppet)
What is in the Wonder Box today? It is a flower! It is so pretty! I wave it all around and OOPS! It is bent. Oh, oh! Now it won't stand up in the vase. And if I give it to my friend, it will droop. I wish I hadn't been so rough. I was going to give it to my friend and now it is spoiled. Here's another flower. What should I do?
Invite responses.
Can I put a band-aid on the bend and make it better. No.
Maybe I could still give it to my friend and apologize and see if they mind if it is shorter.
Or give it as just a blossom floating in a cup of water, without a stem at all.
What should I say? "I'm sorry I was so rough with the flower."
What should I do? I could give my friend the other one and be more gentle. But I was hoping to keep that one for myself.
But that's not the right thing to do, I should give the best one as a gift to my friend. I can still make the bent one look pretty. And the right thing to do is to apologize for being so rough with the flower.
And what will I learn from this mistake?
Next time, I will be gentle with the flower!

Stories

It's OK to Make Mistakes
By Todd Parr (Author, Illustrator)
https://www.amazon.com/Okay-Make-Mistakes-Todd-Parr/dp/0316230537/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1540570631&sr=1-1&keywords=its+ok+to+make+mistakes+todd+parr

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZlhN55iJ2Q

"It's Okay to Make Mistakes embraces life's happy accidents, the mistakes and mess-ups that can lead to self-discovery" - Amazon
Theme Connection: It is possible to be wrong and to learn from our mistakes.

The Rooster Who Learned to Crow
From Tapestry of Faith, Wonderful Welcome, The Gift of Learning
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session13/rooster

"Everyone is always wide awake on that farm, because they have a rooster whose friends helped him learn how to crow, just like this: "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"" - from the story

Theme Connection: There is the possibility that we can be wrong and not see the whole picture. The young rooster was wrong in that he was sure he couldn't crow. He learned from his mistake and tried and found out he could!

Meditation

Materials: Tissue paper, felt markers, green construction paper (optional), and pipe cleaners.
https://www.verywellfamily.com/tissue-paper-flowers-craft-620428

Take a moment to center and breathe. (Feel free to use the relaxation technique offered in the previous week.)
Spend a few minutes thinking about something you may have accidentally gotten or done wrong Remember you are human and we all make mistakes.
Draw a picture with markers and on a single sheet of tissue paper while you think about your mistake.
The blessing of being human is to recognize our mistakes and to change.
Make tissue paper flowers from your tissue paper drawing.
Take a silent moment to reflect on the beauty you have now created from your mistakes.

By Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Activities

Fingerplays and Songs
The Eensy Weensy Spider Redux - the possibility of being wrong and learning from a mistake
Sing the Eensy Weensy Spider
Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK2DVfExS-I

Is a gutter a good place to climb? Not really if it rains a lot. Did the eensy weensy spider make a mistake climbing up the gutter again? It's possible. Ask the children if the eensy weensy spider learned from her mistake? Can you make up other places where she might climb and sing it in the song. I.e.
The eensy weensy spider
Climbed up the big old tree
Down came the rain and she didn't wash right out!
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain
And the eensy weensy spider stayed in the big old tree.

Where else could she learn to climb and not be washed right out? A fence, under a leaf, a wall. Sometimes, like the eensy weensy spider we make mistakes, and then we can learn from them.

Jack and Jill - getting an owie and mending it

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after.

Up Jack got, and home did trot,
As fast as he could caper,
He went to bed to mend his head,
With vinegar and brown paper.

Sometimes we make mistakes and get an owie or a hurt. Has that happened to you? It happened to Jack! He went to bed with an owie on his head. These days we would put a band-aid on it, not vinegar and brown paper!

Band-Aid Art

Purchase Band-Aids in quantity and invite the children to explore them. Band-Aids have "power" in the young child's world, being associated with pain and mending. What better way to explore making mistakes and learning from them than manipulating a band-aid?

Provide paper and markers so the children may draw as well as stick their Band-Aids on.
Guide their play with questions like "When did you get a band-aid?"(When I fell off my stryder bike or when my sister pushed me off my chair.) "What happened" (My Mommy washed my owie and put a band-aid on it.") Did you or someone learn from that crash? (I'm going to keep practicing on my stryder/ my sister learned that she can really hurt someone by pushing them. She said she was sorry.) Guide the conversation toward the fact that everyone makes mistakes, and we can learn from them and change.
Variation: Invite the children to put Band-Aids on themselves and pretend owies, mistakes and learning..
Variation: Invite the children to put Band-Aids on toys and talk about their owies, mistakes and learning.

"Sunshine"(connection with nature and our bodies)

If it is possible to go outside, take a ball and kick it to each other. Notice how everyone makes mistakes and misses the ball or kicks it in a crazy direction. Encourage the children to try again and learn from their mistakes. For movement indoors, play Simon Says or Follow the leader. Again notice how everyone makes mistakes sometimes and encourage the children to try again and learn from their mistakes.

Service

Make a flower bouquet as a centerpiece for the coffee hour. Invite the children to be gentle with the flowers as they place them in a vase. Remind them of how the puppet made a mistake and then learned to be gentle.

First through Fifth Grade Sessions

Session 1
The Possibility of You

Introduction

Message: You can be anything.
Spiritual Focus: The Spirituality of Individual Potential
This session lifts up our first principle, the inherent worth and dignity of each person. Inside each of us is the possibility of anything, we say. We practice the spirituality of potential, which gives us hope for a new beginning in the new year. With our elementary children, we encourage the possibility of kindness and caring as essential to develop our potential. Notice, too, that the last session of the month for the theme of possibility is the Possibility of Being Wrong and the spiritual practice of humility. This first and last session offer a balance between potential and arrogance, humility and hubris.

Reflections

Prop: a Christmas ornament or other Winter Holiday decoration
Hold up the Christmas/ Winter Holiday item.
"It's over. Christmas [the Winter Holidays] is over." Have you packed up your decorations?
Now what do we do?
Read the poem by Howard Thurman.

Now the Work of Christmas Begins by Howard Thurman
https://www.uua.org/worship/words/affirmation/now-work-christmas-begins

"When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,..."

It is 2019, Happy New Year. We finished all of the winter holidays and move on. Or do we? What did we hear about the hope for peace, caring and kindness? Do we just forget about all that? No, just like the poem says, our work has just begun. And the place to start is by being a person of possibility.
This month, our theme is "What does it mean to be a people of possibility?" What do you think the theme means? What things are possible?
After eliciting the children's ideas…

Today, we reflect about the possibility of you because working for peace means starting with ourselves. Inside of you are all sorts of possibilities - what you will grow up to be, what you will be this year, how you will act this week. Each of us can be anything. Each of us must include kindness and caring if we are to reach our full possibilities.
Here's one more prayer about the message of the Winter Holidays:
Prayer for Peace - Lao-Tse
If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.

