Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church
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A World of New Friends: An Introduction to World Religions

Thirteen adaptable lesson plans for children aged 5 to 12

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Research and development of these lesson plans was funded through a generous grant from the Unitarian Universalist Sunday School Society. The lesson plans are free to all who may wish to use them. These lesson plans have been assembled from a variety of resources, all of which are cited in the text.

In particular, the United Religion Initiative’s summary descriptions of world religions, written in a child-friendly way, were particularly helpful. (The United Religions Initiative promotes enduring, interfaith cooperation to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings¹.)
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** 4

**Calendar** 7

**Classroom Basics** 7  
*Classroom set up, supplies, lesson format*

**The Lessons**

1. Meet **A World of New Friends** 10
2. Christianity: **Meet Maria** 14
3. Islam: **Meet Fatima** 22
4. Islam: **Meet Guntur** 31
5. Hinduism: **Meet Ravi** 37
6. Buddhism: **Meet Sumalee** 44
7. Buddhism: **Meet Duc** 53
8. Confucianism: **Meet Wen** 59
9. Taoism: **Meet Mei** 65
10. Earth-centered Religions: **Meet Rowan** 71
11. Earth-centered Religions: **Meet Tiva** 77
12. Sikhism: **Meet Devasheesh** 82
13. Judaism: **Meet Ben** 87

**Resources** 93

**References** 132
Introduction

“The living tradition which we share draws from many sources … Wisdom from the world’s religions which inspire us in our ethical and spiritual life.”

From the Unitarian Universalist bylaws

“One truth, many truths; one God, many faiths; one light, many windows.”

Forrest Church, “A Chosen Faith”

Unitarian Universalism teaches us that there is some wisdom to be found in all the great religions of the world. These lessons are designed to use a child’s curiosity flavored with stories, art, drama and song to introduce our youngest UUs to the many truths and many faiths that richly color our earth and enrich our lives.

Background

A World of New Friends is a collection of 13 lesson plans designed to introduce a multi-aged classroom to the eight largest world religions. Lessons are designed using a thematic approach to world religions and a center-based teaching format that uses multiple intelligence learning.

The lessons use imaginary classroom members to introduce the world religions. Each week the class will learn about a new Classroom Star. Through a show-and-tell presentation of the Classroom Star, our UU students will learn about the faith and traditions of the imaginary student while learning the basic tenets, customs and celebrations of each faith.

The faiths included here represent the world’s largest, formal religious groups, and are ordered here by the size of their membership:

1) Christianity
2) Islam
3) Hinduism
4) Buddhism
5) Traditional Chinese religions (Confucianism, Taoism)
6) Earth-centered religions
7) Sikhism
8) Judaism

Our classroom will contain 12 imaginary children:

1. Maria - Christian (Roman Catholic); Mexico
2. Fatima - Islam; Saudi Arabia
3. Guntur – Islam; Indonesia
4. Ravi - Hinduism; India
5. Sumalee - Buddhism; Thailand
6. Duc - Buddhism; Vietnam
7. Wen – Traditional Chinese religions (Confucianism)
8. Mei - Traditional Chinese religions (Taoism)
9. Rowan – Earth-centered religions (Wicca); United States
10. Tiva – Earth-centered religions (Hopi Indian); United States
11. Davasheesh - Sikhism; India
12. Ben – Jewish; Israel

Lesson One provides time for the children to construct the imaginary students as three-dimensional figures. Once made, these “students,” each representing a male or female child from each of the eight largest religions, become a permanent part of the classroom and are in turn featured as the Classroom Star. Children will be introduced to the religion and traditions of the Classroom Star through his or her family celebrations, art, stories, games, food and holidays.

Learning centers that combine various learning styles are designed for each of the lessons. Once students have been introduced to the main theme of the lesson through the Classroom Star presentation, the students will be encouraged to move to any of the learning centers (if time allows).

A method to evenly divide children among the centers, and then move them between each center, may be considered. For example, cardboard markers that correspond with the colors of each center can be distributed at the beginning of the activity period. The child must move to the center that corresponds to his/her marker. After some time in the center, the teacher announces that it’s time to change centers.

Another option would be to allow children to exchange tokens with each other as they complete activities at a center and in by so doing, move around the room at their own pace.

Typical centers might include:

**The Blue Center** (*Verbal/Linguistic and Visual/Spatial*) -- Here, students will be encouraged to use the written word. Lesson activities will include word cards, research materials, poetry and story telling. The center will also encourage students to integrate information through pictures by using activities like story illustration and collage making.

**The Red Center** (*Bodily/Kinesthetic and Musical/Rhythmic*) -- This center will encourage students to learn using sounds and rhythms. Tapes of traditional religious and cultural music will be available along with rhythm instruments for students to make their own music. In addition, the center will encourage the student to learn through touch and movement, dramatics, role playing and games.
**The Yellow Center (Logical/Mathematical)** -- This center will encourage scientific thinking. Some lessons will include measuring, charting, labeling and matching activities.

Discussion questions will encourage both interpersonal and intrapersonal learning by encouraging students to explore how the tenets, or customs, of the featured religion impact our Unitarian Universalist faith, as well as their own lives.
Classroom Basics

Classroom Set Up

The first lesson, **Lesson #1: Meet a World of New Friends**, provides time for the children to make the imaginary “students” that will represent the eight largest religions of the world. Once made, the friends will become a permanent part of the classroom for the entire 13 weeks.

Each imaginary “student” will wear a name tag bearing his or her name and religion. These should match the name tags used by the students.

Each Sunday a different Classroom Star will be placed in a special chair. The Classroom Star poster for that child may be “held” by the “student” or simply leaned on the chair.

Classrooms also should include an attendance chart, a map of the world religions, the UU children’s principles poster and a Golden Rule poster.

**Supplies**

**Classroom Star Poster**

Younger children will be familiar with this traditional way for getting to know each other. The “Classroom Star” poster will include:

My name, what it means…
My family is from …
My religion is …
Where I worship…
My family religious customs…
My favorite holidays and celebrations…

The Star poster should be made in advance. Google Images provides a simple and excellent search engine for photos that can be printed and pasted onto the poster. Star posters can be purchased from most teacher supply stores. However, the format of the poster does not need to be the same each week. Indeed, a slight difference makes it more realistic as each Classroom Star reflects his or her own style.

A sample Classroom Star poster can be found at Resource #1.
Basic Lesson Format

40-60 minutes

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

This activity will keep the children engaged while class members arrive.

2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Here the teachers will welcome the class, introduce the lesson for the week and light the chalice, the symbol of our faith. Children will recite a simple chalice verse each week.

3. Check in and sharing (5-8 minutes)

The children will have an opportunity to share with each other by briefly stating what special things may have happened in their lives that week.

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

During this time the teachers will bring the Classroom Star into the circle and will present the Star poster. In addition, a brief and age-appropriate discussion of the religion of that week should take place. The Teacher Background Information provided at the beginning of each lesson is designed to provide adequate information to begin a simple discussion.

5. Activity centers (20-30 minutes)

Children will move to an activity center at this time. Centers may include:

**The Blue Center** (Verbal/Linguistic and Visual/Spatial) -- Here, students will be encouraged to use the written word. Lesson activities will include word cards, research materials, poetry and story telling. The center will also encourage students to integrate information through pictures by using activities like story illustration and collage making.

**The Red Center** (Bodily/Kinesthetic and Musical/Rhythmic) -- This center will encourage students to learn using sounds and rhythms. Tapes of traditional religious and cultural music will be available along with rhythm instruments for students to make their own music. In addition, the center will encourage the student to learn through touch and movement, dramatics, role playing and games.

**The Yellow Center** (Logical/Mathematical) -- This center will encourage
scientific thinking. Some lessons will include measuring, charting, labeling and matching activities.

If time and class size allow, the children should be encouraged to visit more than one center.

6. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

After each lesson we will review what was learned and discuss the impact/influence of each religion on Unitarian Universalism.

It is very important to both begin and end each lesson with a firm grounding in Unitarian Universalism. While our faith embraces an individual interpretation of truth and encourages spiritual exploration, this can be confusing to a young child. A firm grounding in Unitarian Universalist values and principles provides a framework within which a child’s personal faith can be nurtured and encouraged to mature.

Tell the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Ask the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and about his/her religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next, refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement about the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Following the review, the chalice will be extinguished.
Lesson #1
Meet a World of New Friends

Supplies Needed:

- Resource #2
- Map of world religions
- Globe
- Chalice, matches
- Jeans – 10
- Skirts – 2
- Long-sleeve T-shirts – 10
- Blouses – 2
- Pantyhose – 2
- Name tags – 12
- Paper lunch bags – 12
- Markers
- Newspaper
- Large, white head scarf – 1
- Brown and black yarn for hair
- Safety pins
- Stapler
- Glue, glue sticks, glue guns
- Name tags with each Star’s name and religion

Books, etc:

- At least one book from your public library on each religion:

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

Have the above-mentioned books, along with other books on world religions, on a table for children to look through as they enter the room.

Have the children fill out their own name tag and mark their name on the classroom attendance poster.

2. Opening (2 minutes)

*Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:*

“Today we will make some new friends. And when I say we will “make” them, I mean just that! Not only will we learn about 12 new, imaginary friends, we also
will create them and make them a part of our classroom for the rest of this summer. Then we’ll spend the summer learning about each one individually.

As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. Each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion.

Let’s start by lighting our chalice and getting to know the REAL students here.”

**Chalice Lighting (3 minutes)**

A: Younger children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

**3. Check in and sharing (5 – 8 minutes)**

*Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:*

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart. But this week we will use the time to learn each other’s names and a thing or two about each other. As we go around the room, tell us your name, your school grade next year, and one thing you would like to tell us about your family … something like how many pets you have, that there are seven children in your family, or something else you would like us to know.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! Now let’s move on to Tom so there will be time for all of us to share.”
If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.

4. Discussion (5-8 minutes)
Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“Tell me, in your neighborhood, your school or in your community, do you know people whose religions are different from your? Tell me about them …”

Allow the children to describe friends and neighbors. Ask questions about clothing, food, celebrations, and other religious customs they have seen.

Refer to the map of world religions and to the globe as children describe friends and religions.

6. Activity (35 minutes)

Have name tags pre-made with name of each student you will be making and the religion that he or she observes.

You may either divide the children into teams or assign them an imaginary child to build or, for older children, allow them to work independently on their own child. Assemble all clothing as indicated below and assemble the imaginary friends using the instructions on Resource #2.

Maria - Christian, Catholic (jeans, T-shirt)
Fatima - Islam, Middle East (skirt, blouse, stockings, scarf)
Guntur - Islam, Indonesia (jeans, T-shirt)
Ravi - Hinduism, India (jeans, t-shirt)
Sumalee - Buddhism, Thailand (jeans, T-shirt)
Duc - Buddhism, Vietnam (jeans, T-shirt)
Wen - Traditional Chinese religions, Confucianism (jeans, T-shirt)
Mei - Traditional Chinese religions, Taoism (blouse, skirt, stockings)
Rowan - Earth-centered religions, Paganism, United States (jeans, T-shirt)
Tiva - Earth-centered religions, American Indian, United States (jeans, T-shirt)
Devasheesh - Sikhism, India (jeans, T-shirt)
Ben - Jewish, Israel (jeans, T-shirt)

If the children finish early, invite them to look through the books you have supplied on each religion and to learn one thing to share in circle group about the religion of the friend they have just created.
8. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

Have the children present the child they made to the group. For older children, have the child also display the book on the religion of that Classroom Star and what they learned from looking through the pages. Have one child extinguish the Chalice.
Lesson #2
Christianity: Let’s Meet Maria

Supplies Needed:

Resource #3
4 sheets of tissue paper (any color) 6” x 12” each per child
1 pipe cleaner per child
Scissors
Ruler
Colored markers
Perfume (optional)
15 craft sticks
Glue
Scissors
Bowls
Mixing spoons
Measuring cups
Knives (bread knives will work fine for all but the apple)
Fresh fruit such as apples, bananas, grapes and strawberries
One taco shell for each child
Orange juice
Low-fat strawberry yogurt
Toasted coconut (optional)
Sliced almonds (optional)

Book:

“The Night of Las Posadas” by Tomie DePaola, Putnam Pub Group, 1999

Preparation:

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials in order to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle as well as displaying and discussing the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will then bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

Teacher Background Information:

Christianity:

Christianity traces its beginning to the birth, adult ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, known as Jesus Christ.

More than 2,000 years ago in Palestine (today’s Israel), Jesus was born into a humble Jewish family. His mother was a young peasant woman named Mary. Christians believe that his father was the Holy Spirit of God, making Jesus both fully human and fully divine.
His earliest followers came to believe that he was the Messiah, or messenger, sent by God to free God’s people from slavery, sin and death. God sent his son Jesus in human form so that people would better understand God as a caring and loving parent. Jesus lived and experienced the suffering of humans. Jesus healed the sick and told stories, or parables, and preached sermons that taught what God wanted people to do – to love God with all their hearts and love their neighbors as themselves.

Jesus taught by example. By being loving and forgiving himself, Jesus taught others to be loving and forgiving -- especially toward those who were considered outcasts in society. This is the central message and style of Jesus' teachings.

During his adult ministry, Jesus built up a loyal following, led by his twelve disciples. But Jesus also made enemies among the religious and political leaders of his time. In the end, these powerful leaders were so threatened by Jesus' growing following that the Roman governor sentenced Jesus to death and had him crucified. The third day after Jesus’ death, his followers found his tomb empty and believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

Christians believe that the painful sacrifice of Jesus' life on the cross shows how much God loves His people. Jesus paid with his life on earth for the sins of the world. Christians believe that in raising Jesus from the dead, God showed that Jesus' message of love and forgiveness was more powerful than death, and that believing in Jesus and following the example of his life and his teaching would lead to eternal life after death. The resurrection (rising from the dead) is the sign of God’s salvation offered to all people.

After his resurrection, Jesus Christ's followers spread his message throughout the world, creating the Christian faith. Today there are about 2 billion Christians living throughout the world.

Christians believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God – fully human and fully divine – and that by believing in him and following his teachings they can inherit eternal life. Christians believe that Jesus died for humanity, that God raised him from the dead, and that Jesus will come again at the end of time.

The essence of Jesus’ teaching comes from his summary of the Jewish law he grew up with:

- Love God with all your heart, soul and mind.
- Love your neighbor as yourself.

Christians also seek to follow the 10 commandments that God gave Moses to give to the Israelites:
- Worship no other God but me.
- Do not make images to worship.
- Do not misuse the name of God.
- Observe the Sabbath Day (Sunday, for Christians). Keep it Holy.
- Honor and respect your father and mother.
- Do not murder.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not steal.
- Do not accuse anyone falsely. Do not tell lies about other people.
- Do not envy other’s possessions.

Las Posadas:

Literally “the inns,” las posadas are rooted in a 16th-century Mexican tradition developed by Spanish missionaries to communicate the Christmas story to indigenous people. This is a ritual procession and play representing the birth story of Jesus and the search of his parents, Mary and Joseph, for a room at an inn. Families play the parts and visit each other’s houses enacting and re-enacting the drama and, at the same time, enjoying fellowship.

