

# Earth-Centered Traditions

## Lesson 3: Special Session on Worship

2.4.2018

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**Objectives:** Youth pause from regular class to focus on worship, as part of their growing exposure and learning about adult worship service.

**Materials:** Basket of folded slips of paper (with elements of worship), lesson attachments.

**Time allotments** suggested and meant to be adapted for **75 minute class**.

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**\*Note:** *Class meets as usual for the first 35-minutes, then gathers in the OWL room for special session on worship, as part of ongoing support of youth attending monthly worship services.*

### 1. Nametags and Graffiti Wall (5 minutes before class begins)

- Make nametags using blank paper, markers, and holders. Youth can create their own unique but LEGIBLE nametag. Make it a regular practice to wear nametags.
- “Graffiti Wall” questions: Write the following on whiteboard. Invite youth as they arrive to grab a marker and weigh in with their responses:
  - ▶ *What community ritual or ceremony have you experienced as meaningful and important to you? (e.g. graduation, wedding, funeral, holiday parade, etc.)*
  - ▶ *Is there a favorite Unity Church worship service you have attended?*
- Teachers complete attendance sheets.

### 2. Silly Fun: Grab a finger (5 minutes max)

Everyone stands in a circle, arms out to the side. Left hand palm up, and right index finger pointing down and touching neighbor’s outstretched palm.

When teacher says “GO,” each participant does two things: (1) try to grab the finger in their left hand, and (2) prevent their right finger from being grabbed. Repeat several times and see who is good at grabbing without being grabbed.

### 3. Chalice Lighting: Light the chalice, saying these words together: “We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith; the light of truth and the warmth of love.”

**Teacher reads:** (attributed to Transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson)

*“The Gods we worship write their names on our faces; be sure of that. A person will worship something, have no doubt about that... That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and our character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping, we are becoming.”*

- 4. Joys and Sorrows (10 minutes):** Listening is a precious gift that we offer one another at church. Using the balance scale and the blue (sorrows) and yellow (joys) stones, invite youth to share a joy and/or a sorrow from the past week, as a way of *meeting* one another with our lives and *sharing* in community. You will want to set limits (e.g. two stones max per person) so that no one monopolizes sharing time.

Each Sunday, a copy of the congregation's *Embracing Meditation* will be made available to your class. Share this information, putting in stones for those whose names are being spoken in the Sanctuary.

- 5. Elements of Worship: Liturgy (20 minutes)**

**Teacher reads** the quote again attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson (used above with chalice lighting ritual). The word "worship" literally means "worth" + "ship," or giving honor to something in recognition of its worth. Emerson says that a person will surely worship something, and by looking at their "faces"—or character of their lives—you can tell what the person worships and regards as worthy.

**Question for Discussion:**

- *In your opinion*, what are examples of people you know and what you think they worship by looking at the character of their lives? (E.g. Mother Teresa/ Divine within the poor; J.K. Rowling/ power of friendship; Taylor Swift/ success and fame; Trevor Noah/ political integrity)

**Activity: Liturgy Trivia**

The word "liturgy" comes from *leitourgia* (Greek) meaning public action, ritual action, or symbolic action performed by people *as a communal activity*. In the church, liturgy commonly refers to elements of the worship service, including: singing, praying, preaching, and more.

Invite youth to take turns drawing a slip of paper from the basket, each containing a liturgical element from Unity's worship service. What's their best understanding of how that element functions in the worship service? What does it accomplish? What is its purpose? Invite others in the class to share their ideas.

- 6. Gather in OWL Room to Talk about Worship (last 40 minutes of class)**

[Respectively at **9:35am, 11:35am, 5:05pm**] Throughout the year, youth will be attending full worship services in the sanctuary on Story Sundays and Family Sundays as part of their RE work and preparation for Coming of Age. All youth will gather in the OWL Room as part of their growing exposure and learning about adult worship service.

**\*Please be sure to extinguish chalice (below) when leaving room.**

7. **Say goodbye until next time:** Extinguish the chalice, saying together:

*“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”*

8. **Help clean up classroom** before leaving: Please keep regular practice of readying classroom for the next class.

- leave lesson plan and all materials organized
- return blue/yellow stones to containers
- wipe the whiteboard clean
- tables and chairs neatly returned
- nametags collected in Ziploc bag
- leave any comments for RE staff on attendance sheets