If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.

If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.

If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.

https://www.beliefnet.com/prayers/other-faiths/nations-leaders/prayer-for-peace.aspx#kc5wMQhHxzv3GfI0.99

So, to reach the full possibility of you, there must be peace in the heart, says Lao- Tse, a Chinese thinker who started a philosophy called Taoism (Dow-ism).

Stories

The Very Short Rule
From Tapestry of Faith, Wonderful Welcome, The Gift of Kindness
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session4/118229.shtml

"I say to you, friends, that being good is not just obeying a large number of rules. You could obey every single one of the rules the teachers have made, and still not be really good. Whether one is good or not depends on how one feels inside in one's heart. Do you feel hateful or loving toward others? Do you feel angry or patient with the person who hurts you? Those are the things that count."

"That kind of talk sounds good, Jesus," said a man who had been busy all day long hauling stones for building a road. "But I wish you would tell us in just one sentence what is most important so that we can't forget." - from the story

Theme Connection: One of the things that is possible in you in kindness. How would the world change if we practiced the Golden Rule? There would be more kindness.

Meditation

New Year's Ritual: Hand Blessing

Prep and materials: If your church has a tradition of keeping "living waters" ask the minister for approximately a teaspoon of that water. Place the living water in a large container and use tap water to "stretch" the living waters. Distribute the water in small cups/bowls, one bowl for each pair of students. Feel free to play solemn music to help the students find the sacred during this meditation. Explain that this is a serious exercise, that we need to remember we don't aren't alone when things get hard.

Have the children find or assign a partner.
Sit near your partner and take a few deep breaths. You may want to use the relaxation technique from September:

Sit upright as you are willing and able.
In-breath: Tighten all of your facial muscles and body muscles but not so tight that it is uncomfortable. Take a look at your friend's scrunchy faces.
Out-breath: Release and relax
This is a new year, there are many new possibilities for each of you this year. You can change what you don't like, become better at your favorite things, and discover something new this year.
One person in each pair dips their fingers in the living waters and places a bit of water on their partner's hand. They then touch hands and bless each other.
Use these words or something similar: "As your friend, I bless your journey this year, I genuinely hope that you become all that you want to be this year. I am cheering you on." or this blessing, adapted from Laila Ibrahim's words, "It's a blessing you were born. And it matters what you do, what you know about God, is a piece of the truth. Let the beauty you love, be what you do....and you don't have to do it alone."
Reverse and have the other partner administer the blessing.

* Please allow students to opt-out of the physical contact aspect of this meditation. As an alternative, students can choose to dip their own fingers in the bowl and "gassho" (Japanese folded-hand position) to each other during the blessing.

From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Activities

Making Golden Rulers
From Tapestry of Faith, Wonderful Welcome, the Gift of Kindness
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session4/118218.shtml

To go with the Very Short Rule story.

Acts of Kindness Role Play
From Tapestry of Faith, Wonderful Welcome, the Gift of Kindness
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session4/118219.shtml

Scenarios in which children can act out the possibility of being a kind person.

“Sunshine” (connection with nature and our bodies)

The Circle
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session4/144684.shtml
“He drew a circle that shut me out
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout
But love and I had the wit to win;
We drew a circle that took him in.” - Edwin Markham

Play the Keep Out Circle game, as described. Say something like, “how would we change the game to add the possibility of kindness, just like in the poem? Can you come up with “the wit to win; we drew a circle that took him in.” Play this with chalk circles on the sidewalk, or snow circles outside.

Peace Prayer Game - as in “The Farmer in the Dell”
Invite the children to learn the peace prayer as a movement game, which could be played outdoors or indoors.
First, play a regular game of “The Farmer in the Dell” so everyone remembers it.
Remind them of the Prayer for Peace words and suggest that they learn it by playing it in a way similar to the way you play “The Farmer in the Dell.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mibD5lR4Kco

First someone is chosen to be peace in the world.
The person playing Peace in the World chooses a person to be Peace Among the Nations.
The person playing Peace Among the Nations chooses a person to be Peace in the Cities, and so on.

You can add the tune by leaving out the words “If there is to be” and just singing Peace in the World, etc.
Invite the children to help develop the game. Is there a way to include more verses and thus, more people? What could they add - Peace in their town, peace in the woods, peace at the pool, peace at the school, peace between friends, etc.

Prayer for Peace
- Lao-Tse
If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.

If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.

If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.

If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.

Service
Include in the possibility of you, the practice of kindness. Invite the children to think of ways they could be kind to the congregation today. Think about ways that children could offer to help and role -play the way they could offer help.
Are they able to hold the door open for people?
Are they able to carry baby things for young parents?
Are they able to carry a plate of snacks around at coffee hour?
Are they able to mix a cup of coffee or tea for the minister, too busy to grab a drink?
Are they able to play with a child waiting for their parents?
Are they able to welcome a new family’s children and show them around?

Session 2
Impossible Possibility

Introduction

Message: The future is wonderfully impossible to predict
Spiritual Focus: The Spirituality of Surprise
Celebrate our love of science and reason with a Makerspace or Take Apart Party. Invite them to invent something impossible. And while you are "hands on," Rev. Jaelynn Scott has provided a "hands on" prayer flag meditation, too.

Reflection

Props: a toy airplane

The theme for this month is "How are we a people of possibility?" Today we are going to explore something we call "Impossible Possibilities." Can you imagine what "Impossible Possibilities" might mean? Something that seemed impossible but became possible.

Folks used to think that a machine could never be invented that would allow people to fly in the air. That would be impossible they said! But something was invented. What was it? (Pull out prop) An airplane! Who has ever been in an airplane? Something that seemed impossible became possible.

Folks used to think that women should not vote because they were too delicate to be a part of decisions. That was impossible they said! But eventually, women were granted the right to vote, in the U.S. and they vote today! Something that seemed impossible became possible.

Folks used to think that a machine could never be invented that would wash clothes without scrubbing them by hand. That was impossible! But what is it? A washing machine! Something that seemed impossible became possible.

White Folks in South Africa used to think that the white race should be superior, and the people of color should be separate and discriminated against. Blacks in the government was impossible! But now that system called "apartheid" is over and their first president of the new government was a black man named Nelson Mandela. Something that seemed impossible became possible.

Folks used to think that a machine could never be invented that would tell you anything you wanted to know and would fit in your pocket. That would be impossible, yet what is it? A smartphone! Something that seemed impossible became possible.

