

CliF Notes

A curriculum for families and small groups

September 2005

Week One – September 4th

UU Identity—A family/group chalice

Supplies Needed: terra cotta flower pot and matching saucer, paint (preferably acrylic), paintbrushes, glue, tea light or votive candle. Optional: rubber stamps

Opening Words (Note: usually these sessions will start with a chalice lighting, but today we're going to be making a chalice)

We are Unitarian Universalists (*shape hands fingers up to form two "Us"*)

This is the home of the open mind (*touch fingers to forehead and open out*)

This is the home of the flaming chalice that lights our way to truth. (*cup hands thumbs out and hold up*)

This is the home of the loving heart (*fold hands over heart*)

This is the home of the helping hands (*hold hands out*)

Together we care for our earth

And work for peace in our world. (*join hands amongst the group*)

Or, for older kids:

In the freedom of truth

and the love of justice

We bring all that we are

to shape what we yet can be.

Centering

See the Nurturing the Spirit section of this month's KidTalk

(www.clfuu.org/kidtalk) for a brief introduction to yoga and a link to some easy poses. Try the first pose, sukhasana.

Or, ask everyone to close their eyes. Ring a chime and have each person open their eyes when they can no longer hear the chime ringing.

Making a Family/Group Chalice

See <http://www.uua.org/CLF/uume/0903/crafts2.html> for instructions on how to make a chalice. You may choose to make one chalice for your family or group, with everyone planning together the design and sharing in the painting, or you may prefer for each person to make their own chalice. If the latter, you'll need

space to store the chalices and to display them so that each person can light a chalice at the beginning of each session.

For more about the story of the flaming chalice see http://www.uua.org/clf/re/uidentity/chalice_14-18.html. This version of the story is told with adult vocabulary, so you may need to adapt language to tell it to younger children. You may want to tell the story while the chalice is being decorated.

Discussion

A symbol is a picture or thing which points toward larger ideas. For Unitarian Universalists the chalice can mean many things. What does it mean for you? (You can prime conversation with ideas such as: Some people see the cup of the chalice as representing community, while the flame stands for the individual. Or, “the light of truth, the warmth of love, the energy of action.” Or “it lights our way to greater understanding.”)

Closing

Have each person share aloud something about what they chose to put on the/their chalice. If you have lit the chalice(s), hold hands in a circle and blow them out together.

Week Two – September 11th World Religions—Hinduism

Supplies Needed: paper and crayons or markers, or modeling clay

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

Light chalice. For opening words see week one. Or, now that you have your chalice(s):

In the light of truth and the warmth of love,
We gather to seek and seek to share.

Centering: See week one. You may wish to try a different yoga pose, such as The Mountain.

Hinduism and the many shapes of God

Hinduism is the most ancient of the major religions of the world (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam). The religion of Hinduism originated in Northern India about 4000 years ago. It has no known founder or prophets. Hindus believe in one supreme spirit called Brahman. Brahman takes on many forms that some Hindus worship as gods or goddesses in their own right. Hindus also believe that there is a bit of the divine inside each person, called Atman.

If you have computer access where you are doing RE, you may want to look at <http://www.hindukids.org/index.html> for a lot of good information about what Hindus believe, presented with neat graphics.

If you go to www.clfuu.org/kidtalk (September 2005) in the Celebrate! section, you will find materials about the Hindu holiday Ganesh Chaturthi. If you look at the link with information about Ganesha you'll find a section on the significance of his form and his belongings. This will give you a good idea about how the different aspects of Hindu gods and goddesses are expressions of particular aspects of the divine, Brahman.

After introducing the Hindu notion that gods/goddesses might be shown with multiple arms, animal heads, different colors, etc. as a way of showing ideas of what God might be like, invite kids to draw or model out of clay their own figure of a god or goddess that is designed to say something about what they believe about God (or, if you or they don't care for the concept of God, something about what they believe people should be like at their best.)

Discussion

Nobody knows exactly what God/Brahman is like, since God is not something you can feel or see. Are there other things which are real to you that you can't feel or see? (For example, feelings.) For older children/teens: How do you decide what you believe is true about things that can't be scientifically proven?

Closing

Have each person share what they drew and why. Blow out chalice(s) together.

Week Three—September 18th
Principles in Practice—1st Principle

See above for opening/chalice lighting and centering

Supplies Needed: butcher/roll paper, markers. Or if the weather is good enough, you can use sidewalk chalk outside.

Practicing our First Principle

See the Principles in Practice section of the June 2005 KidTalk at <http://www.uua.org/clf/kidtalk/2005-06/index.html>.

And/or, if you have enough people, play "I Like People Who." Form a circle with one person in the middle. The person in the middle says: "I like people who..." and fills in the blank. For instance, "I like people who have brown hair" or "I like people who listen to disco music." Anyone who fits that description has to get up and change places with another person who also fits the description while the person in the middle tries to take one of their places. The last person standing goes in the middle.

Discussion

How do you decide what kind of person you like? Do you sometimes decide just by looking at a person? Are there things that would make you say, “Oh, I could never be friends with him/her.”

Closing

Have each person share one thing they have in common with someone else in the room and one way they are different from everyone else in the room.

Week Four—September 25th

Worship—Water Ceremony

See the September 2003 *Quest* at <http://www.uua.org/clf/quest/2003-09.html#blanchard2> for a family/small group water ceremony.

You may also want to share joys and concerns during your ceremony by having each person place a stone in a bowl of water as they share something from the past week that has touched their heart.

You may also wish to include an acknowledgment of the people whose lives have been devastated by water during Hurricane Katrina. Water sustains us, but it can also be a power greater than us which disrupts lives. You may wish to have a collection for the Red Cross or to talk during the service about how the family can contribute to relief efforts.