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

Make Mexican Paper flowers. See Resource #3.

2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Teacher Paraphrase: As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. And each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion.

Chalice Lighting: Begin the lesson by placing the chalice in the middle of the table or floor and asking the group to recite the chalice lighting:

A: Younger children:
“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:
“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

3. Check in and sharing (5 – 8 minutes)
Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart. “

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! Now let’s move on to Tom so there will be time for all of us to share.”

If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

Let’s Meet Maria

The teacher will ask one student to bring today’s class “star” into the circle. Addressing the “stuffed” child, the teacher will bring out the child’s “Star Poster,” introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

What is my name, what does it mean?
Maria. I am named for Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Where do I live and where is my family from?
I live in insert your town name. My family is originally from Mexico.

What is my religion?
I am a Roman Catholic, which is Christian.

Where and when do I worship?
I go to insert the name of a local Roman Catholic church every Sunday.

What are my family customs?
Our family prays before every meal.

What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?
My favorite holiday is Christmas. I love the Posada.
Teacher paraphrase: Christmas is an important holiday season with strong traditions for Mexican-American Christians. One of the most colorful traditions is the *posada* party, celebrated every evening from December 16 to 24.

On each of these nights before Christmas, a party is held. There is plenty of food and drink, with candies and fruit for the children. At dusk, all the guests gather outside the house. A small child dressed as an angel leads the procession along with children carrying figures of Mary and Joseph. The children are followed by the adults, and musicians. Everyone sings melodious songs as they walk slowly along, carrying lit candles. When they reach a house, the group divides into two. One half remains outside and begs for shelter from the other half, which is inside the house. The doors are then opened, the religious part of the celebration ends, and the fun begins.

5. Activity Centers – Christmas in June! (30 minutes)

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

The Blue Center:

Read the story “The Night of Las Posadas” by Tomie DePaola. Discuss.

The Red Center:

Teacher paraphrase: “There are many ways to commemorate Christmas. One of them, common in the Spanish traditions, is Las Posadas -- The Inns. In some places this celebration lasts for nine nights preceding Christmas; in others nine houses are visited in a single night, or nine rooms in a building. A procession led by figures of Mary and Joseph, the parents-to-be of the infant Jesus, goes from place to place, searching for an inn in which to stay.

Who can tell us the Christmas story? Why were Mary and Joseph traveling and why did they need a room? Did they find one?”

Now we are going to have a Las Posadas Play Parade with craft stick figures. Give the children copies of Resource # 4 for figures to color, cut out and attach to craft sticks with glue. Each student should act the part of one puppet.

The lines of the “play” are repetitious enough that you should be able to teach them without needing a script. However, if a script is preferred, see Resource #5.

While the children are working on the puppets, talk to them about Las Posadas.
Teacher’s Paraphrase: “Las posadas means "the inns" or "the shelters" in Spanish. It’s a religious and social celebration that takes place for nine nights, from Dec. 16 to Dec. 24, and commemorates Joseph and Mary’s journey to Bethlehem and their search for shelter prior to the birth of Jesus. Las Posadas is a re-enactment of this difficult journey. It’s preparation for La Navidad (Christmas) in Mexico and in some Central American countries.

The tradition of Las Posadas parade dates back to the 16th century and St. Ignatius Loyola, who used an Aztec festival to teach the birth of Christ. He did so by replacing the nine-day celebration of the birth of the Aztec Sun god with this Christian celebration.

Las Posadas includes a procession led by children, followed by adults and musicians. The procession travels to a different house in the village or neighborhood each night looking for lodging. When they enter the designated house, they begin the evening with prayer; soon after, the celebration begins, full of music, fireworks, food, candy and treats. Children and adults alike anticipate this joyous religious occasion.

Mary
Joseph
Innkeeper #1
Innkeeper #2
Innkeeper #3
Innkeeper #4

Mary and Joseph puppets move to the first Innkeeper.

Mary and Joseph: Can we stay here?
Innkeeper #1: There is no room.
Mary and Joseph puppets move to the next Innkeeper.

Mary and Joseph: Can we stay here?
Innkeeper #2: There is no room.
Mary and Joseph puppets move to the next Innkeeper.

Mary and Joseph: Can we stay here?
Innkeeper #3: There is no room.
Mary and Joseph puppets move to the next Innkeeper.

Mary and Joseph: Can we stay here?
Innkeeper #4: There is no room. But you may stay in the stable.
Yellow Center: Make Fruit Tacos

These delicious fruit tacos make a wonderful Las Posadas treat.

5 cups assorted chopped or sliced fresh fruit (apples, bananas, grapes, strawberries)
12 taco shells, warmed
2 tablespoons orange juice
1 cup low-fat strawberry yogurt
1/2 cup toasted coconut (optional)
1/2 cup sliced almonds (optional)

1. Combine fruit and orange juice in large bowl.
2. Fill taco shells with fruit mixture.
3. Top with yogurt, coconut and almonds.

While the children are working, talk to them about Las Posadas.

*Teacher’s Paraphrase:* “Las Posadas means “the inns” or “the shelters” in Spanish. It’s a religious and social celebration that takes place for nine nights, from Dec. 16th to Dec. 24 and commemorates Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem and their search for shelter prior to the birth of Jesus. Las Posadas is a re-enactment of this difficult journey. It is preparation for La Navidad (Christmas) in Mexico and in some Central American countries.

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Las Posadas includes a procession led by children, followed by adults and musicians. The procession travels to a different house in the village or neighborhood each night. When they enter the designated house, they begin the evening with prayer; soon after, the celebration begins, full of music, fireworks, food, candy and treats. Children and adults alike anticipate this joyous religious occasion.

6. Closing Circle (5 minutes)

*Session review:* Bring the children back into the circle and ask them to tell you about what they learned about Maria, Christianity and Las Posadas.

“What did you learn about Maria? Where is her family from originally? What is her religion? What are her family’s customs? What is her favorite holiday? What is this holiday all about?”
Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our classroom Star today and his/her religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next, refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s classroom Star.

Invite one child to extinguish the Chalice.
Lesson #3:
Islam: Meet Fatima

Supplies:

Dried dates
Scarves for head coverings
A small rug to be used as a prayer rug
Perfume
Long mirror
White card stock, markers, crayons
Eid A Fatr stencils (http://eidstuff.com)
The words Eid al Fatr printed on card stock
Ramadan poem printed on card stock
Colored construction paper
Scissors
Glue or staples
Resource #6
colored tissue paper

Books and Audio:

- Celebrating Ramadan by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith, Lawrence Migdale
- Tape or CDs of adhan calls to prayer (Islam: Musiques et Chants, France: Auvidis Tempo, 1997)
- Other picture and story books from your local library on Islam, Eid al Fatr and Islam.

Preparation:

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials in order to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children's activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle as well as display and discuss the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will then bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

Teacher’s Background Information: Islam

The present form of Islam began in Arabia in 622 CE (the year zero of the Islamic calendar). It is based on the ministry of a man named Muhammad, who Muslims regard as a great prophet.
Muslims regard Muhammad as the messenger through whom Allah (God) revealed the Islamic faith to the world. Muslims believe there were earlier messengers, among them Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

Muhammad was not only a religious leader, but a political leader as well. This established a close relationship between religion and "politics," and ensured the rapid spread of the faith and the influence of Islam on many countries’ entire way of life.

In his final sermon, Muhammad summarized the heart of Islam:

- Belief in One God without images or symbols;
- Equality of all Believers without distinction of race or class, the superiority of individuals being based solely on piety;
- Sanctity of life, property and honor;
- Abolition of interest, and of vendettas and private justice;
- Better treatment of women; and
- Obligatory inheritance and distribution of the property of deceased persons among near relatives of both sexes, and the removal of the possibility of the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few.

**The Five Pillars of Islam**

These are five duties that every Muslim is obliged to perform.

1. **Shahada**: The Muslim profession of faith. Muslims say this when they wake up in the morning, and just before they go to sleep at night.

   "I witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah."

2. **Salat**: A prayer ritual performed five times a day by all Muslims over the age of 10. Salat is very different from praying on the inspiration of the moment. A precise ritual is followed five times each day, each time being carefully set aside for devotion.

   While an individual may pray on their own, Muslims prefer to perform Salat with others to demonstrate unity.

3. **Sawm**: This usually is described as fasting, but it actually involves abstaining from all bodily pleasures between dawn and sunset. Muslims must also make sure that they do not do or think anything evil and so believe Sawm helps develop self-control and gain a better understanding of God's gifts and greater compassion toward the deprived.
4. **Zakat**: This involves giving alms to the poor. It's a compulsory gift of 2.5 percent of one's savings each year in addition to any other charitable gifts. Giving in this way is intended to free Muslims from the love of money by reminding them that everything they have belongs to God.

5. **Hajj**: The pilgrimage to Mecca that all physically able Muslims must make at least once in their lifetime. Mecca is the most holy place for Muslims.

**Basic tenets of Islam:**

- There is only one God, called "Allah."
- Allah's last prophet was Muhammad.
- Muhammad was not a god; he was a man through whom God revealed his will. Although Muslims revere Muhammad, they do not worship him.
- Everything and everyone depends on Allah.
- All Muslims, of whatever race, are members of one community, the "ummah."
- Muslims are guided to follow Allah's will by the holy book, the Qur'an, which Muslims regard as the unaltered word of God.
- Every Muslim is to follow the example set by Muhammad's life.
- Every Muslim must perform the duties known as the Five Pillars of Islam.
- The Muslim place of worship is called a mosque. The word comes from the Arabic for "place of prostration." Muslims believe that they have one life, after which they are judged.
- Islam seeks and welcomes converts.

1. **Entering Activity (5 minutes)**

Allow the children to walk around the room and explore the centers you have set up. Then invite each child to fill out a name tag and/or record his/her name on the class attendance poster.

2. **Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)**

“Good morning! I want to welcome you all to our special summer class *A World of New Friends*! How many of you have been to our special classroom before?” *Indicate the stuffed or cut-out children that decorate the classroom.* “Soon we will take a moment to get to know our new members and to check in with those of you who have been here all summer. We will also meet our special classroom Star, Fatima!

As Unitarian Universalists, we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will learn about Islam by meeting Fatima. Let’s start by lighting our chalice and then checking in with the REAL students here today.”
Chalice lighting (*Choose one*).

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn from and to respect each other.”

3. **Check in and sharing (5 minutes)**
*Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:*

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we sit together and take a few moments to find out who is here and to see if perhaps something important happened to our group during the week we have been apart.”

*Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”*

*If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.*

3. **Circle Story (8-10 minutes)**

Let’s Meet Fatima – All ages

The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s class “star” into the circle. Addressing the cut out-and-stuffed child, the teacher may display Fatima’s “classroom star” poster and introduce the child, then begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

**My name. What does it mean? How old am I?**
Fatima -- it means “a daughter of the prophet.” I am 10 years old.

**Where do I live and where is my family from?**
I live *insert the name of your town* and my family is from Saudi Arabia.

**What is my religion?**
I am Muslim. We observe the religion of Islam.
Where and when do I worship?
We go to our mosque to worship. We attend the insert the name of a local mosque. Friday is a Muslim holy day. The Muslim community celebrates this day by holding Friday afternoon prayers. I started saying the prayers when I turned 10 years old.

What are my family customs?
All the women in my family observe hijab, that is, we cover our heads with a scarf. We do this because the prophet Mohammed told us to do so. We also do it because we are modest and want people to know us by our minds and not by our looks.

My parents also pray five times each day. My father wakes at dawn to pray, breaks at noon to pray, again in the later afternoon, again at dusk, and prays one last time before retiring to bed. He washes up briefly before prayer, and then goes to a clean spot in his room to bow to God; turning to Him for guidance and expressing gratefulness for all God has given him.

What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?
My favorite holiday is Eid al Fitr.

Teacher paraphrase: Muslims have two major celebrations each year. Both are called Eid (meaning celebration). Eid al Fitr, or the Celebration of Breaking the Fast, marks the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan is the month of fasting. Congregational prayers are held, gifts exchanged, delicious food prepared and new clothes worn.

Eid al Fitr is all about celebrating the good things that have been received by Allah with our family and friends. Every household that can afford it must pay a form of tax in the days leading up to Eid al Fitr. Traditionally the tax was in the form of food, although most people now give the equivalent in money. The money or food is given to the poor, so they can celebrate Eid al Fitr, too. The tax is not collected by anyone, and no one is forced to pay it, but it’s required as a religious act, and almost everyone pays.

Everyone has new clothes for Eid al Fitr. The last few nights of Ramadan it’s almost impossible to get into the shops, as everyone is buying their clothes. A complete new outfit is normal, right down to the shoes and even the women’s head scarves.

On the morning of Eid al Fitr, everyone gets up very early to go to prayers. These are special prayers, held only at Eid al Fitr. They are held only in very big mosques, or in large open areas, such as football stadiums.
After the prayers everyone goes home to eat breakfast and then the celebrations really begin. It isn’t common for children to receive gifts. Instead they receive money. The money is in the form of a brand new bank note or coins. The amount given is small, usually about $3. But everyone who visits the children, or everyone whom they visit, gives them the gift of money. In a large, extended family, with lots of friends, the children can end up with a small fortune!

Sometime around mid-morning, people start to go out visiting. They visit neighbors and friends in the morning. At each visit special cakes are eaten, and the children receive their money. The visits are very short as there are many stops to make. Dinner is spent with family. Each day of the holiday is spent with a different branch of the family, so everyone receives a visit. In the evening the visits start up again. This goes on for three days, but money is normally only given to the children on the first two days.

In between visiting, people make trips out into the streets. Many neighborhoods have a street fair, with music, dancing, fireworks, kids' games and much more. Here, the children get to spend their money. They buy candy, soft drinks, toys and rides. Everyone has great fun, and the children become disappointed when it is over. The adults, on the other hand, are usually worn out and glad for rest!

During Ramadan, the grown-ups "fast," which means they don't eat anything during the day, from the time the sun comes up in the morning until the sun goes down at night. They can eat a small meal in the evening. Instead of eating during the day, they use this time for thinking about and praying to Allah, and doing kind things to help others. This goes on for a whole month during the Fall.

Sometimes, children may ask their parents if they can "fast" part of the month too, but most children don't fast because they need food for their growing bodies.

4. Activity #1 (10-20 minutes) – All ages

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

Encourage the children to move to their first center.
The Blue Center – Celebrating Ramadan

Read an excerpt from “Celebrating Ramadan,” by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith and Lawrence Migdale, to the children. Discuss the activities seen in the photos.

Discuss: What are they doing in this picture here? Why do you suppose food is so important for this holiday (they have been fasting). Have you ever seen women wearing head coverings like this? What did Fatima call that?

