



JOURNEY IN... YEAR TWO

THE DIVINE WITHIN

KINESTHETIC

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- When we recognize that the Divine that is within us is also in every other human being, we feel compassion for ourselves and for others.
- Compassion, the deep understanding and sharing of another being's feelings, can be cultivated and nurtured.
- Acted upon, compassion contributes to our own well-being and the greater good of the entire world.

Lesson Materials

- Cotton tube socks
- Rice
- Measuring cups or scoops
- Safety pins
- Cotton yarn
- Darning needles
- Elastic bands
- Flannel covers

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Jesus said to them, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Rabbi, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." - Matthew 25:35-40

When you begin to touch your heart or let your heart be touched, you begin to discover that it's bottomless, that it doesn't have any resolution, that this heart is huge, vast, and limitless. You begin to discover how much warmth and gentleness is there, as well as how much space. - Pema Chödrön

A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. - A. Einstein

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.

- The Dalai Lama

**YOUR FIELD
EXPERIENCES:
FEEDBACK AND
NOTES**

GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 6 minutes

Today we're going to be talking about spreading compassion to others. Our bodies can be a really useful tool for doing the work of compassion. Touch is a great way to show that you understand and care. Name some ways that you can use touch to show someone that you care and want to understand how you feel. How do your parents use touch to show their caring?

2 minutes shoulder rubs: Sit or stand in a circle and turn so that each person can place their hands on the next person's shoulders. Set a timer for 2 minutes and let everyone give and receive a nice, gentle shoulder rub. No roughness is allowed. This is meant to get us in the right frame of mind to share our compassion.

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE
TONGLEN MEDITATION**

🕒 10-15 minutes

Tonglen: Now we're going to do a meditation practice called tonglen, which is a Tibetan word that means "sending and taking". We're going to use our imagination and our bodies to really feel compassion for other people and for ourselves (yes, we can love and understand ourselves!).

- First, get in a comfy seated position for meditation. Some people sit with their legs crossed, some kneeling with legs underneath them. Hands can be folded or cupped or resting on knees.
- Now, imagine that your heart, beating there in your chest, is a powerful place where all the love in the Universe resides. It's almost like a love factory. We're going to share that love with other people by feeling their sad feelings.
- Breathing is an important part of this exercise. First, we breathe in. Now, on the in breath we're going to think of someone who is sad, who has sorrow and fear and loss all around and inside them like a thick, dark storm cloud or black, heavy smoke. When we breathe in, we'll imagine that we're breathing all that cloudy smoky sadness into our bodies.

- When that heavy sadness gets to our heart, that tender, pulsing spot of love and power, it gets transformed into clean, fresh air or bright white light. It doesn't feel like sadness anymore, but is changed into calm and peace.
- On our out-breath, we imagine that this new, bright, clear peace goes back to the person who used to be sad.

We can do this exercise several times, starting with 1.) someone we know and love, continuing to 2.) a stranger that we imagine, and 3.) someone we know who makes us a little angry or uncomfortable and then 4.) every person in the world, all at once. We should make clear to ourselves that this meditation isn't supposed to fix all the world's sadness, but it's helpful to remind us that inside us is a loving heart that can change how we feel and act in the world. It reminds us that we can sometimes focus more on others than on ourselves in order to find peace and happiness.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO

COMFORT WARMING BAGS

🕒 35 minutes

Discussion Questions (from simplest to most complex):

- What are some kind ways to touch another person? What are some unkind ways to touch another person?
- Who knows what the word "torture" means? (It means to hurt someone a lot on purpose, both by harming their body and by harming their heart and spirit).
- Do you think Unitarian Universalists think it's okay to torture other people?
- If you met someone who had been tortured, how would hearing their story make you feel?
- Compassion is the feeling of sharing someone else's hurt. How would you show compassion to someone who had been hurt a lot, someone who had been tortured?
- Do you think that people who torture others recognize that their victims are human beings? Do you think they see other human beings as holy? How does their perception of other human beings change?
- How do you think a victim of torture feels when another person touches them, even if that touch is gentle or friendly?

