

UU Identity & History

Lesson 1: UU Principles: How Did We Get Here?

1.24.2021

Objectives: Build class covenant and begin to explore UU Principles and faith.

Materials: Teachers should download lesson plan and attachments onto their desktop.

Time allotment: 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 take attendance.

2. Zoom Icebreaker: I Spy (5 minutes, begin while waiting for everyone to arrive)

Ask one youth to be the “spy.” The “spy” secretly picks an object in someone’s zoom background and says: “I spy...” and gives a hint (e.g. something blue). Everyone else tries to guess what the object is and in which zoom screen it is located. The person who guesses correctly becomes the “spy” and the game repeats as time allows.

Teachers can stage fun objects in their zoom background!

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: (from UU religious educator, Edith Hunter)

“Perhaps we should realize that our need is not to ‘find something to believe’ – but rather to discover that our lives indicate what we believe right now. This is the place to start.”

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 (15 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?

- **Screen share** lesson attachment 1b (Class Agreements). Write down the agreements for everyone to see. **Save** the document to draw upon as needed in the future.

***Question to consider:** 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; assuming best intent while honoring impact and accepting accountability as an invitation.)
- 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 at 10:00am, 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 to one another (e.g. have video on, unmute to speak, use the chat when prompted).

7. What Brings UUs Together? (15 minutes)

Teacher introduces: As we come to know one another in community, we will focus our attention specifically on being in community as Unitarian Universalists. Let's think about how people *intentionally* come together.

(a) **Questions for discussion:**

- How do you choose your friends?
- Why do you think people choose to come to Unity Church?

(b) Screen share lesson attachment 1c (Guiding Principles).

- A “principle” could be understood as a *ground rule* or *fundamental value* that guides our community life. What do think are some of the guiding principles that Unity members share in common?
- Write down their ideas.

(c) Scroll down to the section “Seven UU Principles.” Have a different youth read each principle aloud.

(d) Questions for discussion: Invite youth to compare the list they made to the Seven UU Principles.

- From comparing the two lists of principles, do you feel there is anything missing from the list created by the class?
- Is there anything you feel is missing from the official UU list of principles?

(If racial justice is mentioned at all, assure youth that a later class will explore an 8th Principle proposed for adoption, articulating a commitment to a diverse multicultural community and dismantling racism.)

8. Announcement: Next Sunday, there is no RE class because of the second UU Families Covenanting Workshop.

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

10. Leave zoom breakout classroom: wait until all youth have left, click “Leave” then “Leave Meeting.”