

# JOURNEY IN... YEAR THREE

# COMMUNITY SCIENCE

## 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

- Book about symbiosis
- Symbiosis memory cards (several sets)
- Books:  
*Owen and Mzee*  
*Koko's Kitten*
- Copies of attached Venn Diagram worksheet

## 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?

## **GATHERING AND FOCUSING**

🕒 3 minutes

Ask each child to share the name of his or her closest friend(s).

## **PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE**

### **SYMBIOSIS: COMPANIONSHIP IN THE NATURAL WORLD**

🕒 20-25 minutes

In this lesson, we'll use symbiosis to explore the idea of mutually beneficial companionship. We'll search for metaphors for human spiritual companionship in the relationships we find in nature.

Two kinds of positive symbiosis will be explored: mutualism, where both parties benefit and commensalism, where one party benefits and the other is neither harmed nor benefitted.

#### **Symbiosis Memory Game**

- Using picture cards of many organisms that exist in symbiotic relationships, we'll play a matching game like Memory. On a set of identical cards, pairs of animals' pictures can be matched up. These cards can be made using index cards and clipart from the internet. A sturdier set can be made of balsa wood with images glued or painted on.
- Younger children may need an introduction to or review of the symbiotic relationships and how the animals help one another.
- Begin by laying the cards out face-down in a block pattern. Kids can take turns flipping over two cards at a time, checking for a symbiotic match. If the cards don't match by chance, they are turned back over again and the players attempt to remember the cards' locations for future turns. If the cards match, they are collected by the matching player for points.
- Players attempt to find the most matches during the game.

Organisms of the natural world that exist in symbiosis include:

- Egyptian plovers and crocodiles (plovers clean mouth)
- Sea anemone and clownfish (fish eats parasites, anemone protects fish)
- Remora fish and sharks (fish clean shark)
- Goby fish and burrowing shrimp (shrimp digs burrow for both, fish acts as watchman)
- Humans and dogs
- Flowering plants and bees
- Moray eels and cleaner fish
- Ants and acacia trees (trees provide sweet sap, ants eat aphids)
- Anglerfish and bioluminescent bacteria (bacteria live in fish, glowing thingie attracts prey)
- Honeyguide birds and badgers (birds show way to honey, badgers open the hive)
- Humans and intestinal bacterial (ex. *Lactobacillus acidophilus*)

### TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

- If your group is a little wiggly at first, you might want to begin with the story-books and then move on to the matching game so as not to lose the ability to reclaim the kids' focus.
- 
- 
- 
- 

### Wondering Together

- I wonder how these special relationships got started?
- I wonder if you could guess how being different helped in the relationship between the organisms?
- I wonder if sharing is important in these relationships? Trust? Patience? Learning?
- I wonder which of them you find most interesting?
- I wonder how the individual organisms find each other and come together to live in symbiosis?
- I wonder what symbiosis in nature can teach us about friendships in our human community?
- How can you get a special spiritual relationship started? What's the best way to make a new friend?

## PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO TWO SPECIAL FRIENDSHIPS FROM THE NATURAL WORLD

🕒 20-25 minutes

We'll read one or both of these stories: *Koko's Kitten* and *Owen and Mzee*. Both are examples of unusual and beautiful friendships between very different creatures. Follow up with the questions below:

### Wondering Together

- I wonder if animals can really be friends?
- I wonder what about these relationships seems friendly?
- I wonder if these animals are more *like* each other or more *different* each other?
- I wonder if you and your closest friend are more *alike* or *different*?
- I wonder what people can learn from these animal companions?

## SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY VENN DIAGRAMS: BEST FRIENDS

Really valuable friendships can help us grow because we have things in common with our good friends, but we also share significant differences that challenge us to learn, grow and appreciate diversity.

Distribute the Venn Diagram worksheet and invite the kids in the class to examine the similarities that overlap in their closest friendship, as well as the differences that make our individuality shine.

**TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON**

- The Venn Diagram activity is best for kids 3rd grade and up.
- 
- 

**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*

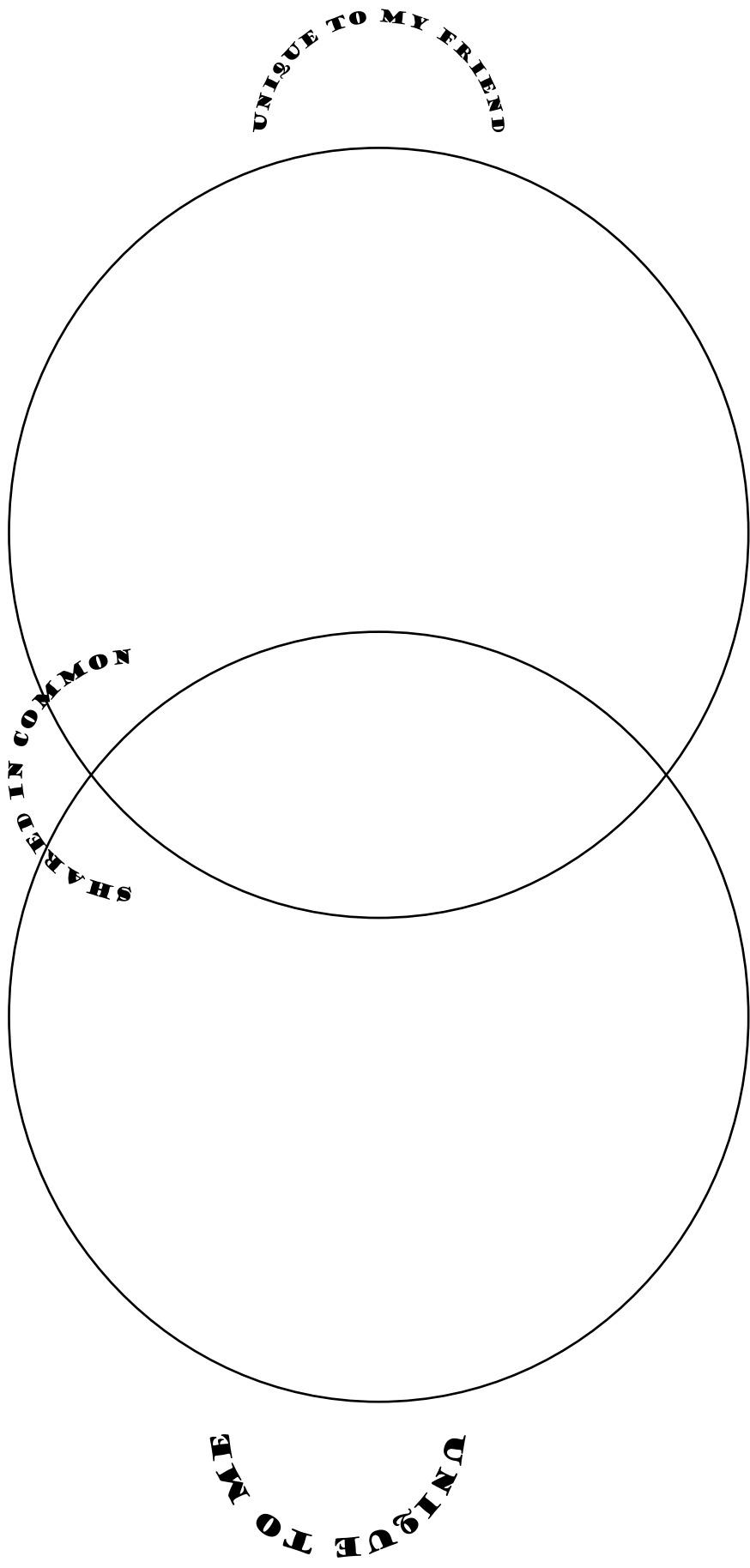
*May we be good friends ourselves*

*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.

# FRIENDSHIP VENN DIAGRAM



MY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FRIEND'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_