

JOURNEY IN... YEAR THREE

COMMUNITY ART

This lesson's Big Ideas:

One of our Unitarian Universalist principles encourages us to think of spiritual friendship as "acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth"

Being a friend is a religious act; it is living out our love. To have a friend and be a friend takes time, patience and effort. Strong friendships are based on commitment, respect, listening, trust and celebration of differences.

There are many examples of rich spiritual friendships to inspire and guide us in choosing and keeping friends. These stories teach us that we can and should be friends with people who are different from us.

Lesson Materials

- white copy paper
- pencils
- crayons
- black markers
- vegetable oil
- cotton balls
- electrical tape (optional)

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

"And a youth said, Speak to us of Friendship.
And he answered, saying:
Your friend is your needs answered.
He is your field which you sow with love and reap with thanksgiving.
And he is your board and your fireside.
For you come to him with your hunger, and you seek him for peace.
When your friend speaks his mind you fear not the "nay" in your own mind, nor do you withhold the "ay".
And when he is silent your heart ceases not to listen to his heart;
For without words, in friendship, all thoughts, all desires, all expectations are born and shared, with joy that is unclaimed.
When you part from your friend, you grieve not;
For that which you love most in him may be clearer in his absence, as the mountain to the climber is clearer from the plain.
And let there be no purpose in friendship save the deepening of the spirit.
For love that seeks aught but the disclosure of its own mystery is not love but a net cast forth: and only the unprofitable is caught.
And let your best be for your friend.
If he must know the ebb of your tide, let him know the flood also.
For what is your friend that you should seek him with hours to kill?
Seek him always with hours to live.
For it is his to fill your need, but not your emptiness.
And in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures.
For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed."
-from *The Prophet*, by Khalil Gibran

- In preparation, for this lesson, take some time to reflect on the gifts that friendship has brought into your life. What have your friendships asked of you? What qualities do you seek out in other people? What does spiritual companionship look like, in your experience?

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

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YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

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GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 2-3 minutes

What does friendship look like? If you had to *draw* friendship, what would be in the picture?

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE
SUNCATCHERS**

🕒 10-15 minutes

Friendship has been described as ‘the love of God shining on us through another person’. We’ll make a gift of a suncatcher to give to a good friend to remind them that their friendship is a blessing to us. We can incorporate all kinds of images and words into our suncatcher art.

- Our friend’s name
- Lots of his or her favorite color
- Our own favorite color
- Images of a good shared memory
- Images of the best things about him or her
- Words about friendship
- Images of two people together
- Two of anything: two flowers, two birds, two skateboards, two hearts

Symbols of friendship (see attached sheet for some reference images)
Show the children these images and ask, “Why is this a good symbol for friendship?”

- yellow roses
- yin/yang (friends who balance each other)
- claddagh
- clasped hands
- Chinese character for friendship
- Japanese character for friendship
- West African symbol for friendship
- two interlinked circles
- rainbows
- anything that goes together: salt & pepper, bees & honey,

Technique:

We’ll make faux stained glass ‘suncatchers’ using regular copy paper, crayons, black markers and vegetable oil.

1. First, draw out a sketch of the images in pencil on white copy paper.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

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2. Next, trace over the pencil lines with a black marker
3. Fill in the image with coloring crayons
4. (Optional) Edge the suncatcher with black electrical tape, making a 'frame'.
5. With a cotton ball, coat the whole image with a *light* layer of vegetable oil. This will saturate the paper and make it translucent. When it dries, the suncatcher can be hung in a window and the sunlight will pass through it.

Wondering Together

- I wonder why you chose the images you did?
- I wonder what about these cultural symbols makes you think of friendship? What could the images mean?
- I wonder who you'll give this suncatcher to?
- I wonder if, to be good friends, people have to be exactly alike?
- I wonder if a person has to change himself or herself to be a good friend?
- I wonder what the best part about friendship is?
- I wonder how friends can show us the love of God?
- I wonder if you have good friends here in our church community?

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, take each other's hands and speak these words:

May we be blessed with good friends

May we be good friends ourselves

May our friendships help us to grow and change

May we be grateful for the blessing of friendship.

Invite the children to speak the names of good friends out loud before or after this blessing.

SYMBOLS OF FRIENDSHIP



“Ese Ne Tekrema” West African symbol of friendship (teeth and a tongue working together)



Crossed Arrows:
A Native American



A simple Chinese character for friendship



An Inuit symbol of friendship: two rocks that hold up a balanced stack of rocks.



Yin & Yang: a symbol of very different forces contacting and balancing one another (and holding a bit of each other, too)



Claddagh: an Irish symbol of love and friendship

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