The elderly, those recuperating from surgery, or in our church's case, victims of torture, benefit from compassionate touch therapy. A complementary therapy used with massage and rehabilitation is applied heat.

Our Sunday School is going to collaborate on a project using our hands. We're going to make soft, cozy rice packs that warm in the microwave and can be used to relax sore muscles and tense bodies. This is compassion put into action.

Teachers can pass around a rice pack that's been warmed in the microwave. Let the students snuggle it for a moment.



Teacher Talk on the Center for Victims of Torture
-from the CVT website:

Summarize this information in age-appropriate language for your students:

We believe that survivors of torture can recover from the traumas that they have suffered, that they are capable of rebuilding their lives and that they may even go on to thrive.

When torture survivors come to CVT they may be suffering physically, mentally and spiritually. They may have nightmares, depression or a complex set of symptoms known as post-traumatic stress disorder. They may have trouble making meaningful connections with other people. They have fled their home countries and are building new lives for themselves in the United States. This in itself can be traumatic.

The healing services staff at CVT are here to help torture survivors regain control and to help them heal physically, mentally and emotionally. Each survivor works with a team of care providers, including doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, massage therapists and physical therapists. Clients and caregivers must work together to achieve healing, but it is the client who is ultimately in control. Trust and confidentiality are essential to the healing process.

In their homelands, most people singled out for torture were leaders in their communities – whether they were professionals, students, legislators or simply outspoken people, they were advocates for democracy and freedom.

Here, in their new homes, they are our neighbors, our coworkers, the people we see on our daily commutes, the employees and customers in our neighborhood shops. When these new Americans rebuild their lives, their new neighbors and their new communities have much to gain.

MAKING COMFORT WARMING PACKS

Show each group the final project so that they have a sense of our goal. You can even warm it in the kitchen microwave to demonstrate its use. Explain that each week, groups will have a new job that gets us closer to the finished project. Recap what groups did in previous weeks.

- **Weeks 1 & 2:** We'll begin with Grades 1 & 2, whose job is to fill tube socks full of rice. It's best to work in pairs, one child holding the sock open and the other scooping. You may choose to provide big bowls of rice for several teams to share and have them work over trays to contain spillage. Productivity will depend on group size. Instruct children to fill the socks between half full and full—if you hold the sock shut, the ideal amount of rice is as much as you can fit in while still being able to fold the sock in half. Have the Journey Guide assist you in helping the children to roll and pin the socks tightly shut. Keep finished ones in a tub, ready for the next step. Be sure to allow time for clean up with brooms and dustpans.
- **Weeks 3 & 4:** With our Grades 5 & 6 groups, we'll stitch the socks shut, incorporating elastic handles into each end so that it's easy to manage them during use. A couple grown-ups from the CVT team will come to help you. We'll use a backstitch, which is strong like a straight stitch on a sewing machine. First, thread the needle with about 16" of yarn and tie a good-sized knot at the end. We'll start on the right edge of the sock and sew toward the left, the opposite of reading direction. With the end of the sock tucked through the elastic and then laid (or pinned down) straight, we begin by bringing the needle through the two layers of fabric. Insert the needle back down through the fabric about 1/8 inch to the right; bring it back up 1/8 inch to the left of where you started (so each stitch will overlap the last by 1/8 inch). Repeat until you've stitched across the sock. Attach another elastic in a similar fashion at the toe-end of the sock.

- **Weeks 4 & 5:** The High School Tower Club will provide us with cozy, colorful flannel covers for our warmers. The job this week belongs to the Grades 3 & 4 Groups: stuff the filled, sewn socks into their flannel covers. The instructions are straightforward but the task is actually more time-consuming than it sounds. The CVT team will take the covered socks to the St. Paul CVT building.

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, assume a comfortable meditative position or take each other's hands. Speak these words, or words like them, the children repeating each line after you, the teacher.

The Holy is inside us
And the Holy is inside everyone
May we love and understand ourselves
May we love and understand others
May we love and understand the whole Universe
May our hearts be tender
May our minds shine friendliness into the world

and/or

We want others to be happy
Let us practice compassion
We want to be happy ourselves
Let us practice compassion