

Religions of Star Trek

Lesson 1: Introduction and Overview

Star Date 9.20.2020

Objectives: Introduction to community, discovering what youth already know of Star Trek.

Materials: Teachers should download lesson plan and attachments onto their desktop, **login to Unity's YouTube account.**

Time allotments: suggested for 60 minute online class.

1. Zoom Welcome (as youth arrive into the breakout classroom)

- Teachers and youth are expected to log on to zoom at 11:15am (15 min before class begins at 11:30am) so that everyone can be organized into correct breakout classrooms. We want to make sure there is an attentive adult in each breakout classroom with youth.
- Greet youth and ask everyone to correct their display name as needed. Ask everyone to select "gallery view" to see everyone else.
- Staff will attend to attendance.

2. Zoom Icebreaker: Current Events Trivia (5 minutes)

Prompt youth to raise their hands to answer. One teacher reads questions aloud, another teacher watches to see whose hand pops up first. Once a youth responds, ask everyone else to put a "thumbs up reaction" if they agree or, if they disagree, any other emoji reaction. Confirm if the answer is correct. If the answer is incorrect, call on someone who disagreed to see if they know the answer. If no one guesses it correctly, then read the answer aloud. Repeat.

Questions:

(a) Which basketball star died in a helicopter crash this year?

[Answer: Kobe Bryant]

(b) On what date did the World Health Organization declare the coronavirus a pandemic?

[Answer: March 11]

(c) In which month did Prince Harry and Meghan Markle announce they were stepping down as senior royals?

[Answer: March, Bonus March 31]

(d) Donald Trump became the third US President to be impeached. Who are the two others?

[Answer: Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton. Note: Nixon resigned before he could be impeached.]

(e) In which country did a US drone strike in January? Bonus: Who was killed?

[Answer: Iraq ; Bonus: Qassem Soleimani, Iranian Quds Force top commander, was killed.]

(f) Which MN city council unanimously voted to defund the police and re-invest in community support and safety in June?

[Answer: Minneapolis]

(g) Which US sport sparked a historic boycott in support of Black Lives Matter this summer?

[Answer: Basketball / the NBA]

(h) Which film won Best Picture at the Oscars this year?

[Answer: Parasite]

3. Chalice Lighting

Light a chalice at your home, invite youth to light their own chalices and say together: *“We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith, the light of truth and the warmth of love.”*

Teacher reads: (from Gene Roddenberry, creator of Star Trek)

“Reality is incredibly larger, infinitely more exciting, than the flesh and blood vehicle we travel in here. If you read science fiction, the more you read it the more you realize that you and the universe are part of the same thing. Science knows still practically nothing about the real nature of matter, energy, dimension, or time; and even less about those remarkable things called life and thought. But whatever the meaning and purpose of this universe, you are a legitimate part of it. And since you are part of the all that is, part of its purpose, there is more to you than just this brief speck of existence. You are just a visitor here in this time and this place, a traveler through it.”

4. Brief Check-in (10 minutes)

Begin a simple ritual for weekly check-in so that everyone’s voice is heard (e.g. sharing a joy or sorrow so that everyone feels present in class).

5. Community Time: Getting to know each other (20 minutes)

Take the time to get to know one another. In the manner of the television show *Inside the Actors Studio*, each youth will be interviewed by a teacher and respond to as many

questions as possible within 60 seconds. A second teacher will keep time. Teachers get interviewed, too!

Read aloud from lesson attachment 1a (Interview Questions). Don't screen share so youth can see everyone.

6. Important Agreements (15 minutes)

Extend community sharing to discuss what community practices/agreements will help "learning together." Because this class is not just about learning new information but learning about ourselves, how do we create a community where our best selves can emerge?

Open a Word document and **screen share**. Write down the agreements for everyone to see. **Save** the document to draw upon as needed in the future.

***Question to consider for this course:** The agreement to "assume positive intentions" and goodwill is vital for the work of racial justice and multiculturalism. But does that mean what others say/do out of good intentions will never hurt us?

- Are positive intentions ("I didn't mean to...") protection from all harm?
- Can we apply the same principle of "assuming positive intentions" when honest, critical feedback is given? (I.e. assuming critical feedback is offered not to shame us but to request change in behavior or language.)
- What do you think about Unity Church shifting from using the language of "safe space" to "brave space"? Does one help achieve the other? Which one?

***Important agreement for all Junior High youth:** youth (and teachers) are asked to attend Unity worship every Sunday morning from 10:00-11:00am, ideally with their families.

***Important agreement for virtual learning:** youth (and teachers) are asked to use as much interactive technology as possible to be fully present (e.g. have video on, unmute to speak, use the chat when prompted).

7. View intro to Star Trek, both original series and Next Generation (5 minutes)

[Note: Please sign into Unity's YouTube account to avoid advertisements. If an advertisement does pop up, please skip, or use volume control to silence, then resume normal volume for actual clips.]

Screen share (with audio):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdjL8WXjIGI> (57 seconds)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnDtvZXYHgE> (1.46 min, **pause after 1:10 min**)

Teacher reads signature introduction to Star Trek: *“Space...the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise, its five-year mission....to explore strange new worlds...to seek out new life and new civilizations ...to boldly go where no man has gone before.”* — Gene Roddenberry (August 10, 1966)

Questions for Discussion:

- What sort of human beings, or what kind of world, might Gene Roddenberry have envisioned with such a distinctive statement?
- Any connections to our world and people today?

8. How do we know Star Trek? (5 minutes)

Ask youth to write in the chat how they are familiar with Star Trek.

[e.g. Star Trek Original Series (OS), Star Trek Animated Series, Star Trek Next Generation (NG), Deep Space Nine, Voyager, Enterprise, Discovery, Picard, Feature Films, Books etc.]

Survey youth’s knowledge of Star Trek: Ask youth to give quick replies to a range of questions below.

- What do they know about Star Trek?
- What do they think about Star Trek? What do they like about it?
- What characters do they relate to?
- Why do they think it is relevant? Or why does a science fiction series matter?
- How does it relate to religion, spirituality and UU?
- How does it relate to the broader culture?

9. Preview of Next Week

Teacher shares: Next week, the lesson will (re)introduce the Seven UU Principles and the Five core theological questions we use throughout Religious Education at Unity Church. We will reflect on how scenes from Star Trek may address these questions and principles. These are the kinds of connections we are going to explore during this class!

10. Extinguish the chalice, saying together: *“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”*

11. Leave zoom breakout classroom: click “Leave” then “Leave Meeting.”

Viewing clips, in order of sequence:

- Intro to Star Trek, both original series and Next Generation:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdjL8WXjIGI> (57 seconds)

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