Stories

Mistakes That Worked: 40 Familiar Inventions & How They Came to Be
by Charlotte Foltz Jones (Author), John O'Brien (Illustrator)
https://www.amazon.com/Mistakes-That-Worked-Familiar-Inventions/dp/0385320434/ref=zg_bs_16244711_2?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=E3DXWWXZKH9M7SM9HDMS
Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3C3tPHA21Y0 (not a video of the book but of mistaken similar inventions. Stop at minute 3:30 to avoid Viagra and LSD)

"Popsicles, potato chips, Silly Putty, Velcro, and many other familiar things have fascinating stories behind them. In fact, dozens of products and everyday items had surprisingly haphazard beginnings. Mistakes That Worked offers forty of these unusual tales, along with hilarious cartoons and weird and amazing facts." - Amazon

Theme Connection: How something that seemed impossible became possible.

The Scratched Diamond
From Tapestry of Faith, Love Will Guide Us, We are Loved
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session5/168619.shtml

"The king gasped at what he saw. Where there had once been a scratch, a horrible flaw in his precious diamond, there was now an exquisitely beautiful flower carved into the diamond. Unable to polish the scratch out of the diamond, the diamond carver had instead turned the flaw into something beautiful." - from the story

Theme connection: What might seem impossible to fix, such as a scratched diamond, becomes even more beautiful with some creative invention.

Meditation

Hanging Prayer Flags for the New Year

Materials and Prep: Purchase black prayer flags
https://www.amazon.com/Blank-Prayer-Flags-surged-Edge/dp/B075NYRTKB/ref=asc_df_B075NYRTKB/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=222333483536&hvpos=1o1&hvnetw=g&hvrand=14192998806572650685&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9033269&hvtargid=pla-393619780695&psc=1
or make your own https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS_dGnaE7mU
with cloth and rope/string/yarn. Each string of flags should have 7 flags representing the 7 principles and be large enough to write messages and decorate. (optional) Decorative materials for fabric art.

Not all meditation involves sitting quietly. Today we will do meditation in action. The meditation is to be mindful of our best intentions for the new year and create sacred prayer flags (a meditative practice of Tibetan Buddhism.)
Take a moment to center and breathe. (Feel free to use the relaxation technique offered in the previous week.)
Create prayer flags either as a group or individually. Each flag represents a possibility that you would like to see made manifest this year. You may use words based on the seven principles, e.g., "May all people be seen as important this year"...and etc. You may also choose to use symbols that represent your hope for the world.
After you have created the prayer flags, enter into a time of silence.
Remembering your breath, your body, your hopes for the world, hang the prayer flags.
After the flags are up, take a few moments and imagine that the winds of the earth blow your prayers of hope and possibility to every end of the world.

From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Activities

Junk Maker Space
What inventions and impossible possibles can they make? Collect a variety of recyclables and safe junk from the congregation. Add duct tape and masking tape in various colors and go at it!

Take Apart Party
Collect old tape cassettes, VCR cassettes, old computers, printers, cameras, adding machines, speakers, etc. With the help of some appropriate tools, such as small screwdrivers, and some willing adults and High Schoolers, invite the children to dissect the old technologies.

"Sunshine" - connection to Movement and Nature

Hang the Prayer Flags
Hang the prayer flags outside in a corner of the playground, or inside the room, if possible. "Traditionally, prayer flags are used to promote peace, compassion, strength, and wisdom. The flags do not carry prayers to gods, which is a common misconception; rather, the Tibetans believe the prayers and mantras will be blown by the wind to spread the good will and compassion into all-pervading space. Therefore, prayer flags are thought to bring benefit to all." - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer_flag

Service (to others)

Order or make extra prayer flags and invite the congregation to design a prayer flag for the possibilities of the New Year. The children offer this activity after the service and share their own ideas for prayer flag making.

Session 3
The Possibility of Change

Introduction

Message: It is possible to make a difference
Spiritual Focus: The Spirituality of Justice
We UU's are an idealistic, hopeful people. One of our beliefs is that it is possible to make a difference in the world. Our spiritual practice is justice making. Celebrate the possibility of change today by sharing the story of the recent change in marriage equality. Support those who are working for change and predict the future with the traditional children's paper folded Fortuneteller (aka a Cootie Catcher.)

Reflections

Props: *a rainbow flag or other flag or banner easily accessed.*
Who knows what this is? It's the Rainbow Flag (or other) which represents our support of Lesbians, Gays, Transgender, Queer and Questioning people. It is flown in the Gay Pride Parade. It used to be that only one man and one woman could be married. Now, since June 26, 2016, all people who love each other can be legally married. That was only two years ago! How old were you then? Invite answers.
So there is the possibility of change. For our month exploring being a people of possibility, we are going to think about the possibility of change. We Unitarian Universalists believe that it is possible to make a difference and we work for justice.

Story

Peace
by Wendy Anderson Halperin (Author, Illustrator)
https://www.amazon.com/Peace-Wendy-Anderson-Halperin/dp/0689825528/ref=pd_sim_14_12?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=0689825528&pd_rd_r=9d3c6454-ce56-11e8-ab44-9143b7b890b1&pd_rd_w=QyTem&pd_rd_wg=AzD51&pf_rd_i=desktop-dp-sims&pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_p=18bb0b78-4200-49b9-ac91-f141d61a1780&pf_rd_r=B8FSY5YRS3EAXVP1TAJ4&pf_rd_s=desktop-dp-sims&pf_rd_t=40701&psc=1&refRID=B8FSY5YRS3EAXVP1TAJ4
"Poetic and soothing, Peace is a masterful exploration of the true path to world peace and serves as a perfect springboard to discussions about bullying, conflict resolution, and right actions." - Amazon

Theme Connection: The path to peace is the path to the possibility of change.

Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa
by Jeanette Winter (Author)

https://www.amazon.com/Wangaris-Trees-Peace-Story-Africa/dp/1328869210/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1539382988&sr=1-1&keywords=wangari%27s+trees+of+peace
"...based on the true story of Wangari Maathai, an environmental and political activist in Kenya and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004.

As a young girl growing up in Kenya, Wangari was surrounded by trees. But years later when she returns home, she is shocked to see whole forests being cut down, and she knows that soon all the trees will be destroyed. So Wangari decides to do something—and starts by planting nine seedlings in her own backyard. And as they grow, so do her plans." - Amazon

Theme Connection: It is possible to make a difference.

The Clearwater
From Tapestry of Faith, Gather the Spirit, Gather to Celebrate
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop8/149703.shtml
"Less than a year later, in April of 1970, the Clearwater sailed down the Hudson River and out into the Atlantic Ocean, down past New Jersey and Delaware and Virginia, and into the Chesapeake Bay and up the Potomac River, right to the capital of the United States: Washington, DC. Clearwater went to Washington for the very first Earth Day, 40 years ago, to help teach people about how to help keep our land clean and our water clear. - from the story.

Theme Connection: Pete Seeger sought out the possibility of changing the polluted Hudson River and succeeded!

Meditation

Orbiting the Sun
Materials: DVD/PC/Laptop to play the following video: https://www.pbs.org/video/religion-and-ethics-newsweekly-sufi-whirling-dervishes/.
Play music, preferably a UU hymn or song. (Please don't play "sufi-esque" music, we want to be careful not to misappropriate the practices of other.)