Now tell the children they’ll be making traditional Eid al Fatr cards, which are sent much like Christmas cards. Give each child a blank piece of card stock and show them how to fold it down the middle. Print “Eid al Fatr” on the front of the younger students’ cards, and show the words to the older students so they may copy it onto their cards. Or, you may use “Eid al Fatr” stencils to decorate the cards, or ask the children to draw a picture of something “cool” they remember from the book (or from other books you have assembled in the center) -- a crescent moon, a mosque shape, etc.

An alternative project: Cut out shapes of mosques (Resource #6) and decorate them with torn pieces of colored tissue paper.

**Red Center** - Dress Up For Eid al Fatr

Invite the girls to try on head scarves and to look at themselves in the mirror. Invite the boys to put on perfume – tell them that only the men are allowed to wear perfume on Eid al Fatr! Invite the children to take turns kneeling on the prayer rug and placing their foreheads to the floor. Make certain the rug faces East, and discuss why Muslims pray in this direction.

Play adhan calls to prayer on the tape player. Check your local library for “Islam: Musiques et Chants,” France: Auvidis Tempo, 1997), or you can download some adhan calls to prayer from http://www.islamonline.net/English/eid/1424/topic08.shtml.

While the children are dressing up and listening to the calls to prayer, introduce Mohammed.

*Teacher Paraphrase:* “The prophet Mohammed was born in what is now Mecca in Saudi Arabia in 570 CE. (AD). He was orphaned and was raised by his grandfather and an uncle. He worked as a trader and married a wealthy widow. He enjoyed meditating and often did so on Mount Hira. In 610 he proclaimed that he had a revelation from God brought to him by an angel called Gabriel. When he told this to his friends and neighbors in Mecca, some did not believe him.
He further proclaimed that God was a single, powerful deity -- not a separate god for Jews, or Christians or the many other religions, but one God for them all who is responsible for all things in life. God asked Mohammed to warn the people that they should become a single community bearing witness to this one God. This angered many, and Mohammed fled to the area now known as Medina and spent the next 8 years fighting against the Meccans. With each battle win, he gained more power, prestige and acceptance. He died in 632 at the age of 62 and is seen as the Islamic prophet who brought the revelations of God to the people. Each time his name is mentioned, a Muslim must say 'peace be upon him' to show his or her reverence.”

Yellow Center – A Ramadan Time Keeper!

Have the following poem printed on card stock for the younger children. Older children may copy it in their own handwriting from the dry-erase board.

THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN
FOR THE MUSLIMS HAS BEGUN
PRAISING GOD THROUGHOUT THE DAY,
FROM DAWN TO DUSK WE FAST AND PRAY.
WE PAY ZAKAT FOR THOSE IN NEED,
TRYING BEST TO DO GOOD DEEDS.
WHEN THE SUN HAS SET, AND DAY IS DONE
I'LL BREAK THIS CHAIN, BUT ONLY ONE.
AT RAMADAN'S END, THIS CHAIN WILL
BE GONE!
AND TIME TO CELEBRATE
AND SHARE IN THE FUN!!!

Next, have the children measure and cut colored strips of construction paper into 8-inch lengths. Measure these for the younger children and/or cut out the strips for them. Glue or staple strips of construction paper into a chain. You will need 30 links (rings) in your chain -- one for each day until the end of Ramadan. Invite the children to make a pretty pattern, alternating the colors of the rings. Attach the completed chain to the bottom of your poem.

Tell the children that every day during Ramadan a Muslim child carefully tears off one of the rings.

While the children are copying the poem and working on the chain, talk to them about the meaning of zakat (see Teacher Background material, above.)

5. Session review: Bring the children back into the circle and ask them to tell you what they learned about Fatima and her Islamic faith. Invite one child from each age group to display their projects and describe it for the others.
Have a plate of dried dates. Explain that dates are a favorite snack for Middle Eastern Muslims as well as a traditional food for celebrating Eid al Fitr. Give each child a date as he or she remembers something about Islam learned from the stories or activities. Give each child a date at the end of class.

“What did you learn about Fatima? Where is her family from originally? What is her religion? Why does she wear a scarf on her head? What is her favorite holiday? What is this holiday all about? What does her name mean? Who is the Muslim prophet? How long does Ramadan last?”

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and her religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Invite one child to extinguish the Chalice.
Lesson #4: Islam: Meet Guntur

Supplies:

- Scissors
- Black construction paper
- Card stock
- Black garbage bag
- Shiny silver wrapping paper or foil
- Sticky tack
- Cloth for blindfold
- Tape player
- Small stickers

Books, Recordings:

- **Islam: World Religions**, Khadihaj Knight, Thompson Learning, 1996
- **Stories form the Muslim World**, Huda Khattab, Silver Burdett Press, 1987
- **Tell Me About Hajj**, Saniyasnain Khan, Bright Kids
- **Javanese Court Gamelan**, Robert E. Brown

Preparation:

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle, and display and discuss the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

**Teacher’s Background Information**

*Please read the general background information on Islam from lesson #3.*

Islam is a major world religion, with more than 1 billion followers worldwide (1/5 of the world population). It’s considered one of the Abrahamic, monotheistic faiths, along with Judaism and Christianity. Although usually associated with Middle Eastern Arabs, fewer than 10 percent of Muslims are, in fact, Arab.
About 80 percent of Indonesians are Muslims, making Indonesia the largest Muslim nation in the world.

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)


Talk to them about Indonesian shadow puppets as they work.

“Wayang kulit (pronounced why-young cool-it) are perforated leather puppets with movable, jointed arms, and they’re found in both Java and Bali in Indonesia. The puppets are manipulated behind a large screen illuminated from behind with a strong light. The audience views the puppets’ shadows from the other side of the screen. Wayang kulit are used to tell Indonesian versions of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Wayang kulit performances can last all night.

The Mahabharata is the longest story ever written. It was written more that 2,000 years ago in India. Traders and religious scholars brought the story to Indonesia where it became popular, especially on the islands of Bali and Java.

The story tells of jealousy and power struggles between two sets of cousins who both want to rule their kingdom. 9

2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Teacher Paraphrase: “As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. And each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion.”

Chalice Lighting: Begin the lesson by placing the chalice in the middle of the table or floor and asking the group to recite the chalice lighting:

A. Younger children:
“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”
B. Older children:
“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

3. Check in and sharing (5 – 8 minutes)
*Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:*

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”

*If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.*

4. Circle Story (8-10 minutes)

Let’s Meet Guntur – All ages

The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s “class star” into the circle. Addressing the cut-out child, the teacher will then display Guntur’s “Star” poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

Star Poster:

*My name. What does it mean? How old am I?*  
Guntur means “thunder.” I am 8 years old.

*Where do I live and where is my family from?*  
I live in *insert your town name* and my family is from Indonesia.

*What is my religion?*  
I am Muslim. We follow the teachings of Islam and are called Muslims.

*Where and when do I worship?*  
We go to our mosque to worship. We attend the *insert the name of a local mosque here*. Friday is a Muslim holy day. The Muslim community celebrates this day by holding Friday afternoon prayers. I will begin saying the prayers when I turn 10 years old.
What are my family customs?
My parents pray five times a day. When they do so, they face Mecca. My parents recently completed a hajj, or holy trip to Mecca.

What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?
While not a holiday, my favorite time recently was preparing my parents to go on the hajj. It was exciting helping them prepare for the big journey. I hope to go to Mecca some day when I’m older.

See background information in Lesson #3.

5. Activity Centers (30 minutes)

Teachers: After presenting the Star Poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

The Blue Center – Let’s Read about Islam!

Have the following books available for the children to look through:

Islam: Eyewitness Books, Dorling Kindersly Limited, 2002
Islam: World Religions, Khadihaj Knight, Thompson Learning, 1996
Stories from the Muslim World, Huda Khattab, Silver Burdett Press, 1987
Tell Me About Hajj, Saniyasnain Khan, Bright Kids

After looking at the books together and talking about the photos, select a story from Stories from the Muslim World and discuss.

Next, give the kids copies of Resource #7. Discuss the symbols and what they mean. Allow the kids to color the symbols, cut them out and paste them onto a sheet of colored construction paper. Invite the kids to label each symbol.

The Red Center - Gamelon Music

Have Javanese court gamelon playing on the tape player. Children may listen to this music as they move between the other centers.

The Yellow Center - Learn About Hajj

Teacher paraphrase: “Remember that Guntur told us that his father recently went on a hajj.

Hajj is one of the five institutions of Islam. The performance of a Hajj pilgrimage is a duty to
be performed at least once in a lifetime by every adult Muslim, man or woman.

The Ka'aba is located in the holy Islamic city of Mecca. It is a massive black meteorite known as the sacred stone of the Islamic faith after Muhammad deemed the meteorite sacred in 630 AD. Wherever a Muslim is located, s/he is instructed to pray toward Mecca and the Ka'aba.

A Muslim’s pilgrimage to Mecca represents the ultimate in spiritual fulfillment. During the worship at the Ka'aba, pilgrims circle the shrine seven times, and then make their way to kiss the sacred shrine. Muslims believe that prayers made toward the Ka’aba, along with the pilgrimage to Mecca, create unity between the Muslim people."

**Play “Put the Black Stone on the Ka’aba”**

This is a variation of the classic game “Pin the Tail on the Donkey” and is used as an Eid al Fatr party game for children.

To play this game, cut out a large square from black card stock. With shiny gold paper or wrapping paper, cut out decorative strips and glue them on to represent the silver holder for the black stone.

Next, make a large copy of the Ka'aba on Resource #8. Tape this to the chalk or dry-erase board.

Blindfolded, children take turns trying to put the black stone on the Ka’aba. Mark each child’s guess with a small sticker with their name on. Follow the game with a discussion about the black stone and its history.

*Teacher Paraphrase: “The Black Stone of the Ka'aba is a dark boulder set in gold on the wall of Islam's central shrine, the Ka'aba, in Mecca. It marks the starting point of the walk around the Ka’aba at the heart of the holy pilgrimage called the hajj. Muslims make it clear that the Black Stone is not holy in itself.*

The Black Stone has its own legend. It's said that when the patriarchs Abraham and Ishmael were building the Ka’aba, the stone was delivered to them by an angel from heaven. That story suggests the Black Stone is a meteorite, and indeed meteorites have been prized and revered by many world cultures. 10
6. Discussion and closing (10 minutes)

Ask the children to finish their activity and to move to the circle area. Begin a discussion about why the Islamic faith is relevant to Unitarian Universalism.

“Who can find a principle on the poster of UU principles that encourages us to learn about the faiths of the world?” (#3, #4)

“Why is it important for you to understand the Muslim faith in our modern world?”

Session review: Bring the children back into the circle and ask them to tell you what they learned about Guntur and his Islamic faith. Invite one child from each age group to display his/her project and describe it for the others.

“What did you learn about Guntur? Where is his family from originally? What is his religion? What are his family’s customs? Tell me about the hajj. What is this pilgrimage all about? Who is the Muslim prophet?

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and his/her religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Invite one child to extinguish the Chalice.

Extinguish the Chalice
Lesson #5: Hinduism: Meet Ravi

Supplies:

Ingredients for Thali:
- Milk -- 2 cups
- Almonds -- 1 Tabl.
- Pistachios -- 1 Tabl.
- Charoli -- 1 Tabl. (Skip this special nut if it can’t be found.)
- Poppy seeds -- 1 Tabl.
- Cashews -- 6 nuts
- Glazed cherries -- as desired
- Honey -- as desired
- Mixture of cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, anise seeds -- 1 tsp. or to taste
- Cream -- 2 Tabl.
- Resource #10 copied onto colored card stock
- Scissors

Books, etc:

*The Broken Tusk: Stories of the Hindu God Ganesha*, by Uma Krishnaswami
Linnet Books, 1996

Preparation:

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle, and display and discuss the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

Teacher Background Information:

The word “Hindu” comes from the name of a river called “Sindhu” that flowed in Northwest India. The name of that river was mispronounced “Hindu” and the people who lived in that part of the world were called “Hindus.” The philosophy about God that came from this part of the world is called “Hinduism.”

Hinduism, or Sanatana Dharma (“eternal spiritual path”), began about 4,000 years ago. It was the religion of an ancient people known as the Aryans (“noble people”) whose philosophy, religion and customs are recorded in their sacred
texts known as the Vedas. Archeological evidence from the Indus Valley civilization of Northwestern India helps to establish Hinduism as one of the world's oldest living religion. Today, worldwide, there are almost 1 billion people professing some aspect of Hinduism.

The fundamental teachings of Hinduism, which form the foundation of all its sects, are contained in the concluding portion of the Vedas, and are known as the Vedanta (the “end or concluding portion of the Vedas”). This part of the Vedas also is known as the Upanishads.¹²

This teaching suggests that a human being’s basic nature is not confined to the body or the mind. The spirit, or the spark, of God within the soul is believed to be beyond both body and mind and is within us, and within everything we see. All beings and all things are thought to be, in their deepest essence, the pure or divine spirit -- full of peace, full of joy, full of wisdom -- and forever united with God.

For Hindus, this unification with God can be experienced through training to purify and refine the mind and senses. This training can take various forms and is known as yoga (“union” – the union of the individual self with this inner spirit).¹³

Within Hinduism there are lots of different ways to find God. No one method is better than others. The method chosen reflects the practitioner’s own character and abilities.¹⁴

The general name for God in Hinduism is Brahman. The name of the divine essence within us is known as Atman. Hindus believe they are one and the same, infinite and eternal and present in all creation. They believe that the manifestation of God goes by many names. It's like a person who at the same time is called “father” by his son, “friend” by his friend, “son” by his own father, “husband” by his wife, etc. A special relationship goes with each name. So the same Hindu Lord can be addressed as Shiva and Vishnu, as well as Divine Mother, Kali, and Durga.¹⁵

Since it’s the one God alone who is being revered, all these manifestations may be prayed to for help and protection. This is the underlying principle behind the different sects of Hinduism. Those who prefer a particular manifestation of the divinity will form a sect devoted to the contemplation and worship of that manifestation. All the sects, however, will accept the ancient teachings of the Vedas and the Vedanta as the foundation of their practice.

Hindus believe that after death, we are reborn. This cycle of being born again and again is called reincarnation. Hindus believe that every cause has an effect and that we are responsible for the results of our actions. The Hindu people believe that long ago, human beings first asked themselves, “Why are some people born in happy circumstances, whereas others are born to suffer?”
To explain this, it was assumed that we all have had previous existences, and that in our current lives we are reaping the results of those previous actions. Furthermore, the Hindu people believe we can take charge of our destiny right now and create a better tomorrow by resolving to do better actions today.

Three things are necessary to be released from the cycle of birth and rebirth: good actions, an understanding that the spirit of God and the spirit in humans are linked, and devotions to one’s chosen gods or goddesses. The process of being released from birth is known as moksha.¹⁶

The code of behavior is one’s dharma. This is determined by an individual’s place in society and the duties associated with it. There are four main social positions, or varna; Brahmins (priests and teachers) Kshatriyas (rulers and soldiers), Vaishyas (merchants) and Shudras (workers).

There are four ideal stages of life described in Hindu scriptures: the student, the family man, the recluse, and the wandering holy man. For most Hindu people these represent a metaphorical path, not an actual path.

