

Spirit Play Lesson

Listening for God

Materials:

- A strip of dark felt divided into segments.
 - A circle of red felt.
 - Eight wooden people figures with a red dot or oval painted on each.
 - A beautiful crystal, stone or other visually attractive natural object.
 - A small conch shell or some other natural object associated with the sense of hearing.
 - A cinnamon stick or some other natural object associated with the sense of smell.
 - A small wooden or papier-mache dish of salt. (Salt can be stored in the basket of story materials in a small vial when not in use.)
 - A feather or some other natural object associated with the sense of touch.
 - A miniature chalice and rose to represent our UU history and identity and some of our special ceremonies.
 - An earth, frog, and tree, representing the web of life we are part of.
 - A miniature book or scroll (optional) to represent poetry, prayer, and song.
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Watch where I go to get this story so you will always know where to find it. This is a story about listening for God and some of the different ways we sense God's presence.

Get story materials and return to your place in the circle. Put story materials beside you.

God is never far away. God's Spirit is always so close-closer than breath. But unless we stop and listen, we might not notice.

Take out rolled up dark underlay. At "close," make this motion: with each hand cupped, palms facing and about 15" apart, one above the other, gently move hands together.

We practice listening. We listen with our whole selves—with our bodies, our minds, our hearts, our imaginations, our souls.

Roll out underlay from right to left about 9". Pause, looking at the new black/blue/purple space.

Sometimes God touches us in that deep, deep place we call the heart, a place where God is at home in us and where we are at home in God. We feel the Spirit's presence there. We say "Here I am, God." Then the Spirit helps us to know how to love, what to do, and who to be.

Place one wooden people figure on underlay. Indicate the red dot. Cup one hand a few inches above the figure as a sign of blessing, or of God's presence.

We practice listening. We listen with our whole selves.

Roll out another 9" of underlay. Pause, looking at the new space.

Sometimes God touches us through another person. God in one person sees God in another person. Heart touches heart. We say, "Welcome, God!" Then the Spirit helps us to know how to love, what to do, and who to be.

Place two wooden people figures on underlay. At "heart touches heart," slowly move one finger back and forth several times from red dot to red dot. Then cup one hand over the figures in a sign of blessing.

We practice listening. We listen with our whole selves.

Roll out another 9" of underlay. Pause, looking at the new space.

Sometimes God touches us through the gifts of the earth. God touches our eyes,

Pick up stone or other small natural object and hold it up before your eyes, then place it on underlay.

our ears,

Pick up conch shell and bring it to your ear, then place it on underlay.

our noses,

Pick up cinnamon stick and pass it under your nose, then place it on underlay.

our tongues,

Slowly pour out a small dish of salt and move it toward your mouth, then place on the underlay.

or our skin.

Pick up feather and slowly pass it over the top of the opposite hand or arm, then place it on underlay.

We feel the Spirit's presence. We say, "Welcome, God!" Then the Spirit helps us to know how to love, what to do, and who to be.

Cup hand over objects in this panel.

We practice listening. We listen with our whole selves.

Roll out another 9" of underlay. Pause, looking at the new space.

Sometimes God touches us through sacred story. God in our hearts works together with the words of the stories and we feel the Spirit's presence. What are these stories? They are stories of people of any time or place who lived in faith and love. They may be stories of our Unitarian Universalist church.

Place a small chalice and rose on underlay.

They may be stories of the earth and the creatures who call it home.

Place a small Earth and then a small frog and tree on the underlay.

And the Spirit can come to us in other words, too, as in poetry and prayer and song.

Place a small book on the underlay.

We welcome God in these stories and words. Then the Spirit helps us to know how to love, what to do, and who to be.

Cup hand over objects in this panel.

We practice listening. We listen with our whole selves.

Roll out another 9” of underlay. Pause, looking at the new space.

Sometimes God touches us through the community gathered for worship or for service. God touches hearts. Hearts touch hearts. The Spirit helps us to see God in each other. God is present in a special way.

Place five people figures on underlay in a circle. Gently drop red or orange disk in the center of the circle. Cup both hands over or around the circle of figures.

We say, “Welcome, God.” We say, “Here we are, God. Yes, we will be your people.” Then we become the presence of God in the world. We become God’s eyes and ears and mouth and hands and feet.

Wherever we are, we practice listening, and God can come to us in many different ways.

Unroll remaining underlay.

We listen with our whole selves—with our bodies, our minds, our hearts, our imaginations, and our souls—and God’s Spirit helps us to know how to love, what to do, and who to be.

Pass hand over the entire story display from right to left. Pause.

Wondering Questions:

I wonder what part of the story you liked the best?

I wonder what part is most important?

I wonder where you are in the story?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?