



JOURNEY IN... YEAR ONE

THE DIVINE WITHIN

KINESTHETIC

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- All human beings are a union of flesh and spirit. There are many words and metaphors that help us talk about the soul as *enfleshed* or flesh as *en-souled*.
- Within every human being, there is something of the Divine. All bodies and minds house a holy spark.

Lesson Materials

- An assortment of clay pots. Each is different in some way: paint them different colors, cover them in different textures, select ones that are different sizes
- Water in pitchers
- Measuring cups (enough for kids to work in pairs or threes)
- Two pair safety goggles (one covered in Vaseline)
- Rubber mallet
- Tray/pan (for breaking jar)
- Masking tape
- Wooden slats and cloth strips to make splints.
- Sleeping bag
- Plate, cracker, butter knife, spread
- Construction paper
- Keys for a nearby lock
- Shoes with laces
- Access to stairs

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Inside this clay jar there are meadows and groves and the One who made them.

Inside this jar there are seven oceans and innumerable stars, acid to test gold, and a patient appraiser of jewels.

Inside this jar the music of eternity, and a spring flows from the source of all waters.

Kabir says: Listen, friend! My beloved Master lives inside.

- Kabir (translated by Czeslaw Milosz and Robert Hass)

“...God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7)

Our body is precious. It is a vehicle for awakening.

- Buddha

GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 7 minutes

- Ask some of these questions:
 - Where does clay come from?
 - Is clay always hard?
 - What can you make out of clay?
- Ask the children who have been in the Art Workshop to share what they experienced in the lesson during which they made clay pots.
- Ask those children who have been in the Story Workshop to share the Christian Genesis story or recount it yourself. Ask the kids for comments on its meaning or realism for them.
- Read the Kabir poem above to the children once or twice and ask for their response.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

- Younger children may not have mastered numbers and quantities in measurement. For their lesson, you might want to mark clear measuring cups with different levels of colored tape so that they can report the color of the water level.
- Protective eyewear is a good idea for the child breaking the jar. If conflict arises or you have concerns about safety, break the jar yourself.
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YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

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PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE CLAY VESSELS

🕒 15 minutes

- Bring out the clay vessels. Ask the kids to close their eyes and rely on their sense of touch to pass around get to know a few clay pots that you put in their hands. Ask a few preliminary questions about the similarities and difference in the jars of clay. After a couple of minutes, ask them to select one and really examine it.
- Go around the circle and ask each child to describe their jar, eyes still closed, how big it is, what it feels like. What's in it? Could it hold something? Could it hold water? How much water?
- In pairs, have the students help each other to fill their clay pot with water. Then, determine the capacity of the clay pot by pouring the water from the jar into the measuring cup. They should measure it, make note of the contents and then pour the water carefully back into the pitcher that it came from.
- Bring the group back together and ask them to report on their findings. How much water could their clay pot hold? Which pot held the most? The least? Could we agree on an amount of water that every pot could hold without overflowing?

Wondering Together:

- I wonder if the color or shape or texture of the jar changed whether the jar could hold water.
- I wonder how these jars might be like people?
- I wonder what the water might be if the jars are like the human body....?
- I wonder if any human being can have more or less spirit than someone else? I wonder if you have a small body, do you have a small spirit? A large spirit for a large body? A broken spirit if a body seems broken?

One Sufi poet says that our bodies are like jars. They are all different, but they hold the same thing: spirit. What do you think of this idea: our bodies may only last for our lifetime, but spirit is something that lasts on and on, even if it's not in the container of a body.

Select ONE plain jar, fill it with the average amount of water that the kids found possible and ask for a volunteer who will take a rubber mallet and break the clay pot (in a tray or pan to catch the water). Give the child the mallet and safety goggles, pausing to ask the kids what they think is about to happen. Break the jar, allowing all the children to watch.

- **Wondering Together:**

- I wonder if anything happened to the water when we smashed that jar? Did the water change or not?
- What if we put all the jars in here and broke them, one by one? (but we're not going to...) What would happen to the pieces of jar? To the water?
- What good is the clay jar now that it's broken? What useful, good things could we do with it? What about the water?
- I wonder what else these clay jars and this water makes you think about.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO

DIFFERENT BODIES: KEVIN CONNOLLY'S SPIRIT

🕒 10 minutes

Read over the handout "Kevin Connolly's Spirit" as a precursor to Activity Three.

Wondering Together

- I wonder why some people live in a body like mine and other people live in a body like Kevin's?
- I wonder if my spirit would be the same if I had a body like Kevin's?
- I wonder what questions people ask Kevin when they see him on the sidewalk or at a restaurant?
- I wonder what questions you would like to ask Kevin if you met him?

PRIMARY ACTIVITY THREE

DIFFERENT BODIES: EMPATHY TRAINING

🕒 15 minutes

This activity leads to three 'empathy training' options which ask kids to perform daily tasks with imposed impairments.

Introduce the idea that bodies are different and ask for ways in which the children's bodies are different from each others' or different from yours. Introduce, too, the idea that some people's bodies work differently from the average human body because of illness or genetics or accidents. Ask the kids to share some ways in which the human body can be challenged or differently abled. They might name blindness, deafness, paralysis, etc. Encourage the children to use neutral words and avoid hurtful words. We can say that someone has a limb difference instead of labeling them as crippled. We can discuss a group of people who *have* visual impairments without labeling them as *the blind*. Whenever possible, say the "person" word in your sentences before the "disability" word, (ex. 'a girl who is deaf' as opposed to 'a deaf girl'). These subtle choices go a long way toward removing stigma and affirming a person's humanity rather than focusing on their physical condition.