The ancient, sacred Hindu texts were written in Sanskrit, the language of ancient India.

- The Vedas are the oldest -- about 3,000 years old. They are a collection of hymns, prayers, and magic spells.
- The Upanishads are stories and parables told by gurus (teachers) to their students.
- The Mahabharata tells the story of two warring, royal families. The Bhagavad Gita is a very popular part of this text.
- The Ramayana tells the story of the god Rama and the rescue of his wife Sita from Ravana, the evil demon king.¹⁷

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

Download and print some free coloring pages from the following web site:
http://www.sanatansociety.org/Hindu_kids_corner/hindu_kids_coloring_pages.htm

Select the level of difficulty depending upon your group’s ages.

2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Teacher Paraphrase: “As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship
differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. And each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion.”

A: Younger children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

3. Check in and sharing (5 – 8 minutes)
Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”

If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

“Our Classroom Star this week is Ravi.”

Let’s Meet Ravi -- All ages

The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s “Class Star” into the circle. Addressing the cut-out child, the teacher will then display Ravi’s “Star” poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.
Star Poster:

**My name. What does it mean? How old am I?**
My name is Ravi. This is a Hindu name that means benevolent (compassionate, kind, caring), and sun god. I am 10 years old.

**Where do I live and where is my family from?**
I live in *insert the name of your town* with my parents. My parents moved here from India 15 years ago.

**What is my religion?**
I am Hindu.

**Where and when do I worship?**
My family has a shrine at home – a puja – where we worship every day. We also go to the temple, or mandir, to be with other Hindus in our small community.

**What are my family customs?**
I like to perform the puja, or daily worship, with my mother. First I take a bath. Then my mother washes the statue of Siva on the altar and places a fresh garland of flowers around the statue’s neck. Then she lights a special lamp and some incense and places a special paste on the forehead of Siva. We offer her fruits and sweets.

My mother repeats the holy names of the gods using a mala – a string of 108 wooden beads. Then we get to eat the food we presented to Siva and get ready to face the day ahead!

**What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?**
My favorite festival is Holi. It’s the festival that celebrates the end of winter and the start of spring. I like this one because we get to throw colored water at each other and it’s lots of fun! It’s a celebration of spring when traditionally all the planting was done and people could just have a good time! 18

**5. Activity centers (20-30 minutes)**

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.
The Blue Center – Hindu Word Cards

Using Resource #10, have the students read and then cut apart the word cards. Mix up all the cards and have the children match the definitions with the words. You can make a game of this by dividing the children into two teams and timing them to see who is first at assembling the cards correctly.

Variations:

- Have the children quiz each other on the definitions.
- Younger children can illustrate the words on the word cards.

The Red Center - The Music of Holi and Morning Meditation

If you have access to a computer and the Internet in your classroom, allow the children to explore the following site for the music of Holi. Have the children read the lyrics and discuss what they mean to the holiday.

Or, you can download music from The Beat of India and offer a few segments from the songs: [http://www.beatofindia.com/forms/holi.htm](http://www.beatofindia.com/forms/holi.htm)

In addition, a free downloadable sample of morning meditation music is also available through the Sanatans Society: [http://www.sanatansociety.org/indian_music_and_mantras/morning_and_evening_meditation_music.htm](http://www.sanatansociety.org/indian_music_and_mantras/morning_and_evening_meditation_music.htm)

The Yellow Center – Make Thali!

Thali is a traditional Holi treat. It has an unusual flavor!

Ingredients

- Milk -- 2 cups
- Almonds -- 1 Tabl.
- Pistachios -- 1 Tabl.
- Charoli -- 1 Tabl. (Skip this special nut if it can’t be found.)
- Poppy seeds -- 1 Tabl.
- Cashews -- 6 nuts
- Glazed cherries -- as required
- Honey -- as required
- Powdered mixture (cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, anise seeds) -- 1 tsp.
- Cream -- 2 Tabl.

Method:

Make a fine paste of all the nuts and the poppy seeds. Mix this paste with the other spices into the milk and stir well. Strain this mixture and then mix in the honey.
5. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

*Who can tell me what Ravi’s religion is? And what is his favorite holiday? What else can you tell me about Hinduism?*

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and his/her religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Have one child extinguish the Chalice.
Lesson #6
Buddhism: Meet Sumalee

Supplies:
Buddha image (statue) or
Copy of Resource #11 printed on card stock
Small picture stand if using printed image
Crayons or markers
Candles, holder
Incense, holder
Matches
Sturdy box
Decorative cloth to cover box
Feathers, pretty rocks or other objects to stand in as sacred objects
Flowers, vase

Books, etc:

- **One Hand Clapping: Zen Stories for All Ages**, Martin Rafe, St. Martin’s Press.
- **I Once Was a Monkey: Stories Buddha Told**, by Jeanne M. Lee, Farrar Straus & Giroux
- **The Prince Who Ran Away: The Story Of Gautama Buddha**
  by ANNE ROCKWELL (author), FAHIMEH AMIRI (illustrator), Knopf, 2001
- Other story books and non-fiction about Buddhism from your local library

Preparation:

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle, and display and discuss the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

**Teacher Background Information**:

About 2,500 years ago, a prince named Siddhartha Gautama began to question his sheltered, luxurious life in the palace. So Siddhartha left the palace and when he did so, he saw four sights: a sick man, an old man, a dead man and a monk. These sights showed him that even a prince cannot escape illness, suffering and death. The monk told Siddhartha to leave his life as a prince and become a
wandering holy man, seeking the answers to questions like "Why must people suffer?" And "What is the cause of suffering?"

Siddhartha spent many years doing many religious practices such as praying, meditating and fasting. He finally understood the basic truths of life after sitting under a fig tree, deep in meditation, for many days. This was in Bodh Gaya, India. Here, he gained enlightenment, or nirvana, and was given the title of Buddha, which means Enlightened One.

Buddha discovered the Three Universal Truths and Four Noble Truths, which he then taught to people for the next 45 years.

Three Universal Truths

1. Everything in life is impermanent and always changing.
2. Because nothing is permanent, a life based on possessing things or other people doesn’t make you happy.
3. There is no eternal, unchanging soul, and the "self" is simply a collection of changing characteristics or attributes.

Four Noble Truths

1. Human life has a lot of suffering.
2. The cause of suffering is attachment (greed).
3. There is an end to suffering.
4. The way to end suffering is to follow the Middle Way.

Buddha then taught people not to worship him as a god. He said they should take responsibility for their own lives and actions. He taught that the Middle Way was the way to nirvana. The Middle Way meant not leading a life of luxury and indulgence but also not one of too much fasting and hardship. There are eight guides for following the Middle Way.

The Eightfold Path

1. Right understanding and viewpoint (based on the Four Noble Truths).
2. Right values and attitude (compassion rather than selfishness).
3. Right speech (Don’t tell lies; avoid harsh, abusive speech; and avoid gossip).
4. Right action (Help others; live honestly; don’t harm living things; and take care of the environment).
5. Right work (Do something useful; and avoid jobs that harm others).
6. Right effort (Encourage good, helpful thoughts while discouraging unwholesome, destructive thoughts).
7. Mindfulness (Be aware of what you feel, think and do).
8. Meditation (Practice meditation, which creates a calm mind and leads to nirvana).

Meditation is an essential practice for most Buddhists, who look within themselves for the truth and understanding of Buddha’s teachings. They seek enlightenment, or nirvana, this way. Nirvana is freedom from needless suffering and being fully alive and present in one’s life. It’s not a state that can be described in words -- it goes beyond words.

Meditation means focusing the mind to achieve an inner stillness that leads to a state of enlightenment. Meditation takes many forms.

- It can be sitting quietly beside a beautiful arrangement of rocks, contemplating beauty.
- It can be practicing a martial art such as karate or aikido, since they require mental and physical control and strong concentration.
- It can mean focusing on a riddle, such as "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"
- It can be contemplating a haiku, or short poem, that captures a moment in time.
- It can be in a meditation room at a monastery.
- It can involve chanting.
- It can involve the use of a mandala to focus attention to the invisible point at the center of interlocking triangles.
- It can involve quietly noticing one’s breath as it goes in and out.
- It can happen anywhere at any time.

After Buddha died, his teachings were gradually written down from what people remembered. The ripitaka, or The Three Baskets, is a collection of Buddha’s sayings, his thoughts about them, and rules for Buddhist monks. The Ripitaka initially was written on palm leaves, and were collected together in baskets.

There are more than 500 million Buddhists today. After Buddha’s death, some of his followers had some differences of opinion, which eventually led to their breaking away and forming separate kinds of Buddhism. There are two main types, Theravada, which spread to Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, and Mahayana, which spread to Nepal, Vietnam, China, Korea and Japan. Mahayana took on aspects of the cultures where it was practiced and became three distinct branches: Vajrayana Buddhism or Tibetan Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism.

The Five Precepts
Even though each form of Buddhism took on its own identity, all Buddhists follow a set of guidelines for daily life called the Five Precepts. These are:

1. Do not harm or kill living things.
2. Do not take things unless they are freely given.
3. Lead a decent life.
4. Do not speak unkindly or tell lies.
5. Do not abuse drugs or drink alcohol.

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

A mandala is a pattern that is used for visual motivation and is used to improve meditation. Color mandalas with the children. See Resource #12.

2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Teacher Paraphrase: “As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. Each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion.”

Chalice Lighting

A: Younger children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

3. Check in and sharing (5-8)

Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important that happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”
If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

“Our Classroom Star this week is Sumalee.”

Let’s Meet Sumalee – All ages

The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s Class Star into the circle. Addressing the cut-out child, the teacher will then display Sumalee’s Star poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

Star Poster:

My name. What does it mean? How old am I?
My name is Sumalee, which is Thai for “beautiful flower.” I am 10 years old.

Where do I live and where is my family from?
I live in Kansas City. My parents are originally from Thailand.

What is my religion?
My family is Buddhist.

Where and when do I worship?
We go to the Buddhist Temple.

What are my family customs?
We practice meditation every day.

What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?
My favorite holiday is Wesak. This is the celebration of Buddha’s birth. For Theravada Buddhists, it’s also the celebration of Buddha’s enlightenment and death. During this celebration, statues of Buddha are decorated. Offerings are taken to monasteries, and sometimes there are fireworks.
5. Activity centers (20-30 minutes)

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

The Blue Center – Read a Story

Read a selection from one of the following books:

One Hand Clapping: Zen Stories for All Ages, Martin Rafe, St. Martin’s Press
I Once Was a Monkey: Stories Buddha Told, by Jeanne M. Lee, Farrar Straus & Giroux

The Red Center -- A Brief Meditation

Take the group into another room. Tell the group that you are going to try a simple meditation and that they should try to empty their minds. Explain that you will help to guide them in every step of the meditation.

A: First meditation: Say the following …

Get comfortable. Wiggle around, then stop. Uncross your legs and put your hands by your sides, on the floor. I promise you this will only take a few minutes and you’re going to have fun.

Take a big breath and blow it out really noisy.

Do it again and again. That's one way to breathe.

Now, let's try another.

Take a deep breath, but slowly -- now let the air out slowly and quietly.

Do this again and again.

Keep breathing this way. This kind of breathing is calmer and will help you during this exercise we call meditation.

Breathe in slowly.

Breathe out slowly.

While you are doing this, look around your quiet place. Look at the things you see right in front of you. See everything. Now, without moving, glance to your side. What else do you see? The other side. What's there?
Now, close your eyes.

How's your breathing?

Still slow, still deep. Just think about that.

Slow, deep, quiet…

Don't open your eyes but try to picture your place. See in your mind what was actually in front of you. What do you remember? What colors were there? What do you see in your mind as you previously glanced to your right side and your left side?

After a few minutes of imagining the things in your place, open your eyes and look again. Did you think of most of the things or only a few? It doesn't matter. This was one way. The next time you try this it will be different. But do try to notice the differences. Pay attention.

When you do this several times you will start to notice what you are seeing around you throughout your day. Make a game of it.

What color are the walls in your classroom?

What color shirt did your friend have on yesterday?

The more you notice, the more you know.

Have the group get up, move around a bit, stretch and then try the second meditation.

B: Second Meditation: Say the following…. 

Let's go on an adventure!

But instead of rushing out the front door, let's go on an adventure within, to a beautiful place inside, in our thoughts ...

Lying on the floor, stretch out on your back like a starfish. Close your eyes, let your body go as limp as a Raggedy Ann or Andy doll while counting to 10 in your mind.

Lying so still and relaxed, keeping your eyes closed, walk through the inner doorway in your mind onto the beach on a warm, sunny day.
In your mind, just feel yourself standing still for a moment, looking around, seeing the waves wash against the shoreline in their regular rhythms, over and over again.

While watching the regular pattern of the waves, just breathe in and out, evenly, in and out, over and over again.

Watch the waves, while breathing evenly, in and out.

Enjoy the relaxed feeling in your own body that is lying so limply on the floor. Feel whole and comfortable in your resting body and mind.

When enough time has passed, begin to come back to your everyday, active self. Stretch out those limp arms and legs, take a deep breath and sit up.

Do you feel your new energy, all set and ready to go again?!

**The Yellow Center – Make a Buddhist Shrine**

Make a Buddhist shrine that will remain on display for the next several lessons.

Set up the sturdy cardboard box and cover it with a cloth. Talk about each object that will go on the shrine and explain it. Then allow the children to “build” the shrine by placing the objects on the shrine in a decorative arrangement.

Teacher Paraphrase: “We will create a Buddhist shrine at this center! The idea is to create a special place for prayer and meditation by creating a beautiful shrine and placing objects on it in a respectful and attractive way. Here is what we will put on the shrine:

The Buddha image – Ideally, this should be placed slightly higher than eye level. It can be on a separate box or a small stand.

Flowers -- These may be fresh or dried (even plastic). Fresh flowers have a special value as they indicate that the shrine is receiving daily care.

Candles -- There may be as many of these as you wish. Shrines are used for spiritual practice and there is something very beautiful about sitting quietly in a room lit by the candles on a shrine.

Incense -- The combination of fire and fragrance is lovely.

Sacred objects -- This can include an enormous range of objects. There may be a treasure box on the shrine.
Perhaps the children have something with them they would like to loan to the shrine for the treasure box.

After the children have assembled the shrine, light the candles and the incense and ask the children to look at the shrine quietly for a few moments. How does it make them feel? Do they like it? Why do they like it?

Then disassemble the shrine for the next group to remake.

6. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

Bring the children back into the large circle. Ask them a few questions about the day’s lesson and what they learned. What was Sumalee’s religion and where was she from? What can you tell me about Buddhism? What kind of family customs does Sumalee observe? What did you think about meditation?

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and her religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Extinguish the Chalice.
Lesson #7
Buddhism: Meet Duc

Supplies:

Resource #13
Resource #14
Red paper
Scissors
Glue
Play money
Coin or small bean bag

Books, etc:


Preparation:

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle, and display and discuss the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

Teacher Background Information:

See back ground information on Buddhism from Lesson #7, Meet Sumalee.

