

JOURNEY IN... YEAR THREE

ON BEING HUMAN

DRAMA

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- Being human means having a capacity to speak and do both good and evil things and plenty of things in-between.
- Good and evil aren't forces that can exist in a vacuum. They are consequences of our actions which are influenced by many factors in our lives. We have to live with the consequences of all our actions, both good and evil and everywhere in between.
- Unitarian Universalists commit themselves to discerning good from evil using our own hearts and minds, to affirming the inherent worth and dignity of all, and to standing on the side of goodness. and love.

Lesson Materials

- Puppets—enough for each child
- Copies of the attached script—one for each child
- Puppet-sized props, if possible: basket of fruits & veggies, stuffed sheep, blanket, small bowl, rock

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Even on this small stage we have our two sides, and something might be done by throwing all one's weight on the scale of breadth, tolerance, charity, temperance, peace, and kindness to man and beast. We can't all strike very big blows, and even the little ones count for something.

- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

"Are there, infinitely varying with each individual, inbred forces of Good and Evil in all of us, deep down below the reach of mortal encouragement and mortal repression - hidden Good and hidden Evil, both alike at the mercy of the liberating opportunity and the sufficient temptation?"

- Wilkie Collins

"The forces that tend for evil are great and terrible, but the forces of truth and love and courage and honesty and generosity and sympathy are also stronger than ever before."

"War with evil; but show no spirit of malignity toward the man who may be responsible for the evil. Put it out of his power to do wrong."

- Theodore Roosevelt

"It is a man's own mind, not his enemy or foe, that lures him to evil ways."

-Siddhartha Buddha

"Men do not differ much about what things they will call evils; they differ enormously about what evils they will call excusable."

- GK Chesterton

"All that is required for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing."

- Edmund Burke

Reflect on your own perspective on good and evil. What has your life taught you about human nature? Do any of the above ideas conflict with or reflect your own beliefs? As a Unitarian Universalist, what is your relationship to these forces, to the struggle between them, both within and without?

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

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YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

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GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 5 minutes or so

We'll take some time for puppet practice and check-in. Give each child a puppet. Ask them to use the puppet (no voices or sound effects) to show the following:

- An angry puppet
- A sorry puppet
- A scared puppet
- A proud puppet
- How they are feeling today

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE
PUPPET SKIT: CAIN AND ABEL**

🕒 10 minutes preparation, 15-20 minutes for rehearsal, 15-20 to perform

We'll put on puppet shows of the Cain and Abel story for each other and we'll select one team of puppeteers to perform the story for our parents. Each group can perform once for the rest of the class if they use their time well. You may need to find separate rehearsal areas for each group.

Depending on attendance, you may have one, two or three teams performing. The script is attached to this lesson plan and will be provided to each child.

Roles include: Narrator, Cain, Abel, God and, if appropriate, a director.

The director helps puppeteers to speak clearly, use their puppets well, follow the script, use their props and put emotion into their performances.

Before creating the teams and beginning the rehearsals, do a read-through of the script with volunteer readers. Feel free to discuss the wondering questions before or after the rehearsals.

Wondering Together:

- I wonder if you've ever felt like Cain does in this story?
- I wonder if Cain will always do bad things or if he can be a good person after this?
- I wonder if this story *had* to be about two brothers (boys)? Could you tell the same story with sisters? A sister and a brother?
- I wonder if God is something that speaks to people, like in this story?

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

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- I wonder what Cain and Abel could have said or done differently to help each other be good and kind?
- I wonder if God had anything to do with what happened?
- I wonder if Cain was punished for his actions? I wonder what the natural consequences were?
- I wonder what you can do in your own life to help create a world of goodness?
- I wonder what evil is? What goodness is?

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, take each other's hands and speak these words responsively, teacher beginning and children responding:

Inside us all is a seed of hate and a seed of love

I will water the seed of love.

Inside us all is a seed of anger and a seed of calm

I will water the seed of calm

Inside us all is a seed of violence and a seed of peace

I will water the seed of peace

Inside us all is a seed of evil and a seed of good

I will water the seed of good

- inspired by the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh

PUPPET SHOW SCRIPT

CAIN AND ABEL

Based on the book by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

Characters:

- Cain
- Abel
- Narrator (puppet or no puppet)
- God (no puppet)

Narrator: Once long ago, the world was a beautiful and peaceful garden where the first two brothers lived together. The older brother was named Cain.

Cain: Oh, how I love the trees and plants and fruits and vegetables. I chose to be a farmer.

Narrator: The younger brother was named Abel.

Abel: I love the animals of the world, especially the sweet lambs and kids. I chose to be a shepherd.

Narrator: Cain and Abel lived together happily. They each loved their work and they cared for each other.

Cain: Abel, would you like some vegetable stew? I made it from my garden!

Abel: Thank you! Would you like this wool blanket to keep warm? I made it from the fleece of my sheep!

Narrator: One day, the brothers decided it was a good day to give thanks to God for the blessings in their lives. They decided to bring an offering of the best things that came from their hard work when they went to pray to God.

Cain: I'll bring my most beautiful fruits and vegetables. After all, God created the first garden!

Abel: I'll bring my finest sheep! After all, God created the animals!

Narrator: The sheep ran and played in the field where the brothers played. Abel thought that God was pleased with his tender care of the sheep and lambs. Meanwhile, Cain's vegetables just shriveled up in the hot noon sun.

Abel: (to himself) It seems God likes my sheep better than Cain's offering. I feel proud and happy.

Cain: (to himself) It seems God doesn't even care about my offering. Maybe God likes Abel better than me.

Narrator: That night, Cain didn't share his stew with Abel and he didn't sleep under Abel's warm wool blanket.

Cain: Everything is so easy for Abel. If it weren't for him, I'd be God's favorite! If it weren't for Abel, I'd be a lot happier! **(yelling)** I HATE YOU ABEL!

Abel: (surprised) You do? Well, I hate you, too!

Narrator: For weeks, the brothers were so angry at each other, they couldn't even look at one another. They didn't help each other or speak to each other. One day, Cain came across Abel napping under a shade tree while his sheep slept. Cain had been working in the hot fields all day.

Cain: Oh, I HATE that Abel has it so easy! I HATE that his stupid sheep make a mess of my gardens. I'm so angry I feel like my insides are on fire!

Narrator: Cain was so angry, his heart wouldn't stop pounding. He couldn't even look at his brother; he just stared at the ground. On the ground, he saw a big rock. Without thinking, he picked up the rock in his anger and threw it at Abel's head. Blood came from Abel's head. He didn't move. It was then that Cain knew he had killed his brother, Abel.

Cain: I have to run away! What have I done? I'm too scared to move!

God: Cain! Where is your brother?

Cain: (scared) I don't know! Am I my brother's babysitter or something?

Narrator: Cain felt his heart grow as heavy as the rock he had thrown. He wished he could take back his anger. He wished he could fix things, but it was too late. Cain had done the first evil thing in all the world, but it wasn't the last. Time passed and one killing became two, and two become ten and ten became a thousand. All people have to choose between the good and evil inside them. Perhaps one day, when people learn to reach out with a gentle hand instead of a rock, or a sword or a gun, the entire world will be a place of goodness.

THE END