If you have a child in your class who has a physical challenge, do not put them on the spot as a representative of all people who have a similar condition. If one teacher on your team knows this child or their family well, check in with that teacher to see if they think the child would be un/comfortable talking about their physical challenge with the friends in the class. Find a way to affirm physical similarities before talking about differences.

What must it be like to have a body that asks you to do things very differently from most people? If your legs don't work for walking, you might have to use a wheelchair to get around. If your hands aren't made for fine motor skills, you might have trouble buttoning sweaters or writing with pencils/pens.

We'll take a few minutes to practice empathy, which is a feeling of deep and kind understanding. These activities are not meant to be silly, though we might laugh because it's surprising/awkward/new to us to do things differently. If a teacher is concerned that any classmate is making fun or being disrespectful, ask that child to stop and find a way to have a private conversation with the child before inviting them to participate again.

The three empathy training options are as follows (we'll each choose one, take 10 minutes to experience and witness each activity and then we'll gather together and talk):

1. Fine motor impairment: With the ring finger and pinkie taped together and the middle, pointer fingers and thumb taped together with masking tape, the two tasks are to 1.) tie a pair of shoes and 2.) unlock a door.
2. Large motor impairment: With one or both knees splinted using wooden slats and cloth strips, the two tasks are to 1.) get in and out of a sleeping bag and 2.) go up one flight of stairs.
3. Visual impairment: With goggles covered in vaseline, the two tasks are to 1.) find a square of colored construction paper on a wall across the room and 2.) put spread on a cracker and eat it

Wondering Together

- What does it feel like to have your body not respond to your mind and spirit like it usually does?
- I wonder how living with that challenge every day would be different than just doing this activity once at Sunday School?
- I wonder what activities you could have done *without any trouble at all* with your imposed impairment?
- I wonder if your human spirit or soul was affected by doing this activity for 15 minutes?
- I wonder if having a differently abled body means you have a different human spirit?
- I wonder what happens when people make assumptions about the spirit of a person with a differently abled body?
- I wonder what Unitarian Universalists can do to show that we believe that all people have worth and dignity and a holy spark inside them, no matter what form their body comes in?

PRIMARY ACTIVITY

YOGA: BODY MEETS SPIRIT

🕒 If extra time

- Attached you will find instructions for Sun Salutation, one of the best-known and most beneficial series of yoga asanas. There is also a breathing meditation. Practice these several times yourself before guiding the children through the practice.
- Make sure that each child has enough room to move and a stable, non-slip surface on which to practice.

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 3 minutes

Teach the children the greeting word, *namaste* (pronounced evenly: nah-mah-stay). This Pali word translates as, "The Divine within me sees and greets the Divine within you." Generally, the word is spoken with a gesture which the Thai culture names *wai*: the hands, pressed together, are held just above the heart and the head is bowed to meet the tips of the fingers.

Give the children time to say goodbye to each other and to teachers with this beautiful gesture.

Surya Namaskar – The Sun Salutation:

This series is considered the best exercise for human body. Surya Namaskar consists of important Yogasanas (poses) and Pranayama (breathwork). An awareness of the breath, bones and muscles fosters the connection between the spirit and body. Surya Namaskar invokes the life-generating power of the Sun.

Here's How to Do it:

1. Stand facing the sun with both feet touching.
2. Bring the hands together, palm-to-palm, at the heart.
3. Inhale and raise the arms upward. Slowly bend backward, stretching arms above the head.
4. Exhale slowly bending forward, touch the earth keeping the hands in line with the feet, head touching knees.
5. Inhale and move the right leg back away from the body in a wide backward step. Keep the hands and feet firmly on the ground, with the left foot between the hands. Raise the head.
6. While exhaling, bring the left foot together with the right. Keep arms straight, raise the hips and align the head with the arms, forming an upward arch.
7. Inhale and slowly lower the hips to the floor, (hips should be slightly raised above the ground) and bend backward as much as possible.
8. Exhale and lower the body to the floor until the feet, knees, hands, chest, and forehead are touching the ground.
9. Inhale and slowly raise the head and bend backward as much as possible, bending the spine to the maximum.
10. While exhaling slowly and keeping the arms straight, raise the hips and align the head with the arms, forming an upward arch.
11. Slowly inhale and bend the left leg at the knee taking a wide forward step. Keeping the hands firmly rooted, place the left foot on the ground between the hands. Lift the head upwards.
12. Exhale slowly and keeping hands firmly in place, bring both feet together to align them with the hands.
13. Touch the head to the knees, if possible.
14. Inhale slowly and raise the arms upward. Slowly bend backward, stretching the arms above the head
15. Return to position #1.

(These instructions can be found at about.com.)

Kevin Connolly's Spirit



This is Kevin Connolly. He is an athlete. He was born without legs. He started skiing when he was 10 years old.

When he was a kid, he decided he didn't like using prosthetic legs or crutches. He gets around using his arms. He has a big leather and rubber shoe that he calls his "bucket".

Kevin thinks of himself as different from other people, but only because his spirit pushes him to be more courageous, more determined and more patient than other people because his spirit happens to be in this body.

His friends don't think of him as different. They think of him as short and fast, they say. Kevin has been the disabled U.S. ski champion for four years in a row.



Kevin gets around town on a skateboard. He deals with a lot of stares and questions from other people, but it doesn't bother him.

We all have a spirit. We all have different bodies. Can we be just as courageous, determined and patient as Kevin, given the bodies that we live with and in? What do you think?