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

Read over the collection of Buddhist stories on-line at this wonderful site. Print out a few for the kids to read and color at the beginning of the class.

http://www.gakkaionline.net/kids/cart.html

Or use the sample story found on Resource #13.
2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Teacher Paraphrase: “As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. And each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion.”

A: Younger children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

3. Check in and sharing (5-8)

Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”

If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

“Our Classroom Star this week is Duc.”

Let’s Meet Duc – All ages
The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s Class Star into the circle. Addressing the cut-out child, the teacher will then display Duc’s “Star” poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

Star Poster:

**My name. What does it mean? How old am I?**
My name is Duc. I am 7 years old.

**Where do I live and where is my family from?**
I live in *insert the name of your town* but my family is originally from Vietnam.

**What is my religion?**
We are Buddhists.

**Where and when do I worship?**
We worship at our Buddhist Temple.

**What are my family customs?**
We also have a family altar, or shrine, and say prayers here every day.

**What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?**
I love Tet, the Vietnamese New Year celebration.

5. **Activity centers (20-30 minutes)**

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

**The Blue Center – Learning a Mantra**

*Teacher paraphrase:* “Mantras are like chanting and create a good, peaceful feeling inside when recited over and over. They are used in Buddhism to quiet the mind.

For example, Buddhists believe that the mantra of Chenrezig, the Buddha of compassion, can create a calm, compassionate feeling, while the mantra of Prajnaparamita, the Buddha of wisdom, can create a calm, light feeling of emptiness inside.

Today I will teach you the Mantra of Chenrezig (the Buddha of Compassion):

Have you ever meditated before? We are going to try a simple meditation. I will help to guide you in every step of this meditation.”
If the rest of the room is noisy, you may need to take the children to a different room.

Say the following …

Get comfortable. Wiggle around, then stop. Uncross your legs and put your hands by your sides, on the floor. I promise you this will only take a few minutes and you’re going to have fun.

Take a big breath and blow it out really noisy.

Do it again and again. That’s one way to breathe.

Now, let's try another.

Take a deep breath, but slowly. Now let the air out slowly and quietly.

Do this again and again.

Keep breathing this way. This kind of breathing is calmer and will help you during this exercise we call meditation.

Breathe in slowly.

Breathe out slowly.

While you are doing this, look around your quiet place. Look at the things you see right in front of you. See everything. Now, without moving, glance to your side. What else do you see? The other side. What's there?

Now, close your eyes.

How’s your breathing?

Still slow, still deep. Just think about that.

Slow, deep, quiet.

Now we will try the mantra.

Repeat after me:

OM MANI PADME HUM

(Have the children recite with you.)
When enough time has passed, begin to come back to your everyday, active self. Stretch out those limp arms and legs, take a deep breath, and sit up.

Do you feel your new energy, all set and ready to go again?!

**The Red Center -- Try Da Cau**

The Da Cau game is traditionally played with a coin that has been decorated with paper. You can either take a large coin and cover it with red paper on one side, or for younger children, use a small bean bag. Lay the coin or bean bag on top of your foot. Kick the bag into the air. The object is to keep the bag bouncing off your foot. Keep it going as long as possible! This is good exercise and uses eye-hand coordination skills. 21

**The Yellow Center – Let’s Learn About Tet!**

Tell the children a bit more about Tet, the Vietnamese New Year.

**Teacher paraphrase:** “For Vietnamese Americans, Tet is like lots of celebrations all rolled into one! It lasts for three days and comes sometime between January 21 and February 19.

This holiday has been celebrated by Vietnamese people for more than 4,000 years. For Vietnamese Americans it’s a time to learn about family history and the history of Vietnam. People clean and paint their homes, making everything spotless and new.

Peach blossoms are one symbol of Tet. They serve as a reminder of the new year and the coming of spring. Red is the color for Tet. New Year’s wishes are written in black on red paper scrolls that are hung in the living room and over the front door. Paying back debts before Tet begins is customary. Arguments are avoided and mistakes forgiven. This signifies a new beginning.

Children receive gifts of money called “li xi” that come in small, red envelopes. Some families hang many li xi on a tree in their home to give to visitors during the holiday. Other Tet gifts may include clothes, flowers and toys. A favorite New Year’s food is the sticky rice cake called “banh chung,” which must be cooked for at least eight hours. They are shaped in a square pan because in ancient times the earth was thought to be square. Favorite foods are pickled radishes, peppers and other vegetables.

During Tet everyone visits family and friends. It is believed that the first visitor of the new year brings good luck or bad luck with them. To make sure their luck is good, the families often invite someone important or well-liked to be their first visitor. Therefore, it's an honor to be asked to be the first visitor in someone's home.
Most Vietnamese people have an altar in their home in honor of their ancestors. During Tet they decorate these altars with flowers, a cup of tea and fresh fruit. Families pray to their ancestors for protection and guidance. Because many Vietnamese are Buddhist, the altars may also have a statue of the Buddha.

On the night Tet begins Vietnamese families go to a church, or temple. Buddhist monks often give the families gifts to bring them luck in the new year. Sometimes they play a fortune-telling game with sticks. Each stick has numbers written on it that tell each person what the next year's fortune might be.

Like the Chinese, dragons are important to the Vietnamese people. They are often called the "Children of the Dragon." One legend says that dragons roam the earth during Tet. Another legend tells the story of a dragon and a fairy princess who fell in love. After they married the princess delivered 100 eggs, which later became 100 children. The children were said to be as brave as the dragon and as kind and beautiful as the princess. According to this legend the 100 children grew up and became the ancestors of the Vietnamese people."

Make a li xi packet. See Resource #14.

6. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

Bring the children back into the circle. Ask them about what they learned about Duc.

*Where is Duc from? What religion does Duc and has family observe? What is a mantra? What is Tet?*

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and his religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.
Lesson # 8
Confucianism: *Meet Wen*

**Supplies:**

- Colored photo copy paper
- Scissors
- Red construction paper or card stock
- Copies of Resource #15
- Tracing Paper
- Rulers
- Pencils
- Glue sticks
- Copies of Resource #16
- White writing paper
- A large pillar candle
- Crayons
- Kitchen tongs
- Copies of Resource #17

**Preparation:**

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle as well as displaying and discussing the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

**Teacher Background Information:**

Confucianism is not so much a religion as it is a way of living. The term “Confucian” is an English version of the name of the great Chinese scholar K’ung Fu Tzu. K’ung lived from 551-479 BCE.

While the Chinese government discouraged Confucianism during the Cultural Revolution of Mao Tze Tung, many aspects of it are deeply ingrained in Chinese culture.

Confucius taught people five basic ideas about behavior:

1. Always be considerate to others.
2. Respect your ancestors.
3. Try for harmony and balance in all things.
4. Avoid extremes in behavior and emotion.
5. If you live in peace and harmony, then you will be in contact with the spiritual forces of the universe, including nature.

Confucius also taught five basic virtues:

1) kindness
2) righteousness
3) sobriety
4) wisdom
5) trustworthiness

Confucius told followers that their own well-being depended directly on the well-being of others. This principle is called Jen, which stresses the importance of showing courtesy and loyalty to other people.

Those who practice Confucianism also believe the family and family values are very important. Children are taught to be very respectful of their parents and are taught to obey their parents. This concept of filial responsibility is perhaps the message most relevant to children.

Confucius himself had a simple moral and political teaching: To love others; to honor one's parents; to do what is right instead of what is of advantage; to practice "reciprocity," i.e., "Don't do to others what you would not want done to yourself."

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

Make a Tangram, an ancient Chinese puzzle. See Resource #14.

2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Teacher Paraphrase: "As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship differently from us, observe different holidays and celebrations. And each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion."

A: Younger children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”
B: Older children:

“We light this chalice  
In friendship:  
To celebrate our differences  
To celebrate our similarities  
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

3. Check in and sharing (5-8)  
Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”

If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

“Our Classroom Star this week is Wen.”

Let’s Meet Wen – All ages

The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s Class Star into the circle. Addressing the cut-out child, the teacher will display Wen’s Star poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

Star Poster:

My name. What does it mean? How old am I?  
My Name is Wen. It means “cultured” or “educated one.” My grandfather suggested this name. I am 9 years old.

Where do I live and where is my family from?  
I live in insert your town here now, but my parents are from China.

What is my religion?  
My grandfather is teaching me about the great teacher Confucius.
Where and when do I worship?
I worship at a Chinese Buddhist Temple. My grandfather teaches me about K'ung (Confucius) at home.

What are my family customs?
We have a family altar in a room in my house. Here we burn incense to our dead relatives. We do this out of respect for them and the many things we have learned from them.

Sometimes we burn paper in the shapes of special things -- like houses and cars and flowers and money – to send gifts to our dead relatives.

What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?
My family observes the traditional Chinese holidays. But my grandfather recently taught me about Teachers’ Day, which is an important holiday for Confucians because it celebrates the birth of K’ung, our great teacher, and also celebrates the debt we owe to all teachers. We make cards for our teachers and give them small gifts. There is a special ceremony at temples in the big cities.

5. Activity centers (20-30 minutes)

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

The Blue Center – Make a Card for Teacher’s Day

Give each child a piece of red card stock or construction paper. Fold it in half. Encourage each child to write a story to their favorite teacher (a parent is OK, too!) about something they learned from that teacher and to illustrate it.

On the front of the card, have the child glue the Chinese characters for “Thank You” found on Resource #16.

Older children might want to try tracing the Chinese characters.

While the children are working, talk to them about the importance of education within the philosophy of Confucianism. Tell them that K’ung (Confucius) had more than 3,000 students at one time – he never refused to help one who wished to learn. After the death of Confucius, his many students assembled his teachings into The Analects, a book of wisdom still studied today.

After the death of K'ung, another man named Mencius went beyond the teaching of K'ung. Mencius believed that humans were innately good and that evil acts are committed in violation of their true nature. Ask the kids what they think of this
idea. The teachings of Mencius were later assembled into the **Book of Mencius**.

**The Red Center -- Read and Understand the Wise Sayings of Confucius**

Make copies of Gems of Wisdom from the Great Master K’ung Fu Tzu on Resource #17. Discuss each saying and have the children rewrite it in their own words. Younger children may choose to illustrate the sayings.

Next have the children select a partner. Have each group act out one of the sayings while the rest of the group guesses which one they are acting out.

**The Yellow Center -- Gifts for Our Ancestors**

Ancestor worship is part of the traditional folk religion that predated Confucianism and was endorsed by Confucius as a means to amplify the importance of family as the center of Chinese society and the need for filial responsibility.

Tell the children these two stories:

*A dutiful boy, worried that his parents would be bitten by mosquitoes, slept without covers to encourage the mosquitoes to feed on him, rather than on his parents.*

*Another boy, 8 years old, would warm his parents’ bed in winter and fanned their pillows in summer to cool them.*

Discuss the stories: What do they say about the role of children in a traditional Chinese family? How is that different from your own family? How is it the same?

This respect for parents carries into the spirit world as well. Tell the children that they will make gifts for their ancestors – things that didn’t exist in their ancestors’ time – and that we will send them to heaven as respectful Confucians do.

The following activity should be done outside in an appropriate area.

Give the children paper and crayons and have them draw small gifts. To minimize the size of the drawings, give the children small pieces of paper no bigger than 2 inches by 4 inches. Have the children cut out the drawings.

While outside and carefully supervised, burn the small papers in a candle flame. Have the children place the paper offerings in the flame using kitchen tongs. *Do not allow them to hold the tongs in the flame.*

Have the children say to whom they are sending their gift.
6. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

Bring the children back together into a large circle. Talk about what they learned.

*Who was the great teacher of Confucianism? What did he say about family? What is a child’s responsibility to a parent according to K’ung’s teachings? Can you tell me one of his great sayings? What country did he live in?*

*Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and his religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”*

*Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.*

Have one of the children extinguish the Chalice.

*Additional Activities:*

If you have access to a computer in the classroom, allow the children to access the following site posted by the Taiwan Confucian Temple. An animated game/tour of the temple can be found under the “Kids” section.

http://confucius.cca.gov.tw/english/index_en01.htm
Lesson #9
Taoism: Meet Mei

Supplies:
Copy Resource #17 onto card stock
Scissors
Hot plate
Tea kettle
Tea cups
Tea: green or oolong; Pu-erh, jasmine, black teas
Copy Resource #18
Colored pencils

Preparation:

Read over Resource #19 and become familiar with the T’ai Chi exercises. The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle, and display and discuss the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

Teacher Background Information:

Tao means "way." It’s pronounced “dow."

The Way, according to Taoists, is the spiritual force that underlies the universe and is found in all things. Even though it is a part of all things, it is greater than all things. It is the ultimate reality.

Taoism is based on The Tao-te-Ching, believed to have been written around 600 BCE by the philosopher Lao Tse. The true beginning of the Taoist religion is placed in the first century with the adoption of Lao Tse’s philosophy by the teacher Zhang Dao Ling. About 200 million people worldwide -- the vast majority residing in China -- consider themselves Taoists.

In Taoism, practice is considered more important than creed. Although different sects do have established doctrines, none is universal. Meditation is an important practice for many believers.25

Taoists believe there is a natural order, or the force, that flows through all living things. The Tao is an inspirational way to live. However, Taoism in China is combined with folk traditions, which include a variety of minor deities. In the
beginning Taoists believed there were no gods or goddesses -- only the Tao. But over time people began worshiping Lao Tze and other important Taoist teachers. They also began worshiping forces of nature such as the sun, moon, stars and tides.

Taoists seek equilibrium above all else, and many traditional practices, such as acupuncture or other forms of “Chinese medicine,” are founded on this principal.\(^{26}\)

The Yin-Yang symbol, a circle divided into equal areas of light and darkness, which symbolizes equilibrium and the harmony of opposites, is the most well-known of Taoist images.\(^{27}\) It represents the harmonious interaction of the two opposing forces in the Universe, the male, or yin, and female, or yang.

It is not uncommon for Taoism to be combined with Confucianism and Buddhism.

Taoists believe that good actions will mean a better life for their soul, so Taoists follow rules and guidelines for living. They are not allowed to tell lies, steal, commit adultery, commit murder or drink alcohol. They also have a list of good deeds to further guide the way they live. They are encouraged to obey their elders, love their parents, be tolerant, help others, stay in excellent physical and mental shape, practice self-control of the mind and body, and act selflessly.

T’ai Chi is a set of very controlled, slow-moving exercises that discipline the body and the mind. It’s both a form of physical exercise and a kind of meditation. Millions of people today, especially the Chinese, practice T’ai Chi.\(^{28}\)

1. **Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)**

Give the children a copy of Resource #17. Invite them to cut out the yin-yang symbol and its parts and then to put it back together. Talk about opposites and how well the parts fit together.

2. **Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)**

Teacher Paraphrase: “As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. And each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion.”

A: Younger children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

3. Check in and sharing (5-8)
Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”

*If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.*

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

“Our Classroom Star this week is Mei.”