We will practice the contemplation of change/turning, not exactly as the Sufi's do it, but inspired by their practice of using the body to experience a great turning or change in life.
It is important that we remain silent during this meditation.
Start slowly, imagine your limbs are planets and your body is the sun. (If spinning doesn't work for your body, you may adapt this and mimic turning with your arms/bodies and in your own way.) Spin clockwise, slowly and careful not to harm others, and notice how you feel.
Does the repetitive motion make you feel dizzy, does it make you happy, does it make you peaceful?
Keep spinning and imagine that the sun you revolve around lights the way to peace and happiness for all.

From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Activities

Send Postcards to fellow activists
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5449513ee4b025f84fddfa72/t/5852f276f7e0ab77e001abbb/1481831030997/Love+Notes+to+Organizers.pdf

"Send a postcard of solidarity and support to local organizers. Download and print these postcards on card stock and send them to folks you're building with in your community. ... color & write messages of love together. Regular postage rates apply."

If You Want Justice and You Know It, Clap Your Hands - The Possibility of Change
From Tapestry of Faith, Faithful Journeys, Get Involved
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session11/132571.shtml

Ripple Kindness Cards
https://ripplekindness.org/get-your-kindness-cards-here/
Order the cards from Etsy or make your own, in order to encourage children to "Pay It Forward."

Paper Fortunetellers (aka Cootie Catchers) for predicting change in the future
How to fold: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHT3N-pXVTY
A pre-printed UU Version: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3UG80cRI4ZmbGtQY0dOdlgtZWc/view

For the fortunes which are unfolded inside, invite the children to think of ways that someone might change the world. They will need 8 small phrases, so they might want to brainstorm and share ideas. Some examples:
You will practice love this week.
You will be a witness against injustice soon.
You will be kind to four leggeds tomorrow.
You will care for Mother Earth endlessly.
You will help another today.
You will create peace this week.
You will meditate for calm today.
You will open your heart this week.

"Sunshine" (connection with nature and our bodies)/ Movement
Invite all to join in a body prayer and stand up.
THE PRAYER SCRIPT (SAY THREE TIMES):

We begin with our hands in front of us
to find our inner quiet.

We raise our arms up high
to open ourselves to the Spirit of Life, God of Love, Ultimate Mystery, Sacred Spirit.
We bring our hands to our hearts
to affirm the strength of our inner voice.

We extend our hands out in front of us
to offer our self in service to others.
From Eric Bliss, Youth Specialist Pacific Western Region, UUA

Service
Practice Your Fortuneteller Future
Spend some time making your fortuneteller future come true. How will you open your heart or meditate, or care for Mother Earth?

Session 4
The Possibility of Being Wrong

Introduction

Message: You might not see the whole picture
Spiritual Focus: The Spirituality of Humility
Making mistakes is a natural part of being human. Today, we invite the children to reflect on what happens when we are wrong and how we can learn and deepen from our mistakes. We reflect on a not to common practice of humility in Unitarian Universalism.

Reflections

Props: *a self- centered puppet*
Does anyone know what the word "humility" means? It comes from the word humble, meaning modest, without an excess of pride.
Bring out self-centered puppet. Invent a skit in which the puppet boasts then realizes its mistake, apologizes and learns from its mistake. Suggested script:

Harry: "Like me, I'm just a humble puppet!"
Leader: Oh hello, Harry, Why are you humble?

Harry: Oh, I don't talk about my great self very much. Like how I'm so great at games, and so great at art and so great at singing.(really exaggerate)

Leader: Harry, being humble means not talking about yourself all the time. That's not what you are doing.

Harry: But can I help it if I'm great?

Leader: You are missing the point entirely. Being humble means making room for other people, er, puppets, listening to others and making room for mistakes.

Harry: I never make mistakes.! I'm just so great!

Leader: Well, you just made a mistake about the meaning of being humble.
Harry: Oh, oh. I did?

Leader: Yes, you were boasting. That is not being humble.

Harry: Oh brother, you are right. I did make a mistake. I never make a mistake! I'm so embarrassed!

Leader: Everyone makes mistakes. The way to move forward is to apologize and learn from the mistake.

Harry: (to the group) I'm so sorry I came out boasting. I really would rather be friends. Next time, I'll try not to be so self-centered.

Leader: Thanks, Harry, I'm sure the kids would like to play with you, right kids? For now, I'll put you aside and we can play a bit later.

Here's some wisdom about humility from the Tao de Ching:

"from The Tao de Ching, Chapter 22, translated by J.H. MacDonald
If you want to become whole,
first let yourself become broken.
If you want to become straight,
first let yourself become twisted.
If you want to become full,
first let yourself become empty.
If you want to become new,
first let yourself become old." - from Tapestry of Faith, Virtue Ethics, Humility
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop8/194083.shtml

Story

The Water Bearer's Garden
From Tapestry of Faith, Windows and Mirrors, The Blessing of Imperfection

https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/windows/session5/143528.shtml

"A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on one end of a pole that he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it." - from the story

Theme Connection: We may not see the whole picture and be wrong about what is happening.

Hard Truths
From Tapestry of Faith, Love Connects Us, Seeing Truth
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session12/162366.shtml

Finding out your ancestors were slave owners is a hard truth, when there is more to the story than you know.

Theme Connection: It is possible to be wrong about a family story. Humility helps the storyteller learn more and widen his world.

Meditation

Confessions of Missing the Mark

Materials: Tissue paper, felt markers, green construction paper (optional), and pipe cleaners.
https://www.verywellfamily.com/tissue-paper-flowers-craft-620428

Take a moment to center and breathe. (Feel free to use the relaxation technique offered in the previous week.)
Spend a few minutes thinking about something you may have accidentally gotten or done wrong this past year.
Remember you are human, and we all make mistakes.
If you are comfortable doing so, write down words with markers and on a single sheet of tissue paper that represents your mistakes.
The blessing of our humanity is to recognize our faults and to change.
Make tissue paper flowers from your tissue paper confession.
Take a silent moment to reflect on the beauty you have now created from your mistakes.

From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Activities

Ring Game - Being Humble when you guess wrong.
https://www.mamalisa.com/blog/the-ring-on-a-string-game/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=33&v=Puhd-Bt-g5s

Video: Small Talk: Mistakes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndvt89ybSSE
"In this episode of Small Talk, we look at the role that making mistakes in one's life plays, how we can learn from them and the importance of making them."
Invite the children to share their own mistakes and what they learned from them.

Play "Sorry," the board game
https://www.amazon.com/Hasbro-390095-Sorry-Amazon-Exclusive/dp/B00000IWD0

"Sorry! is marketed for two to four players, ages six and older. The game title comes from the many ways in which a player can negate the progress of another, while issuing an apologetic "Sorry!" - from the game description
Practice your humility as you are jumped over and sent back in this classic board game.

