



JOURNEY IN... YEAR ONE



1

THE NATURE OF GOD ART

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- God, that of many names and beyond all naming, is One.
- Every individual is entitled to form an image of God.

Lesson Materials

- "What do you see?" activity sheet—double or single sided copies of pages 4 and 5 of this lesson.
- Washable, colored markers
- Slide projector, overhead projector or bright, directional light
- Stained glass or a facsimile of stained glass (suncatcher). If you have the real thing, use it. Otherwise, slides or color transparency photocopy might work well.
- Art paper, about 10" x 12."
- Watercolor pencils, watercolor paints, crayons, fingerpaints.

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Readings for you, the teacher:

Forrest Church, from *A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1999.

"1. There is one Reality, one Truth, one God.

2. This Reality shines through every window in the cathedral (and through every eye).

3. No one can perceive it directly, the mystery being forever veiled.

4. Yet, on the cathedral floor and in the eyes of each beholder, refracted and reflected through different windows in different ways, it plays in patterns that suggest meaning, challenging us to interpret and live by the meaning as best we can.

5. Therefore, each window illumines Truth (with a large T) in a different way, leading to different truths (with a small t), and these in differing measure according to the insight and receptivity of the beholder."

All religions,
all this singing,
is one song.

The differences are just
illusion and vanity.

The sun's light looks a little different
on this wall than it does on that wall...

but it's still one light.

- Rumi

Questions for your reflection:

- What does your 'window' look like? In your life, what truths have been illumined by the one light of Truth? Did you view God through a different window as a child?
- What 'illumination' do you hope for these children? How would you like their experience of truth's 'windows' to be similar to or different from your own walk through the world's 'cathedral'?

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

- A light-colored floor or wall will work best for this activity.
- Slides are available from Davis Art at www.davispublications.com (cat. #12388, 25183 and 25184 are good choices).
- Exquisite suncatcher replicas of various rosette windows are available from www.heirloomgifts.com. We especially like “The Fourth Day of Creation” #GLS-9117.
- Washable, fat markers may work better for younger children while watercolor paints (on the floor) will be more interesting for older children because they offer a whole spectrum of saturation. Be sure to lay a waterproof liner (a white shower curtain works) under the kids artwork if you’re worried about the floor.
- Removing the bulb from the projector might clarify the ‘one light’ idea.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE WHAT DO YOU SEE?

🕒 15 minutes

- This is our “turn-taking” activity, meant to start the kids’ creative juices flowing as well as give them something meaningful to do if there isn’t enough space for everyone to do the “One Light, Many Windows” activity at the same time. It introduces the idea that we can each see a single thing from a variety of perspectives and form our own interpretations.
- Distribute copies of the “What do you see?” activity sheet. It has several simple shapes that might be interpreted in a variety of ways. Ask the students not to reveal their work to the other students until you invite them to share. Their task is to create a drawing that incorporates the form in some way.
- Remind them that there’s a set amount of time to work at this, (half the class if part of the group is taking a turn at the “One Light, Many Windows” activity) taking into account group focus and age level. Set a timer. When the time is almost up, ask them to share what they’ve come up with.
- Don’t put these drawings up around the room as it might stifle future groups’ creativity.

Wondering Together—try these discussion prompts during or following the kids’ creative process.

- I wonder why we made different drawings? I wonder why some people ended up making drawings that are almost the same.
- How might we think about life the same way we went about these drawings? How about God?
- Some people think of God as a father who lives in the sky. Many Unitarians think of God not as a being, but as a truth or force that connects us all together. Others have a picture of God as a man who loved everyone equally and died nailed to a cross. Some think of God as a woman or a bird. I wonder why people have such different ideas about God?

PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO “ONE LIGHT, MANY WINDOWS”

🕒 20 minutes

- Turn on your overhead or slide projector or flashlight *without* the slid or suncatcher in place. Point out the bright light to the students. Now arrange the stained glass slide or suncatcher so that it casts patterns of light on the floor or wall.

Allow the children to play with the light on their hands and faces. You may choose to ask guiding questions toward the “one light, many windows” metaphor or you may choose to wait until after the students have created their art. Older groups might be interested in hearing Forrest Church’s words.

- Pass out sheets of art paper, cut to a size that allows the children to capture a large part of the glass’ image without interfering with other children’s efforts. Allow students to pick a spot on the floor or wall and help them to tape down their paper. The students will all capture different images of the same light as it comes through the stained glass.
- Using fingerpaints, crayons, or watercolors or another medium, students capture their chosen part of the pattern on paper, filling in the play of light with their colors.

Wondering Together

- Does anyone’s picture look exactly the same as someone else’s? I wonder if that was even possible?
- Why did you pick the part of the light that you captured?
- Do you think the glass changed the light? Do you think the glass changed the source of the light?
- I wonder how this light and this glass might be like thinking about God?

GATHERING AND REFLECTING

🕒 10 minutes

- Have students tidy up their work area for the benefit of their learning community.
- Put work up on display in a gallery titled “One Light, Many Windows.”
- Compare and contrast the content and symmetry of the captured light.
- Ask students individually to share one idea they have about the one God based on what they’ve seen in the cathedral of their lives. Share an idea of your own. What does your “window” on God look like?

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 5 minutes

- Gather the children in a circle or cluster. Holding hands is a warm gesture of connection; do so if the children feel so inclined. Allow for a moment of silence.

You can ask the children to listen to your reading of this meditative blessing. They can repeat the words in their mind, or aloud, or you can ask them to read it from a blackboard in chorus with one another. Younger groups can be invited to fill in the word “One” as you pause.

*May we remember that we are already One.
 May we remember that God is already One.
 May we each travel our path toward the One Truth
 with hope and respect for every other traveler.*

May it be so and Amen.