Let’s Meet Mei – All ages

The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s Class Star into the circle. Addressing the cut-out child, the teacher will display Mei’s “Star” poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

Star Poster:

*My name. What does it mean? How old am I?*
Mei. Mei means “beautiful flower.” I am 6 years old.

*Where do I live and where is my family from?*
I live in *insert your town here* but my parents are from China.
What is my religion?
My family is Buddhist and Taoist. It is not unusual for Chinese families to combine these religions.

Where and when do I worship?
Our family uses an altar in our home for worship.

What are my family customs?
My mother likes to observe a tea ceremony.

What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?
We observe all the main Chinese holidays but I like the birthday of Kwan Yin. On this day we wash the statutes of Kwan Lin in the temple.

5. Activity centers (20-30 minutes)

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

The Blue Center – The Story of Kwan Yin

Kuan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy and compassion, is the most popular and most venerated Buddhist figure, besides Amitabha Buddha and Sakyamuni Buddha. A popular Chinese saying illustrates this aspect: "Everyone knows how to chant Amitabha Buddha, and every household worships Kuan Yin."

Many say that Kwan Yin, as the goddess of compassion, evokes the softer side of human nature -- the innate softness and unconditional love that counterbalances the drive for competition and dominance.29

This bodhisattva is popular in many Chinese families because Kuan Yin is represented as a female with an appearance that embraces the qualities of compassion and motherly love. In addition, because many Buddhist scriptures state that one can invoke Kuan Yin's assistance by simply calling out her name, people feel that this bodhisattva is very approachable.30

Help the children color the detailed picture of Kwan Yin on Resource #18 with colored pencils.
The Red Center - Try A Little T’ai Chi

Talk to the children about T’ai Chi: In Chinese philosophy and medicine there is a concept of “chi,” a vital force that animates the body. T’ai Chi can be thought of as a moving form of yoga and meditation combined. There are a number of forms, which consist of a sequence of movements. While many of these movements are originally derived from the martial arts, the way they are performed in T’ai Chi is slowly, softly and gracefully with smooth and even transitions between each movement.

For many practitioners the focus in doing these movements is not martial, but is a meditative exercise for the body.

The aim of T’ai Chi is to foster a calm and tranquil mind by focusing on the precise execution of these exercises. Learning to do them correctly teaches balance, alignment, fine-motor control and rhythm. The meditative nature of the exercises is calming and relaxing.  

Try a little T’ai Chi. See Resource #19.

The Yellow Center – Make Tea!

Tea has an important role in Chinese family life. Talk to the kids about tea in Chinese culture while you help them make tea and then serve it to each other.

The tea that is commonly served with dim sum in the restaurant is green or oolong tea, but Pu-erh, jasmine and black teas are the other favorites in Cantonese and Shanghai cuisines.

In Taoism, the teacher Lu Yu believed that the process of making and drinking tea reflected a beauty that only could be found in nature. Because the elements would blend when they were boiled, it’s through observing this change that natural beauty can be appreciated.

Lu Yu and other tea specialists often considered tea to be the cleanest and most beautiful thing in nature. Taoists integrate themselves with nature while drinking it. Taoists also think of themselves as immortal, so they are very health-conscious. They believe that tea preserves good health and its healing power deters all desires and worries.

6. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

Bring the children back to the circle. Conclude the lesson with a discussion of what they have learned about Taoism.
Who can remember the name of the man who was the great teacher of Taoism? What is the name of the goddess of compassion? What is the important symbol of Taoism? What does it mean?

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and her religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Extinguish the Chalice.
Lesson #10
Wicca -- Meet Rowan

Supplies:

Thin sticks gathered from outdoors
Jute or other string
Resource #20 -- one copy for each child
Markers or crayons
Apple
Sharp knife
Cutting board
Potato peeler, several (or peel the apples before class and have them soaking in lemon juice)
Pointed-tip butter knives
Washable tempura paints
Styrofoam cups
Spoons
Grapes (five or six per child)
Shallow-sided boxes (box lids work well – copy paper boxes are great!)
Two drums (or something to turn into a drum!)

Books, etc:
None

Preparation:

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle, and display and discuss the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

Teacher Background Information:

Religious scholars generally consider Wicca as a sub-category of neo-paganism. Wicca has no association with devil worship or Satanism. While pagan means “inhabitants of the country” and generally refers to pre-Christian, European religions, neo-paganism refers to a new religious movement, which focuses on the sacredness of nature and rejects technology, modernization and patriarchal traditions.
The sacredness of nature is typically personified as the Goddess (sometimes given the name Gaia, the Greek goddess of Earth). There are, however, many gods and goddesses. The rhythms of nature – the phases of the moon, the life cycle of individuals, the changing of seasons -- are all considered sacred.

Wicca spirituality focuses on the earth and its seasons and the forces and rhythms of nature and human beings. Wicca festivals include the solar and lunar cycles. Wiccans see divinity in all living things and see divinity as being both male and female. All of life is perceived as sacred and interconnected. Nature is an important spiritual teacher to Wiccans. Spiritual insight is achieved through living in harmony with the earth.

Wiccans do not follow a particular sacred text or set of rules that govern behavior. There is no special leader or prophet. It’s mainly based on experience achieved through ritual. The goal of these experiences is to understand the sacred mystery that gives life true meaning. Wiccans believe all are capable of achieving this goal.

Wicca may be traced to Gerald Gardner (1884-1964). A self-taught British anthropologist, he helped start the movement in 1954 by publishing *Witchcraft Today*.

In Old English, the word Wicca means “to cast a spell.” While Wicca does not embrace many of the traditional ideas associated with sorcerers and witches, it does include practices that are described as “magick.” Founded upon the belief that energy permeates nature, magick includes techniques that are believed to cause nature to conform to the practitioner’s will.

Often female Wicca practitioners are referred to as witches. Practitioners are part of a group called a coven.

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)


   B. Older children: Make a pentacle (pentagram) using thin sticks gathered from outdoors or Popsicle sticks.

A pentagram, or pentacle, is a five-pointed star. Pentagrams were used symbolically in ancient Greece and Babylonia. The Pentagram has magical associations, and many people who practice pagan faiths wear them. One of the most common symbols of Wicca and witchcraft is the pentacle -- the five-pointed star surrounded by a circle. This symbol appears on the cover of many books on Wicca and witchcraft. It’s also a common symbol worn as a pendant or an insignia in a ring. Just as Christians wear a cross and Jews wear...
the Star of David, many witches wear a pentacle. The star, by itself, is called a pentagram. When it is enclosed in a circle, it’s a pentacle.

The pentacle is a symbol with spiritual meaning that witches find beautiful and comforting. According to the teachings of many traditions in witchcraft, the universe is made up of five elements: fire, air, water, earth and spirit. All things are somehow related to one or more of these elements. Take the human body for example: our lungs represent the element of air, our blood stream symbolizes water. Our flesh and bones are linked to the earth, while the mind is related to fire. The soul is related to the element of spirit. Mother Earth has a similar link to the elements. The atmosphere is air, while the oceans, lakes and rivers are water. The soil and rocks are the earth, while the molten core of the planet is the source of her fire. Spirit is related to the Goddess herself -- the consciousness of Mother Earth.

To make a pentacle:

Gather thin sticks from outdoors. Gather enough so that each child will have six sticks of equal length. Assemble the sticks as shown in the image on this page, holding them in place with jute or string. (Better practice this one at home first.) Alternative pentacle crafts can be found at www.pages.ivillage.com/paganparent/pentacles.html

2. Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

A: Younger children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”
3. Check in and sharing (5-8)

Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”

If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

“Our Classroom Star this week is Rowan.”

Let’s Meet Rowan – All ages

The teacher should ask one student to bring today’s class “star” into the circle. Addressing the cut out child, the teacher will then display Rowan “Star” poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

Star Poster:

My name. What does it mean? How old am I?
Rowan. I am 7 years old.

Where do I live and where is my family from?
I live in insert your town here and my family has lived here all our lives.

What is my religion?
My family is Wiccan.

Where and when do I worship?
My family is a member of the insert the name of a local neo-pagan group here. A group of Wiccans who meet together is often called a coven.

What are my family customs?
My family celebrates the changes of the seasons.
What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?
I particularly like Mabon, the Fall equinox festival. At Mabon time we celebrate the Fall equinox and the bounty of the harvest. I love apples, which get harvested in the fall. In our traditional, the apple is a symbol of wisdom.

5. Activity centers (20-30 minutes)

The Blue Center – Read the children the story of the apple in Resource 21.

Cut open an apple and allow the children to see the star at the end of the story.

The Red Center -- Try some drumming

Drumming has become very popular in some Wicca covens. Encourage the kids to try drumming by having two children work together. Have the first child start with a simple drumbeat and then encourage the second one to echo it.

The Yellow Center

Younger children: Paint with harvest grapes!

Have the children make grape prints.

1. Pour several colors of washable tempura paint into individual cups.
2. Give each child five or six grapes (one for each color of paint you have assembled).
3. Have the children drop a grape into the paint and then remove it with a spoon.
4. Drop one painted grape at a time onto a piece of large white paper that is inside of a shallow-sided box.
5. The child will then roll the grape around on the paper to make a design.
6. Remove the grape and repeat the process with a different color.36

Older children: Make an Apple Head Doll

To make an apple-head doll, you need one apple for each child.
Peel the apple. Dip the apple in lemon juice if you want a Caucasian doll, don’t dip it in lemon juice if you want an African-American doll.

Carve out a large area, sculpt a nose and cut out a large mouth. These will shrink as they dry.

Invite the children to take the apple heads home and let them dry for several weeks in a warm place. On top of the fridge is perfect.
6. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

Bring the children back to the circle. Conclude the lesson with a discussion of what they have learned about Wicca.

*Who can remember who, or what, the Wiccans celebrate? What is the name of one of the festivals? What is the important symbol of Wicca? What does it represent?*

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and her religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Extinguish the Chalice.
Lesson #11
Native American Earth-centered Religion: Meet Tiva

Supplies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource #22</th>
<th>Scraps of fabric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tube sock for each child</td>
<td>Scissors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber fill</td>
<td>Glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (one cup per sock)</td>
<td>Fiber fill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy card stock</td>
<td>Felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiggly eyes</td>
<td>Pipe cleaners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feathers</td>
<td>Notions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Books, etc:

“Arrow to the Sun,” Gerald McDermott Puffin; Reprint edition (February 1977)

Preparation:

Read and become familiar with the story on Resource #21. The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle as well as displaying and discussing the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

Teacher Background Information:

The name Hopi means “peaceful people” and the Hopis long have been revered by other American Indians for their role in Native American spirituality. The Hopis are the chief religious proponents of traditional American Indian religion today.  

A Pueblo Indian people, Hopis originally lived in villages of multi-tiered stone or adobe dwellings perched on rocky plateaus, or mesas, where they farmed and herded sheep. Then as today, their religion revolved around the Kachinas.

Kachinas are spirits who move among the Hopi from December or February and return in July to their spiritual homes on the Waynemai and Kisaiu mountain peaks. All Hopi men belong to a particular Kachina cult, each with its own kiva, or worship area. The Kachina spirits are represented by dolls or impersonated by dancers during prayer and ceremonies.
Katsinam are Hopi spirit messengers who send prayers for rain, bountiful harvests and a prosperous, healthy life for humankind. They are friends and visitors who bring gifts and food, as well as messages to teach appropriate behavior and the consequences of unacceptable behavior. Katsinam, numbering more than 250 types, represent various beings, from animals to clouds.

During their stay with the Hopi, the katsinam appear among Hopi people in physical form, singing and dancing in ceremonies.

Hopi ceremonies include the snake dance, a rain ritual involving live snakes, considered the guardians of water to the Hopi people. During the snake dance, performers dance with snakes in their mouths to encourage the rains. According to their traditional mythology, Hopi clans are said to have ascended from the underworld, each clan acquiring its name from something that occurred during the journey.

Each clan also brought with it a sacred object and knowledge of ceremonies with the power to bring rain. Hopis see themselves charged with maintaining the balance between the upper and lower worlds. Through an elaborate cycle of festivals and rituals, the Hopi keep both of these worlds in harmony, and ensure the continuity of life on Earth.

A deeply religious people, the Hopi follow divine instructions and prophecies received from the caretaker of the world known as Maasaw. Hopi religion teaches that a good life is one of humility, cooperation, and respect and earth stewardship. Many Hopi ceremonies improve harmony with nature, enhance prospects for good health and a long, happy life, and are supplications for rain.

Dance, an integral part of a Hopi ceremony, celebrates the renewal of life patterns, ancient migrations, and a spiritual connection with ancestral sites.

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

Read “Arrow to the Sun.”

2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Teacher Paraphrase: “As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. And each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion.”
A: Younger children:
“We light this chalice In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:
“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

3. Check in and sharing (5-8)
Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”

*If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.*

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

“Our Classroom Star this week is Tiva.”

Let’s Meet Tiva – All ages

The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s Class Star into the circle. Addressing the cut-out child, the teacher will then display Tiva’s Star poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

**Star Poster:**

**My name. What does it mean? How old am I?**
My name is Tiva. This means “dance” in the Hopi language. Dance is very important in our religious culture.
Where do I live and where is my family from?
I was born in Arizona here in the United States. My ancestors have lived in Arizona for thousands of years. We recently moved to insert your town name here.

What is my religion?
We observe the traditional spirituality of our Hopi ancestors.

Where and when do I worship?
We have worship services at our family kiva.

What are my family customs?
I have Kuchina dolls that were given to me by my father. I use the Kachina dolls to learn the teachings from our elders about the invisible spirits that help us in our lives.

What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?
We go back to Arizona in late August to visit my grandparents. When we are there we hope to see the snake dance, which is danced during the annual two-week ritual that connects us to our ancestors.

5. Activity centers (20-30 minutes)

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

The Blue Center – Traditional Oral Story Telling

Put a blanket on the floor. Have the children join you on the blanket.

Read the story on Resource #21. Tell the story to the children in your own words, being as animated as you can. Try NOT to read it from the printed version. Tell the children that this is how traditional spiritual myths were passed along in the Native American traditions. Talk about the story after you tell it.

Why did the Spider clan arrive last? Did the Bear group or the Spider group have more influence on the tribe after they arrived? Why? What did you like about this story? What did you not like?

The Red Center - Green Corn Dance

This is a traditional dance done in late August to pray for rain. You will instruct the children on how to do the dance and give them “imaginary props” to do the dance with.
Take the group outside.

Pick one child to be the drummer and give him or her the drum. Have the child drum a simple rhythm for the group.

Pick one child to be the leader. Describe the imaginary object you will give to the child: “The leader of this dance carries a large pole with yellow feathers, representing the sun's color.” Ask the other children if they can “see” it.

Describe the imaginary object you are giving to the other dancers: “The dancers carry pine boughs to represent growing things and life. The male dancers wear headdresses of blue to represent the sky; tufts of eagle down hang from the headdresses, symbolizing clouds.” Ask the children if they can “see” their props.

Tell the dancers to “lift their feet high and then bring them down with a hard stamp. This is how the Hopi pound power from the earth and then send this power into action to bring rain.”