Puppetry
Invite the children to interact with the puppet and consider having a few other available. Encourage conversation and gentle play. Can they invent a skit about mistakes and learning?

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

Soccer or other Outdoor Game
One of the important things we learn in team sports is how to be a good loser. This means being humble enough to learn from the mistakes made which caused the lack of points or the extra goal. Every game has winners and losers, so it is inevitable that someone will be the loser at some point. Invite the children to choose an outdoor game to play and think about humility and learning from mistakes.
If going outdoors is not an option, try a variation indoors using balloons or nerf balls to play soccer, volleyball or other traditional game.

Service

Play Sorry, or a team sport with other children
Invite the class members to offer the board game or a team game to other children or youth who aren't in their group. See if they can model being good losers or making mistakes for the other children.

Share a puppet skit
If the children invented a puppet skit about making mistakes, share it with the other children.

Youth

Here are a variety of components for use in your Middle School/Sr. High 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 Possibility"*

Exploring "The Possibility of You;" The practice of self-affirmation

Meditation
New Year's Ritual: Hand Blessing

Prep and materials: If your church has a tradition of keeping "living waters" ask the minister for approximately a teaspoon of that water. Place the living water in a large container and use tap water to "stretch" the living waters. Distribute the water in small cups/bowls, one bowl for each pair of students. Feel free to play solemn music to help the students find the sacred during this meditation. Explain that this is a serious exercise, that we need to remember we don't aren't alone when things get hard.
Find a partner.
Sit across from your partner.
Lead each other in calming meditation, one partner can choose to lead this and use their own words or the following:
Sit upright as you are willing and able.
In-breath: Tighten all of your facial muscles and body muscles but not so tight that it is uncomfortable. Take a look at your friend's scrunchy faces.
Out-breath: Release and relax
In-breath, think peace
Out-breath, think joy
Repeat for a few minutes
This is a new year, there are many new possibilities for each of you this year. You can change what you don't like, become better at your favorite things, and discover something new this year.
One of the partners dips their fingers in the living waters and places a bit of water on the other partner's hand. They then touch hands and bless each other.
Blessing: The youth expresses all that they wish for their partner this year.
Reverse and have the other partner administer the blessing.

* Please allow students to opt-out of the physical contact aspect of this meditation. As an alternative, students can choose to dip their own fingers in the bowl and "gassho" (Japanese folded-hand position) to each other during the blessing.
- from Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Deep Fun games for the theme of "The Possibility of You"
https://www.uua.org/youth/library/adults-ministry/deepfun

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. What can you share about each person's inherent worth and possibility?

The Interconnected Web (as "Sunshine" - experiences outdoors, in nature, or with movement)
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 affirm. They say something they love about someone else and throw the ball, 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.

Variation: When someone catches the ball of yarn they say a word that describes what they bring to the community.

Life Line

Materials: Paper, pencils

Have each person draw a vertical line down the middle of their page. At the bottom of the line write "0" and your birth date, at the top write the age you expect to live to, and a date that many years in the future. On the line indicate the age you are now and what you're doing now. Write in what you would like to be doing five years from now, ten years from now. Group members can share goals and discuss one other's hopes for the future. You may want to talk about what problems are blocking their achievement, and let the group help each other come up with solutions.

Exploring "The Impossible Possible;"
The practice of openness

Poem: from The Realm of Possibility
By David Levithan
https://www.amazon.com/Realm-Possibility-David-Levithan/dp/0375836578/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1539276744&sr=8-1&keywords=The+Realm+of+Possibility

"Here's what I know about the realm of possibility—
it is always expanding, it is never what you think
it is. Everything around us was once deemed
impossible. From the airplane overhead to
the phones in our pockets to the choir girl
putting her arm around the metalhead.
As hard as it is for us to see sometimes, we all exist
within the realm of possibility. Most of the limits
are of our own world's devising. And yet,
every day we each do so many things
that were once impossible to us."

Reflection after the Poem:

1. What Impossible Possible exists?
2. What impossible Possible can you imagine?

Invite the group to explore the things around them that were once thought "impossible" such as an airplane or a smartphone. Include social impossibles such as women voting and marriage equality. Make a list.
Now, what impossible things can you imagine in the future, such as driverless cars or teleporting? Make a list.

Video
Beyond the Valley
https://www.theatlantic.com/sponsored/vmware-2017/the-possibility-report/1401/
"Over the last decade, cloud computing has enabled a new class of developers and entrepreneurs. But with all eyes on Silicon Valley, it's easy to lose sight of emerging tech hubs elsewhere around the world. In Kenya's Silicon Savannah, for instance, a leap into cloud-first innovation is giving rise to a major tech scene and an unexpected incubator for developer talent. With support from VMware and Node Africa, cloud-supported businesses are leaving their mark on the Kenyan tech world." The Atlantic
Start expanding your understanding of the future with this exploration of tech development.

Makerspace/ Take Apart Party

Choose to create impossible things with a Makerspace with recycled materials and duct tape. Collect paper towel tubes, string, recycled plastic, etc. and provide duct tape in various colors and designs. What impossible possible can you create?
Or
Collect a variety of old tech such as cassette and VCR tapes, boombox, adding machine, computers, printers, etc. Provide tools, such as small screwdrivers and take these items apart.
It is possible to offer both options and use the taken apart tech as part of the Makerspace ingredients.

Meditation

Hanging Prayer Flags for the New Year
Materials and Prep: Purchase black prayer flags
https://www.amazon.com/Blank-Prayer-Flags-surged-Edge/dp/B075NYRTKB/ref=asc_df_B075NYRTKB/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=222333483536&hvpos=1o1&hvnetw=g&hvrand=14192998806572650685&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9033269&hvtargid=pla-393619780695&psc=1
or make your own https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS_dGnaE7mU
with cloth and rope/string/yarn. Each string of flags should have 7 flags representing the 7 principles and be large enough to write messages and decorate. (optional) Decorative materials for fabric art.

Not all meditation involves sitting quietly. Today we will do meditation in action. The meditation is to be mindful of our best intentions for the new year and create sacred prayer flags (a meditative practice of Tibetan Buddhism.)
Take a moment to center and breathe. (Feel free to use the relaxation technique offered in the previous week.)
Create prayer flags either as a group or individually. Each flag represents a possibility that you would like to see made manifest this year. You may use words based on the seven principles, e.g., "May all people be seen as important this year"...and etc. You may also choose to use symbols that represent your hope for the world.
After you have created the prayer flags, enter into a time of silence.
Remembering your breath, your body, your hopes for the world, hang the prayer flags.
After the flags are up, take a few moments and imagine that the winds of the earth blow your prayers of hope and possibility to every end of the world.

From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

"Sunshine" - experiences outdoors, in nature, or with movement
Impossible Possibles in your body
What bodily contortions skills exist in the group? Do you have folks who can do the split? Bend their finger to their wrist? Do some yoga poses or simply touch their hands flat to the floor while bending at the waist?

Service

Join in the Makerspace or Take Apart Party with the younger children to both have fun, help with tools and safety and invent new things.

Exploring "The Possibility of Change"
The practice of justice

Story - The Columbian Children's Peace Movement
From Tapestry of Faith, Heeding the Call, The Call for Peace
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop8/172987.shtml

"Adults are usually regarded as the leaders in working for peace and—for good reason, as many have made a tremendous difference. Yet children can make a tremendous difference, too. Farliz Calle is one of those children. She is one of twenty-six children who organized an election in her home country of Colombia as it was being torn apart by violence. On October 25, 1996, 2.7 million children in Colombia cast their votes for 12 basic rights that included the right to love and family, the right to a clean environment, the right to justice, and the right to peace. With the aid of UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund) and adults from the community, the children of Colombia started a movement that created "peace zones" in schools and parks. One year later, 10 million adults also voted for peace in a national election.

On the day of the Children's Mandate there was peace in Colombia. If there can be one day of peace, why not a week, a month, a year, fifty years Why not fifty years of peace to make up for our fifty years of war? — Juan Elias, 16 years" - from the Story

Bullying Scenarios
From Tapestry of Faith, Sing to the Power, The Power to Shine
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session9/230022.shtml

Participants enact scenarios in which bullying is planned, and brainstorm ways to respond in similar situations.

Affirm that it is difficult to know what to do or say in a situation that involves bullying. Ask for volunteers to act out the parts in the scenarios. If there is to be a possibility of change, anti-bullying efforts is one way.

Body Prayers for change and service
Invite all to join in a body prayer and stand up.
THE PRAYER SCRIPT (SAY THREE TIMES):

We begin with our hands in front of us
to find our inner quiet.

We raise our arms up high
to open ourselves to the Spirit of Life, God of Love, Ultimate Mystery, Sacred Spirit.
We bring our hands to our hearts
to affirm the strength of our inner voice.

We extend our hands out in front of us
to offer our self in service to others.
From Eric Bliss, Youth Specialist Pacific Western Region, UUA

The Ripple Effect for the Possibility of Change
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-6/activity-4
"Now that you have observed "the ripple effect," and formed ideas about it, what ways do you think the ripple effect is relevant to social transformation?
Invite reflection with these questions:
Is the effect of the efforts of one person the same as the combined effects of multiple people working toward a common goal?
What happens when individuals or groups encounter opposition to their ideas?
From the activity

Games from Deep Fun on the Possibility of Change:
Rhythm Jam

Sit in a circle and have one person start a repetitive, rhythmic sound. Go around the circle with each person adding a layer of sound. Use hands, feet or voices—anything goes. When everyone is making noise, you have a variety of options: have one person be the director, telling folks to get softer or louder, silencing everyone so that she can hear a few voices across the circle from each other and how they sound together. Bring all the voices back up for a grand finale. Or, let everyone jam out to each other, without a director.

Variation: Make some impromptu instruments out of cans, rubber bands, water jugs, or other found objects beforehand.

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.

Meditation (as "Sunshine" - experiences outdoors, in nature, or with movement)
Materials: DVD/PC/Laptop to play the following video: https://www.pbs.org/video/religion-and-ethics-newsweekly-sufi-whirling-dervishes
Play music, preferably a UU hymn or song. (Please don't play "sufi-esque" music, we want to be careful not to misappropriate the practices of other.)

We will practice the contemplation of change/turning, not exactly as the Sufi's do it, but inspired by their practice of using the body to experience a great turning or change in life.
It is important that we remain silent during this meditation.
Gather in a circle, have one person sit in the middle. Imagine that they are the sun that represents peace and happiness for all. Stay at arm's length at all times from the person in front of you.
Start slowly, roll/walk around the circle of the sun.
Imagine that you can feel the warmth of love and peace radiating from the sun.
Increase your speed slowly and mindfully, try not to bump into each other. Mindfulness will help you tune into each other so that you remain arm's length apart.
Imagine that you are turning the wheel of time, changing fear and hesitation, into peace and happiness.
Afterward, reflect on if you felt any "ecstasy" or peace from this meditation?
From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Service
Explore opportunities for joining a congregational justice project that is already happening. It might be helping with the half-plate collection for a project, attending MLK events in January, or other congregational project.

Exploring "The Possibility of Being Wrong"
The Practice of Humility

Story - A Circle of Forgiveness
From Tapestry of Faith, Heeding the Call, The Call for Forgiveness
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop11/173114.shtml

"Rev. Dr. Emily Brault is a Unitarian Universalist minister who works as a Chaplain with the Oregon State Correctional Department. Prior to her current position working with incarcerated women, she worked at a juvenile correctional facility. This is one story of forgiveness that has inspired her along the way." - from the story
Theme connection: At first, Jeremy didn't see anything wrong with stealing money from a random church. Then he began to understand the whole picture and wanted a chance to apologize.

Forgiveness in History Match Up
From Tapestry of Faith, Heeding the Call, The Call for Forgiveness
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop11/173101.shtml

"Youth look at forgiveness on a large scale: nations or organizations seeking forgiveness for oppression of a group of people." - from the activity

Steps to Forgiveness
From Tapestry of Faith, Heeding the Call, The Call for Forgiveness
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop11/173104.shtml

"Try to create actual steps participants can commit to taking to seek or give forgiveness. These steps should include: identify the offense; ask "Who have I hurt?" (realizing that one answer might be "you"); empathizing; apologizing, possibly more than once; making restitutions or committing to repair the situation in another way; and, finally, letting go of resentment or hurt feelings." - from the activity

Meditation
Materials and Prep: If not explicit in your class covenant, discuss and agree on confidentiality. You'll also need a meditation bell to help mark time.
Take a moment to center and breathe. (Feel free to use the relaxation technique offered in the previous week.)
This is the meditation of confession, a way for us to acknowledge that we may have been wrong in the past but that we can change.
In pairs, discuss a time where you got something wrong (that you are comfortable disclosing) and use this as a time to unload your feelings about that mistake.
The partner is simply practicing deep listening while the other person "confesses." Try not to judge, think of a response, or get distracted. Imagine the words are coming into you like water being poured from a pitcher into a glass. Let the words touch your heart as if each word enters your spirit and lands on your heart. Don't worry about "understanding" what the person is saying, just let the words come to you.
Switch and let the other practice confession or deep listening.
In the end, with the sound of the bell, imagine that all of the guilt/anxiety/frustration that may have arisen is now gone and know that you can always made different choices in the future.

From Rev. Jaelynn P. Scott, Soul Matters Youth Meditation Consultant

Justice Art
From Tapestry of Faith, Heeding the Call, The Call of Forgiveness
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop11/173106.shtml

"Youth explore the connection between forgiveness and the inherent worth and dignity of every person (first Principle).