Have the children do this in a circle a few times.

**The Yellow Center – Make a Kachina doll**

Help the children make a kachina doll using Resource #22.

6. **Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)**

Bring the children back into the circle. Review the lesson.

*What tribe is Tiva a member of? Describe some of her family’s special religious customs? What is a Kachina? What does it do for Tiva?*

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and her religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Extinguish the Chalice.
Lesson #12
Sikhism: *Meet Devasheesh*

**Supplies:**

Colored sidewalk chalk  
Resource #24  
Resource #25  
Self-hardening clay in colors  
Sequins  
Glue  
Tea lights  

**Books, etc:**

*Divali*, by Dilip Ladpwala, Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers, Austin, Texas, 1998  
*Sikhism*, by Kanwalhit Kaur-Singh, Thompson Learning, New York, 1995  

**Preparation:**

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle, and display and discuss the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will then bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.

One teacher may draw the rangoli pattern on the sidewalk (use the web resources listed below for pattern ideas) while the others begin the lesson and present the Star poster.

**Teacher Background Information:**

The Sikh religion began about 500 years ago in the Punjab region of India. Today there are about 12 million Sikhs living in the Punjab region. It was started by a man called Guru Nanak.

The title “guru” means teacher. Guru Nanak was born at a time in India when Muslims and Hindus were living in the same region but did not get along well. Guru Nanak began preaching to others that there should be tolerance of other
He taught people that the outward differences in people’s religions were not important in God’s eyes.

After Guru Nanak’s death, the leadership of the Sikhs was passed down to nine more gurus. The tenth guru decided it was important for the Sikhs to be able to defend their faith and he formed a brotherhood called the Khalsa of devoted Sikhs who are willing to defend the faith even at the expense of their lives. Men and women may join.

There are five symbolic aspects of the dress of members of the Khalsa: uncut hair, which symbolizes the belief in not disturbing nature anymore than necessary; a wooden comb for neatness; white shorts to wear under clothes for purity and modesty; a steel bangle for strength and eternity; and a short sword as a reminder to defend the truth and what is right.

After the death of the tenth guru, it was decided that the Sikh Holy Book itself would serve as the guru, or teacher. It is called the Guru Granth Sahib. The hymns and writings in it serve as the teacher of the Sikhs.

Sikhs believe in one God. They believe they should remember God in everything they do. This is called simran. Sikhs believe everyone is equal in God’s eyes. For this reason Sikh men are given the surname Singh, which means lion, and the women are given the surname Kaur, which means princess. Sikhs believe that to worship is to live an honest life and care for others. Sikhs believe they should hold jobs that help others and society. This service to others is called sewa. In addition Sikhs believe in giving a tenth of what they earn to others. The work Sikhs do to help others is organized through the temples where they belong. They do not believe in drinking alcohol or smoking.

Sikhs worship in a temple, or gurudwara. This word means "gateway of the guru." When entering a temple, Sikhs take off their shoes and cover their heads. They bow in front of the Holy Book or Guru Granth Sahib. Hymns and prayers are performed and then the worshipers share karah Prasad, which is a food offering made of sugar, butter and flour.

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

Allow the children to walk around and look at the centers you have set up. Encourage them to look at the books on Sikhism.

2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Teacher Paraphrase: “As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship
differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. And each Sunday we will look more closely at each religion.”

A: Younger children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:

“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”

3. Check in and sharing (5-8 minutes)
Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”

If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

“Our Classroom Star this week is Devasheesh.”
Let's Meet Devasheesh.

The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s Class Star into the circle. Addressing the cut-out child, the teacher will then display the child’s Star poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

**Star Poster:**

**My name. What does it mean? How old am I?**
My name is Devasheesh. It means “blessing of God.” I am 7 years old.

**Where do I live and where is my family from?**
I live in insert the name of your town here but my family is from India.

**What is my religion?**
I am Sikh.

**Where and when do I worship?**
We go to the Gurdwara.

**What are my family customs?**
We do not cut our hair! My father wears a turban and I wear a small turban called a patkas. Uncut hair symbolizes the belief in not disturbing nature anymore than necessary.

My family is also very large and we all live together. My grandparents live with us and a few of my uncles.

**What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?**
Diwali is my favorite holiday. Diwali is the festival of lights that celebrates the time when the sixth guru was released from prison. There are many beautiful lights at night during this time.

5. **Activity centers (20-30 minutes)**

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

**The Blue Center -- Make Diwali Lamps**

Read about Diwali and then make diwali lamps using Resource #24.
The Yellow Center – Make Rangoli Patterns

Hindu and Sikh families often use colorful Rangoli patterns to decorate their homes during Diwali. Placed by the entrance to the house they welcome guests to the home.

Some Rangoli patterns are geometric in design, whereas others may show a picture. Traditionally Rangoli patterns are made using colored sand or rice paper. As an alternative the children will use chalk to color the designs.

Move this group of children to the sidewalk entrance to the church where one volunteer has drawn the Rangoli pattern on the sidewalk. Give the children the sidewalk chalk and show them how to color in the designs.

See Resource #25. You may also wish to look at these sites for free rangoli pattern ideas:
http://www.snaithprimary.eril.net/rang.htm

6. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

Review the session. What did you learn about Davasheesh? What is his favorite holiday? What do you like about Diwali? Does it remind you of any other holidays?

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our classroom star today and his religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?"

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Extinguish the Chalice.
Lesson #13
Judaism – Meet Ben

Supplies:

Felt squares
Pencils
Glue
Large dinner plate or circle for pattern
Sharp fabric scissors
Bobby pins
Notions for decorations
8 apples
2/3 cup almonds
3 tablespoons sugar, or to taste
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Grated rind of 1 lemon
Measuring cup
Measuring spoons
Vegetable peeler
Knife
Wooden chopping board
Old-fashioned chopper or food processor

Books, etc:

Let’s Get Ready for Passover, by Lloyd Douglas, New York, Children’s Press

Miriam’s Cup: a Passover Story, by Fran Manushkin, illustrated by Bob Dacey. New York: Scholastic, 1998

Bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah: how Jewish boys & girls come of age, by Bert Metter, illustrated by Marvin Friedman, New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1984


Preparation:

The lesson will require one lead teacher and two helpers. All three will need to read the Background Materials to introduce key concepts of the religion while supervising the children’s activities in each center.

The lead teacher will introduce the lesson in the circle, and display and discuss the Classroom Star poster. As the children move to their centers, each of the three teachers will move to staff one center. The lead teacher will then bring the group back together for the lesson review and closing.
Teacher Background Information:

Judaism began about 4,000 years ago with the Hebrew people in the Middle East. Abraham, a Hebrew man, is considered the father of the Jewish faith because he promoted the faith’s central idea: that there is one God. At the time many people in the Middle East worshipped many gods. It is said that Abraham and his wife Sarah, who were old and childless, were told by God that their children would be as plentiful as the stars in the sky and that they would live in a land of their own -- the Promised Land. This gradually came true.

Abraham’s son, Isaac, had a son, Jacob, also called Israel. In this way the descendants of Abraham came to be known as the Israelites. God promised the Israelites that he would care for them as long as they obeyed God’s laws. While still traveling, the Hebrews lived in Egypt where they were enslaved. Moses, a Hebrew, was chosen by God to lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt. Moses led the Hebrew people out of the Sinai Desert toward the Promised Land. At Mt. Sinai, God gave Moses the Law, which would guide the Israelites to today. The laws were called the Ten Commandments and form the basis of the Torah, the book of Jewish law.

It took many years for the Israelites to finally get to what they thought was the Promised Land -- Canaan. After some fighting the Jews established the Israelite kingdom. After many years, Canaan was conquered by the Assyrians, the Babylonians and then eventually the Romans. The Israelites once again found themselves enslaved, first by Babylonians, and then by the Romans, who destroyed much of Jerusalem. Most of the Jews were scattered all over the region and eventually moved from place to place to avoid persecution, which continues to this day. The dispersion of the Jews is called the Diaspora.

Jewish people believe in the Torah, which was the whole of the laws given to the Israelites at Sinai. They believe they must follow God’s laws, which govern daily life. Later, legal books, written by rabbis, determined the law as it applied to life in each new place and time.

The Ten Commandments, as written in the Torah, are:

• Worship no other God but me.
• Do not make images to worship.
• Do not misuse the name of God.
• Observe the Sabbath Day (Saturday). Keep it Holy.
• Honor and respect your father and mother.
• Do not murder.
• Do not commit adultery.
• Do not steal.
• Do not accuse anyone falsely. Do not tell lies about other people.
• Do not envy other’s possessions.
The Tenakh is the ancient collection of writings that are sacred to the Jews. They were written during a thousand year-span, from 1000 to 100 BCE. The word Tenakh comes from the three first letters of the three books included in this text: the Torah, the Nev'im (prophets) and the Ki'tuvim (writings, which include histories, prophecies, poems, hymns and sayings).

The Torah is written on scrolls and kept in a special cabinet called the aron hakodish, the holy ark, in synagogues. The Torah is read with a pointer called a yad (hand) to keep it from being spoiled. Each week, one section is read until the entire Torah is completed and the reading begins again.

The Talmud is an important collection of Jewish writings. Written about 2,000 years ago, it’s a recording of the rabbis’ discussion of the way to follow the Torah at that time. Later texts, the Mishnah Torah and the Shulhan Aruch, are recordings of rabbinic discussions from later periods.

1. Entering Activity (5-10 minutes)

Allow the children to move around the room and look at the various centers. Invite the children to look at the books on bar and bat mitzvah. Discuss this coming-of-age event and how it’s similar to the UU coming-of-age program.

2. Opening and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)

Teacher Paraphrase: “As Unitarian Universalists we know that we can learn a lot from the many religions in our world. This Sunday we will start learning about these many religions by meeting some children whose families worship differently from us, and who observe different holidays and celebrations. Each Sunday after this we will look more closely at each religion."

A: Younger children:
“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To learn how we are different
To learn how we are the same
To learn how to grow together.”

B: Older children:
“We light this chalice
In friendship:
To celebrate our differences
To celebrate our similarities
To rejoice, to learn and to respect one another.”
3. Check in and sharing (5-8 minutes)
Paraphrase in your own words and for the age group you are teaching:

“This is our check-in and sharing time. Every week we will sit together and take a few moments to find out if something important happened to members of our group in the week we have been apart.”

Allow the children to share, but be mindful of the time. You can move the conversation along with gentle reminders such as “Thank you, Susie. This is very interesting! But now let’s move on to Tom so there is time for all of us to share.”

*If sharing time becomes a consistent problem, purchase a 30-second sand timer and pass the timer from child to child.*

4. Circle Story (5-8 minutes)

“Our Classroom Star this week is Ben.”

Let’s Meet Ben – All ages

The teacher may ask one student to bring today’s Class Star into the circle. Addressing the cut-out child, the teacher will display Ben’s Star poster and will introduce the child to the group and begin the discussion of the child’s religion.

Star Poster:
**My name. What does it mean? How old am I?**
Ben. I am 12 years old.

**Where do I live and where is my family from?**
My family lives here in *insert the name of your town here*.* We have relatives that recently moved to Israel.

**What is my religion?**
We are Jewish.

**Where and when do I worship?**
I go to *insert the name of the local Jewish Temple.*

**What are my family customs?**
We are conservative, so the men in my family all wear yarmulkes.

**What are my favorite holidays and celebrations?**
I love Passover because I like the food that’s served!
5. Activity centers (20-30 minutes)

Teachers: After presenting the Star poster, explain the different centers. Divide the children into three equal groups and invite them to try more than one center if time allows.

The Blue Center – Read a Story


“Miriam’s Cup: a Passover story,” by Fran Manushkin, illustrated by Bob Dacey, New York: Scholastic, 1998

The Red Center – Make Haroset

Haroset is a traditional Passover dish consisting of a mixture of chopped fruits -- usually apples -- nuts, raisins, spices and wine. The mixture represents the mortar Hebrew slaves used to make bricks for the Pharaoh Ramses II.

Use the recipe found in Resource #27.

The Yellow Center – Make Yarmulkes

Explain to the children that in Ben’s family the men all wear yarmulkes and that we will make a simple one today.

Teacher paraphrase: “The Talmud (a holy book to the Jewish people) tells two stories about the custom of covering one’s head. In one place it says, "Rav Huna the son of Rabbi Joshua never walked four cubits with his head uncovered. He said 'because the Divine Presence is always over my head.'" (Talmud, Kiddushin 32a)

In another place, the mother of Rav Nachman bar Isaac was told by a stargazer that her son was destined to be a thief. She therefore told him to cover his head so that the fear of heaven would never leave him, and prayed that he should never come to this temptation but never told him why. One day, Rav Nachman was sitting under a palm tree learning Torah, when his scarf that covered his head fell off. Immediately the temptation to steal seized him and he took a cluster of dates from a tree that wasn't his. (Talmud, Shabbat 156b) Due to these stories, the custom of head covering exists today in the conservative Jewish community.”

Use Resource #26.
6. Closing Circle (5-10 minutes)

Bring the children back into the circle. Ask them questions to wrap up the lesson.

*What is Ben’s religion? What are his family customs? Did you like the haroset?*

Ask the children to look at the Unitarian Universalist principles found on the poster in the room. Tell the children, “We learned a lot about our Classroom Star today and his religion. Can you see how our Star’s religion has inspired our own Unitarian Universalist principles? Which ones?”

Next refer to the Golden Rule poster and read the statement from the religion of this week’s Classroom Star.

Extinguish the Chalice.
Resource #1
Classroom Star Poster!

- My name
- Where I worship
- My family religious customs:
- My favorite holiday
- Where I live:
- My faith
Resource #2
Making Friends

Jeans – 10
Skirts – 2
Long-sleeve T-shirts – 10
Blouses – 2
Pantyhose – 2
Name tags – 12
Paper lunch bags – 12

Markers
Newspaper
Large, white head scarf – 1
Brown and black yarn for hair
Safety pins
Stapler
Glue, glue sticks, glue guns

For each friend you will need one pair of pants, one long-sleeve T-shirt, a brown lunch bag and a lot of newspaper.

1) Using markers, draw a face on the lunch bag.
2) Next, glue lengths of yarn onto the top of the bag for hair.
3) Crumple up newspaper and stuff into the lunch bag.
4) Crumple up newspaper and stuff into the shirt and pants.
5) Join together the lunch bag, pants and shirt with safety pins.
6) After your friend is made, place a name tag on him/her.
How to Make a Mexican Paper Flower

Materials needed for one flower:
- 4 sheets of tissue paper (any color) 6" x 12" for each child
- 1 pipe cleaner
- scissors
- ruler
- coloring marker
- perfume

1. Stack 4 pieces of tissue paper together.

2. Fold the tissue paper together starting at the bottom, allowing 1" folds. Fan fold back and forth making a 1" by 6" piece.