Invite youth to find a comfortable space in the room and give everyone one sheet of tracing paper, one pencil, one clipboard or cardboard, and one copy of Handout 2, Justice Art. Ask them not to read the handout until the music begins playing. Explain that one side of handout offers details about the life of the artist. After reading about the artist, participants trace one part of the piece of art-any part of their choosing-with the pencil and tracing paper and then create a new piece of art by adding their own sketches around what they just traced."

Five Spread Tarot-like Game Online
" The Virtues Project website https://www.virtuesproject.com/FiveSpread.html?virtueswhat has a game called Five Spread. It resembles a Tarot card reading, but with suggested virtues to help you with a dilemma you are experiencing. Remember: No game on a computer can understand you or your personal situations. The game's predictions are random and should not be taken too seriously. However, if you find information that seems useful, consider it. After all, who among us cannot benefit from practicing virtues?" from Tapestry of Faith, Virtue Ethics, Humility
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop8/194031.shtml

Humility Skits
From Tapestry of Faith, Virtue Ethics, Humility
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop8/193944.shtml

Read quotes then come up with a skit to illustrate the meaning of the quote on humility.

"Sunshine" - experiences outdoors, in nature, or with movement
The Practice of Humility, Martial Arts and Youth Group

How does humility feel? One way is to explore the practice of bowing, as they do in martial arts.
Here is an excerpt describing the several aspects of bowing in martial arts:
"...Bowing is anything but a gesture by one person saying that he or she is below the other! If this were the purpose of bowing, then bowing would not be a mutual gesture between two people but rather a one-sided action. It is actually a great insult for one person to bow and then the other person to not acknowledge or return the gesture. Bowing is a sign of mutual respect and humility.

There are many times when a martial artist may bow. When one bows upon entering a Wing Chun kwoon (training area), they are not merely performing a training formality. They are demonstrating through a motion of their body that he or she respects the environment into which they are entering and the people with whom they are going to train…

...a student will bow to the pictures of the elders of our Wing Chun lineage ... as a sign of the high regard for their devotion, self-sacrifice and dedication to the training they gave so that we may have the opportunity to continue to learn the art of Wing Chun…

The student shows respect to his Sifu, and his Sifu returns the gesture to his student demonstrating the respectful bond between student and teacher. The same bow and salute are done upon leaving the kwoon…
If training partners are going to spar, they will bow both before and after they have worked with each other. This is also used as a respectful gesture if one student accidentally causes another student a small injury, the

offending student will show his regret for his infraction by using the Wing Chun salute and bowing to the partner. The gesture is returned by the other to show that all is forgiven and signal that respect is still shared between the two students." - from http://sifuochwingchun.com/bowing-martial-arts/

Try these bowing movements to feel humility and respect in your body:

1. Bow upon entering the room to show humility and respect for the environment into which you are entering and the people in your group.
2. Bow to the pictures and symbols which represent your faith, such as a chalice.
3. Group member and leader bow to each other to show the respectful bond between.
4. When in dialogue, bow to your partner to show humility and respect.
5. If there is injury or hurt, bow to each other to show that all is forgiven, and respect is still shared.
6. How does it feel to practice humility in youth group in the same way that martial artists practice humility while training?

Service

Faith in Action from Tapestry of Faith, Virtue Ethics
https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop8/194012.shtml

"This is a true story of a man who was humbled, and it changed his life:
Narayanan Krishnan was on his way to becoming a five-star chef in Switzerland when he encountered a man on the street of his hometown in Maduria, India. The man belonged to a group called "untouchables." Though India is working to combat classism, classes still exist. One traditional class that has brought infamy to the country is Untouchables. These people are considered so low that many people will literally not touch them. Narayanan reached out to touch the old man and his life was changed forever. Not because he was stained or cursed by the touch, but because he was blessed to find his life's work. He started feeding the hungry fresh-cooked meals, using his personal savings. His ministry to literally "the least of these" has grown and become Akshaya USA. This organization is currently trying to build a homeless shelter, so they can help more people.

The Akshaya website makes this statement: "Today, did you... shower, eat something, get your medicine, sleep indoors? Now imagine those starving, exhausted, mentally ill, filthy, abused and left for dead on the street. If it were your street, your neighborhood, you know what you'd do... " - from Tapestry of Faith

Movies with a Theme of Possibility

Chariots of Fire (PG)
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/chariots-of-fire

"CHARIOTS OF FIRE depicts the true story of two athletes who ran in the 1924 Olympics: Jewish Cambridge student Harold (Ben Cross), and Scottish missionary Eric Liddell (Ian Charleson). ..There is a crisis when Liddell's event is scheduled for a Sunday, because he will not run on the Sabbath. But Lord Lindsay (Nigel Havers) graciously allows Liddell his place in a different event, "for the pleasure of seeing you run." Both athletes face difficult choices and much opposition. One uses a coach, in defiance of tradition and expectations. The other goes against the wishes of his sister, and even defies the Prince of Wales."
Theme Connection: It is possible to live life as your authentic self.

The Doctor (PG 13)
https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-doctor-1991

""The Doctor" tells the story of an aloof, self-centered heart surgeon who treats his patients like names on a list. Then he gets sick himself and doesn't like it one bit when he's treated like a mere patient." - review

Theme Connection: It is possible to find humility and learn from one's mistakes.

Big Fish (PG 13)
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/big-fish

Parents need to know that this movie has brief nudity, mild language, and fantasy peril. Sensitive kids may be upset by the death of a parent.

Theme Connection: Perfect film about for convincing you to believe the unbelievable. Maybe anything is possible!

Book

The Realm of Possibility
By David Levithan
https://www.amazon.com/Realm-Possibility-David-Levithan/dp/0375836578/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1539276744&sr=8-1&keywords=The+Realm+of+Possibility

A remarkable book for youth that celebrates the possibility of the impossible.

Family and Parent Resources

These resources help parents as they engage the question: "What does it mean to be a family of Possibility?" In addition to families using them at home, you might also use them to engage parents collectively, for instance in a Parent Circle that meets on Sunday afternoon or mid-week.

With Your Kids

(Ideas to engage Possibility as a Family)

Family Adventure Ideas

30 Days of Love Family Calendar
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5449513ee4b025f84fddfa72/t/5a551ac008522941933bf172/1515526848381/30+DOL+2018+All+Ages+Calendar.pdf

Practice the Possibility of kindness and love with this calendar of family activities, one for each day from Mid-January until Valentine's Day.

The Traveling Chalice
Take part in this month's suggested traveling chalice program at your congregation!

Create a New Year's Resolution together

Focus on the Possibilities….
One thing I want to learn more about…
One thing I want to stop being afraid of…
I want to improve my …
I want to spend more time….
I want to spend less time…
I want to be more…

Game

Play "Sorry," the board game
https://www.amazon.com/Hasbro-390095-Sorry-Amazon-Exclusive/dp/B00000IWD0

"Sorry! is marketed for two to four players, ages six and older. The game title comes from the many ways in which a player can negate the progress of another, while issuing an apologetic "Sorry!" - from the game description
Practice your humility as you are jumped over and sent back in this classic board game.

Books To Read Together

Good People Everywhere
by Lynea Gillen (Author), Kristina Swarner (Illustrator)
https://www.amazon.com/Good-People-Everywhere-Lynea-Gillen/dp/0979928982/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1539373198&sr=8-1&keywords=good+people+everywhere
"A colorful picture book that will warm the hearts of children and adults alike, each of its pages contain endearing examples and vibrant illustrations to inspire children to grow into grateful, caring, and giving people. It provides a wonderful way to calm children before sleep, ease their fears, and help them develop an appreciation for good work." - Amazon

Theme Connection: We believe in the possibility of good in all people.

Family App Ideas

Curious About Me with Curious George (preschool)
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews/curious-about-me
"Curious About Me features preschoolers' favorite monkey, helping kids create movies that let them think and talk about their own lives and experiences. Kids take photos of themselves, their families, friends, and pets; record audio and video to add to their stories; or create their own art. The movie incorporates these contributions into the stories, which are automatically saved in-app or to the device's camera roll. Note: It requires quite a bit of storage space to hold all the pictures and videos kids can add to their stories." - Common Sense Media
Theme Connection: What are the possibilities of you?

Family Movie Night Ideas

Ratatouille (G)
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/ratatouille

"Parents need to know that, like all of Pixar's other films, Ratatouille includes nuanced humor (about the French, haute cuisine, food critics, and so on) and references aimed directly at adults. Kids will miss most of these references but most likely will still enjoy the plot and animal characters. Not surprisingly for an animated kids' movie, the protagonist, Linguini, is an orphan -- although at least he's a young adult and not a child. There's some moderate peril involving the rats and weapon-wielding humans that may frighten sensitive and younger viewers; the sewer sequence is particularly tense and potentially scary, as is the gun-toting grandma. There are a few mild insults, such as "stupid" and "loser," and one "hell."" - Common Sense Review

Theme Connection: Celebrating the impossible possible, even in fantasy.

A Goofy Movie (G)
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/a-goofy-movie

"Free of the pressures that sometimes smother the big Disney releases, this movie has a refreshingly casual feel, with some sly humor, even daring to poke fun at Disney itself. The teen characters are contemporary without the prepackaged feel of other Disney productions (like "The New Mickey Mouse Club"), and there are lively

songs performed by Tevin Campbell. It's a shame that the G rating might scare off the film's optimal audience, the 10-14 age group. If you can persuade them to take a look, they will find much to enjoy and identify with.

At the center of the story is Max, struggling through the torturous insecurity and self-consciousness of adolescence. Like all teens, he is humiliated by his father's goofiness. But the movie's great joke is that in this case, his father is not just goofy, he is Goofy, the Goof of all Goofs, the Uber-Goof!" - Common Sense Media
Theme Connection: The possibility of being wrong and restoring a relationship.

Gym Teacher: The Movie (age 6+)
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/gym-teacher-the-movie

"Parents need to know that this made-for-TV movie touches on themes like teamwork, perseverance, and self-perception and examines what it means to be a winner. There's some poor sportsmanship and bullying (tweens tease a classmate, putting him down and throwing things at him), but it could prompt family discussions about respecting others and being tolerant of differences…" - Common Sense Media
Theme Connection: The possibility of change.

For You

(Support for Parents as Faith Formation Guides)

Starting over; Despite our best intentions, all parents make mistakes, act inconsistently, and generally fall short of our goals. But we can also model asking for forgiveness.
Michelle Richards
https://www.uuworld.org/articles/starting-over

How to Teach Humility to Your Kids in a Digital Age
https://www.thetechedvocate.org/how-to-teach-kids-humility-in-a-digital-age/

Related 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 Possibility.*

Elementary Ages

From Spirit of Adventure:

Session #19 - Take Apart Party
Session #21 - Inventions

From Picture Book UU:

Session #18 - The Everything Seed
Session #20 -Henry Climbs a Mountain
Session #35 - God In Between

From Picture Book Bible Tales

Session #10 Jonah and the Great Fish

From Picture Book World Religions

Session #11 - The Brave Little Parrot
Session #14 - Zen Shorts

Youth

From Lodestone, Magnetize Your Middle School

UU Unit

Session #UU3 - Chalice in a Bag/Tin

Social Nights

January - Pie Making

Opportunities for Support and Connection

Come play and think together!

January Online Zoom Labs

RE Brainstorming Lab on Soul Matters themes
Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2019, 1 p.m. ET - for the theme of Wholeness for April using the "Matrix of Sources" for guided ideas. This lab is not recorded.

RE Implementation Lab for Possibility (January Packet)
Wednesday, Jan.9, 2019, 1 p.m. ET - for the theme of Trust for February
Katie offers highlights of the Packet and we share ideas on how we are implementing the theme.

Note: The above Soul Matters RE Labs are on the First and Second 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
- Second Wednesday - Implementation Lab on the upcoming month's theme.
- Implementation Labs are recorded and 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 ongoing source of support. Your colleagues are available to support you at the click of a button and with the ease of a post:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/545202255591601/

Pinterest Page

Check out the Pinterest page on Possibility. Images and links to the books, videos, activities and more as mentioned in this packet.
https://www.pinterest.com/soulmattersre/2019-possibility-january/

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/

Soul Matters Spotify Music Playlists:

Discover musical inspiration on each of our monthly themes through our playlists:
https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/spotify-lists.html

Sunday Morning Templates Archive

Let's share our Sunday Morning templates! Why reinvent the wheel? Each program has different structures and needs, so it is difficult for Soul Matters to create a one-size-fits-all template.

But we can collect your various Sunday Morning Templates and share them with you all!

So...
Send your Sunday Morning Template to Katie at soulmattersre@gmail.com
with a note about the structure of your program. Include the size of your program, distinctive features and any other information about your model or pedagogy that you think would be helpful to others.

Check out the templates we've collect so far: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QMEuUlS_8tk-Kicb6ksSZ_5BtM942Efi8NMg45gIOAc/edit?usp=sharing

A Reminder About Our Approach in the Soul Matters Packets:
Our monthly Soul Matters RE packets are designed to support your unique session designs. Our sessions do have a general flow to them (From Circle Time/Reflection to Story to Activities) but we see our sessions mostly as "buckets of flexible building blocks" that you can pick from to build/serve your own particular structure.



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Packets are for use only by member congregations of the Soul Matters Sharing Circle.
Learn how to join at http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com