3. Cut the folded tissue at both ends as shown, rounding off the corners.

4. Fold a pipe cleaner in half. This is used for the flower stem. Squeeze the tissue paper in the middle and twist the pipe cleaner tightly to secure.
5. Fan out the piece on both sides of the pipe cleaner. Remember, there are 4 layers. Begin pulling up the petals. Start with the top tissue, being careful not to tear it. After you have finished the top layer, work the second layer, then the third and the fourth. Straighten out the flower to your liking.

6. You may use a marker to highlight and add more color to your flower.

7. The pipe cleaner may be shaped into a leaf on one side.

8. Spray a light mist of perfume on the flower.
Resource #4  
*Christianity*

Joseph and Mary (please cut apart for craft sticks)

Innkeepers
Mary
Joseph
Innkeeper #1
Innkeeper #2
Innkeeper #3
Innkeeper #4

*Mary and Joseph puppets move to the first Innkeeper.*

Mary and Joseph: Can we stay here?
Innkeeper #1: There is no room.
*Mary and Joseph puppets move to the next Innkeeper.*

Mary and Joseph: Can we stay here?
Innkeeper #2: There is no room.
*Mary and Joseph puppets move to the next Innkeeper.*

Mary and Joseph: Can we stay here?
Innkeeper #3: There is no room.
*Mary and Joseph puppets move to the next Innkeeper.*

Mary and Joseph: Can we stay here?
Innkeeper #4: There is no room. But you may stay in the stable.
Resource #6

Islam
Resource #7

Islam

The symbol of the Islamic faith

Mosque

Reading the Koran

قدام حرام
Resource #8

Islam

Ka’aba
**Resource #10**  
*Hinduism*

Hindu Word Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Comes from the name of a river in India called the Sindu.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vedas</td>
<td>Holy book of Hindu prayer, songs and magic spells.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reincarnation</td>
<td>The cycle of being born and reborn into the world. Practice makes perfect!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharma</td>
<td>A way to behave that’s decided by a person’s place in society. Rules of the road!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moksha</td>
<td>Being freed from being born again. Reaching an enlightenment or holy state. The ultimate goal for Hindus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahman</td>
<td>The word for God in Hinduism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atman</td>
<td>The word for the spirit of God within each of us.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resource #11

Buddhism

Buddha Images

For color version, see www.buddhistmonk.com/images/buddha.gif
Resource #12

Buddhism

Mandalas
The Jewel in the Topknot

Once upon a time there was a great king. He was the greatest of kings and was called the Wheel-Rolling King. It was said that he owned a magical wheel of jewels that would spin while he governed.

The king was a fine ruler, and when he found a country that was run by evil people, he would wage war against it. He continually fought such evil countries until he had crushed them all.

The king was very glad to see that some of his soldiers were very brave in war. He rewarded these soldiers with treasures such as gold, silver, shell, agate, coral and amber. He gave some of them farms, houses, villages and cities. He also gave elephants, horses and vehicles to those who were worthy.

Every time the soldiers were given these gifts from the king, they boasted, saying, “I received golden rings and necklaces from the Wheel-Rolling King.”

Or, “He gave me a fabulous elephant and an ox-cart, praising my brave fight in the war.”

Or, “It was clothes this time for me. But I’ll get much more next time for my valiant fight.”

Or, “But you’ll not outdo me. I’ll be fighting with all my might, too.”
There was one thing that the king kept for himself: the brilliant gem that he kept in his topknot. This gem was the only one of its kind in the world. If he had given it to anyone, his followers would have been shocked.

Finally, one day, the Wheel-Rolling King saw an especially brave soldier and gave him that precious gem.

**Shakymuni’s explanation:**

“I, the Buddha, have kept the Lotus Sutra carefully in my heart and have told no one about it. In this way, I am like the Wheel-Rolling King -- who gave many treasures to his soldiers, but kept the most valuable gem. I, like the king, have fought many battles and defeated many devils. Many of my disciples also fought alongside me. I gave them many treasures of the Law and have brought them closer to enlightenment, but I did not teach them the Lotus Sutra. Why? Because the people were not ready and the time was not right.

“I did not tell my followers about the Lotus Sutra earlier because they would not have understood. In a world that is evil and ignorant, people cannot understand such a profound teaching.

“That’s why it was necessary to wage wars and destroy evil. That way, people can learn more and more about the true state of life. Once their mistaken ideas had been changed, they became more open to understanding the great teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

“One day the Wheel-Rolling King saw an especially brave soldier and gave him that precious gem. I am like that king. The Lotus Sutra is the most excellent teaching. Therefore I am teaching it last -- just as the king finally gave the brilliant gem to the one who was his most worthy follower.”
Resource #14 48

Buddhism

Make a Tet Gift Packet

Instead of presents as in the West, the Vietnamese and Chinese give gifts of money at New Year, weddings and birthdays. The money is usually placed in a red packet or envelope and decorated with an appropriate symbol, greeting or lucky sign, like the one pictured here.

To make your own Chinese gift packet you will need:

- a sheet of red paper
- scissors
- glue

Photocopy Figure A onto a sheet of red paper. Cut out the packet and fold it along the dotted lines, folding in the direction away from the printed Chinese characters (if you want to make your packet particularly nice, you can paint the characters with gold paint). Straighten the packet out again, and turn it over so you are looking at the side without the characters, as in the diagram below.

Now fold over flap A and apply a little glue along its right edge. Fold over flap B and press it firmly onto the glued edge of flap A. Apply a little glue to flap C and press it firmly onto flap B.

You now have your gift packet! Flap D is the flap of the envelope and a little glue can be applied to seal it -- but don't forget to put your gift money inside first!
Figure A.

Photocopy this onto a red sheet of paper. Please be sure to tell the children that the characters on this traditional package are in Chinese, not Vietnamese.
Start by making a square piece of paper. To start making the square, fold one corner of a piece of paper over to the adjacent side.

To finish making the square, cut off the small rectangle, forming a square.

Fold the square piece of paper in half, then in half again (making a square that is divided into quarters). Repeat this step (resulting in a square divided into sixteenths).

Unfold the paper.

Draw lines along the red lines marked at the left. Cut along these lines.

You will now have seven pieces: a small square, two small isosceles triangles, a medium-sized isosceles triangle, two large isosceles triangles, and a parallelogram.
You can arrange these seven pieces into an incredible number of shapes, making animals, people, everyday objects, etc. See how many you can make -- invent new ones!

Enchanted Learning, 1996

http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/chinesenewyear/tangram/
Resource #16
Confucianism

Chinese Characters for Thank You

Thank you:

谢谢  you
Resource #17
Confucianism

Gems of Wisdom from the Great Master K’ung Fu Tzu:

To say you know when you know, and to say you do not when you do not, that is knowledge.
Analects 2.17

Not to mend one’s ways when one has erred is to err indeed.
Analects 15.30

If a man sets his heart on benevolence, he will be free from evil.
Analects 4.4
The man of virtue makes the difficulty to be overcome his first business, and success only a subsequent consideration. From The Confucian Analects

The more man meditates upon good thoughts, the better will be his world and the world at large. Things that are done, it is needless to speak about ... things that are past, it is needless to blame. From The Confucian Analects

To go beyond is as wrong as to fall short. From The Confucian Analects

To know what is right and not do it is the worst cowardice. From The Confucian Analects
To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right. From The Confucian Analects

To see what is right, and not to do it, is want of courage or of principle. From The Confucian Analects
Resource #17
Taoism

Yin-Yang Handout

*Cut out the parts of the yin-yang symbol. Put it back together as a puzzle.*
Resource #18
Taoism
Kwan Yin
Resource #19

Taoism

Try a Little T'ai Chi

Raising the Arms

Opening the Chest

Painting a Rainbow
Separating the Clouds

Rolling the Arms
Rowing a Boat in the Middle of a Lake

Everyday T’ai Chi

http://www.everyday-taichi.com/shibashi-pictures-moves1to6.html
Resource #20 - Wicca

Apple

http://abcteach.com/Activities/applecolor.htm
Once upon a time a little boy named Johnny told his mother he had nothing to do. "How would you like to find a little red house with no windows, no doors, a chimney on top, and a star inside?" asked his mother.

Johnny said he would like that very much. So Johnny and his mother went for a walk. They saw Johnny's friend, Jenny, jumping rope. "Do you know where I can find a little red house with no windows, no doors, a chimney on top, and a star inside?" asked Johnny?

"No." said Jenny. "But maybe Farmer Jones knows that."

Johnny and his mother walked until they came to Farmer Jones. Johnny asked him, "Do you know where I can find a little red house with no windows, no doors, a chimney on top, and a star inside?"

"No." said Farmer Jones. "But I bet my Grandma knows. She has lived a long, long time, and she knows most everything."

They went to see Grandma Jones. She was rocking back and forth in a rocking chair on the front porch. Johnny asked her, "Grandma Jones, do you know where I can find a little red house with no windows, no doors, a chimney on top, and a star in the middle?"

"Go into the orchard and ask Mr. Wind," said Grandma Jones.

So Johnny went into the orchard. Mr. Wind came and blew so hard, that an apple fell down onto Johnny's lap. "This is what we've been looking for!" shouted Johnny.

They cut it open, and inside was a star. Johnny and his mother walked home and showed the apple to Grandma Jones, Farmer Jones and Jenny. Then each of them ate a piece of the apple.

The End
Origin of the Clans

Hopi

Native American Lore

A long time ago, when the Hopi Tribe was emerging from the First World, their people started to hunt for the land of the rising sun. Moving in related groups, they thought it fun to play a name game.

When the first band came upon a dead bear, immediately they thought it a sign for them to become the Bear Clan. Another Hopi band came upon the same skeleton but saw little gopher holes surrounding the carcass. They agreed among themselves to become the Gopher Clan.

In the same way, other Hopis found a nest of spiders and they named themselves the Spider Clan. Far ahead the Bear Clan traveled with Chief Bahana leading. Always, the Bear Clan seemed to move faster in many ways.

Spider Clan trailed all the clans because they had so many children. One day they came upon a friendly spider sitting near her large web. The Spider Clan encircled her as she spoke to their Chief, "I am Spider Woman, possessed of Supernatural Power. Since you are named for my people, I will help you in any way I can."

"Thank you, Spider Woman," replied the Chief. "We are traveling to find the land of the rising sun. Other clans of our Hopi Tribe are much farther ahead of us. We wish we could travel faster, but we have much to pack on our backs as we have so many children."

"Perhaps I can make something to ease your travel," said Spider Woman.

"What do you have in mind?" asked the Chief.

"First, I need something of yourself," said Spider Woman. "You must go into my secret room where you will find a large water jug. You must wash yourself all over and save the dust and skin that rolls off and fetch it to me."

Because of many travel days, the Chief was so hot and dusty that he made a sizeable ball of dirt, which he gave to Spider Woman. With this she began her
magic creation. She spread a white, fleecy cloth in front of her, placing the ball in the center. Then she rolled it up carefully into a white ball.

Spider Woman sang her ceremonial creation song four times, while the Spider Clan sat in a circle and waited expectantly. Now and then, she touched the fleecy ball with her magic web and looked to see if any signs of life were evident within the ball. Again, Spider Woman sang another magic song four times and behold! The fleecy, white ball moved back and forth and rolled about. To everyone’s surprise, through the fleecy cover emerged a tiny gray animal stretching forth four tiny legs.

Spider Woman called it a burro. At the sight of it, the Spider Clan knew that it needed to grow much stronger before it could be of any help to them. Spider Woman kept the young animal warm and gave it some of her magic food. She spent much time massaging its tiny legs with her magic salve to make them grow faster.

After only four days, the burro was ready to travel with the Spider Clan. They packed the sides of the burrow with their excess supplies and started on their way to the land of the rising sun.

Later, Spider Woman decided to create a man who should know more about caring for the burro than the Hopis. This she did and sent the man to catch up with the Spider Clan, to teach them how better to care for the burro.

But that man was selfish. Instead of helping the people, he ran away one dark night, taking the burro with him. Though saddened by the loss of their helpful burro, the Spider Clan continued their trek to the land of the rising sun, shouldering their heavy packs as before.

Of course, the Bear Clan arrived at their destination first. They set about establishing their village. Gradually the other Hopi Clans joined them, making their villages nearby. There the Hopi Tribe grew and prospered.

But the Spider Clan, which arrived last in the land of the rising sun, became the largest and most prosperous of all the Hopi Clans, because they had so many children during the following years.
Resource #23

Earth-centered Religion

Making Kachina Dolls

Materials:
One tube sock per child
Rice (one cup per sock)
Heavy cardboard
Pipe cleaner
Wiggly eyes
Felt scraps
Fiberfill stuffing
Fabric scraps
Feathers and other notions
Craft glue, or hot glue and gun

1. Cut feet out of the heavy cardboard, one per child.
2. Give each child one tube sock.
3. Have each child pour one cup of rice into the tube sock.
4. Next place a handful or two of fiberfill in the sock, enough to fill it at least halfway.
5. Twist a pipe cleaner above the fiberfill to close it.
6. Glue the feet onto the rice-filled end of the tube sock.
7. Have the children decorate the doll with the notions to make a supernatural spirit that will bring them good luck through the rest of the year!
Resource #24
Sikhism

Make Diwali Lamps

Self-hardening clay in colors
Sequins
Tea lights

1. Start with self hardening clay about the size of an orange.
2. Show the children how to roll long “snakes” of clay.
3. Coil the clay around itself to make the bottom of your holder (figure a.)
4. Then coil on top of itself to shape the sides (figure b.)
5. Use your fingers to smooth the sides of the coil cup (figure c.)
6. Add sequins for decorations.
7. Put a small tea light into the holder.
Rangoli Patterns

Ritual Patterns from Rural India. Rangoli are also created by building up patterns by connecting dots. They can be simple lines of rice powder or paste, or filled in with colors. In Kerala, they are filled with flower petals. They can also be filled with colored powdered herbs. Catherine Cartwright Jones c 2000

The patterns are created by first making the dotted matrix and then connecting the dots as shown. Select one pattern from above to draw on the sidewalk.

Resource #26

Judaism

Make a Simple Yarmulke

Materials:

Felt squares
Pencils
Glue
Large dinner plate or circle for pattern
Sharp fabric scissors
Bobby pins
Notions for decorations

1. Place the felt square on a table top and then place the dinner plate or other large circle on top.
2. With a pencil, draw the circle onto the felt.
3. Cut out the circle.
4. Next cut a slit from the edge of the circle to the center
5. Fold the circle at the slit to overlap about one inch to form a cap.
6. Glue this into place.
7. Decorate with notions as desired.
Resource #27

Judaism

HaroSet

8 apples
2/3 cup almonds
3 tablespoons sugar, or to taste
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Grated rind of 1 lemon

Equipment:
Measuring cup
Measuring spoons
Vegetable peeler
Knife
Wooden chopping bowl
Old-fashioned chopper or food processor

Child: Peel the apples and cut them into quarters, removing the core. Using your chopping bowl and chopper, chop together all the ingredients. The apples and almonds should be about the size of the chunks in chunky peanut butter.

Makes about 3 cups.

Recipe from: The Children's Jewish Holiday Kitchen by Joan Nathan
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