

**Touchstones REACH**

***Touchstones REACH* (Religious Education Arts Clearing House)**

**Lifespan RE Resources for Generosity**

**Introduction**

The content of this packet is shaped by the theme of Generosity. The second UU principle, “Justice, equity and compassion in human relations,” does not refer to generosity, but the second principle for children refers to kindness: “We believe that all people should be treated fairly and kindly.” We might think of giving infused with kindness as a formula for generosity. Other values connected to this theme are helping and sharing. Exploring the opposite of generosity, which includes selfishness, can also be instructive. Generosity is closely linked to altruism. (See reading 7:24).

While it is not explicit, the concept of generosity is implicit in the golden rule. In addition, while generosity need not be grounded in abundance, a theology of abundance leads to generosity.

The following, *Difference Between Kindness and Generosity*, is helpful in understanding the differences between these two concepts, since children are likely more familiar with kindness than generosity. See <https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-kindness-and-generosity/>

**List of Resources**

**1.0: Pins**

**2.0: Children’s Homilies, Sermons, Time for All Ages & Resources**

**2.1:** *The Gift of a Raspberry* by Martha Dallas (446 words)

**3.0: Wisdom Stories about Generosity, Giving, and Kindness**

***Generosity***

**3.1:** *Sophia’s Guest* by Becky Brooks (821 words)

**3.2:** *The Umbrella Sanctuary* by Tim Atkins (1,066 words)

**3.3:** *The Teachings of the Rain God* (525 words)

**3.4:** *A Brand, New Beginning* (485 words)

**3.5:** *A Hospital Blessing* (629 words)

**3.6:** *The Caican Water Project* (1,032 words)

**3.7:** *Finding Balance* (1,159 words)

**3.8:** *The Dog at the Well* (730 words)

**3.9:** *The Rebirth of the Sun* (697 words)

**3.10:** *It’s Up to Us* (658 words)

**3.11:** *Supriya’s Bowl* (636 words)

**3.12:** *The Stolen Soup Aroma* (482 words)

**3.13:** *A Calabash of Poi* (698 words)

**3.14:** *The Fox and the Lion*, a retelling of a Sufi wisdom tale (291 words)

**3.15:** *Jesus and the Loaves and Fishes*: A UU Telling by Sophia Lyon Fahs (239 words)

**3.16:** *The Farmer on the Hill*, a wisdom tale from Japan (489 words)

**3.17:** *Mullah Nasruddin Feeds His Coat* (733 words)

**3.18:** *The Value of a Gift* (686 words)

**3.19:** *The Other Half* (647 words)

## 3.20: *The Good Samaritan* (576 words)

**3.21:** *The Gift of a Gemstone*, a wisdom tale from many cultures, including Buddhist (280 words)

**3.22:** *How Brigit Got Lands for the Poor* by Erica Helm Meade (634 words)

**3.23:** *The Real Gift* (661 words)

**3.24:** *Loaves and Fishes* (259 words)

**3.25:** *The Most Generous Gift* (387 words)

**3.26:** *A Barn-raising In the City* (856 words)

**3.27:** *Grandmother’s Lesson* by Elisa Davy Pearmain (995 words)

**3.28:** *Growing Green* by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer (909 words)

***Helping***

**3.29:** *Beautiful Hands* by Barb Pitman (1,389 words)

**3.30:** *The Woman Who Wouldn’t Give Up* (467 words)

**3.31:** *The Brave Little Parrot* (859 words)

**3.32:** *The Rooster Who Learned To Crow* by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer (1,150 words)

**3.33:** *Dorothea Dix* (848 words)

**3.34:** *No More Turning Away* by Steven Cooper and Hannah Cooper (651 words)

**3.35:** *Snail Girl*, a Navajo Story (1,527 words)

**3.36:** *Maya’s Questions* by Elisa Pearmain (1,037 words)

**3.37:** *Helping with Hearts, Heads, and Hands* by Jan Devor (431 words)

**3.38:** *The Journey of the Birds* (449 words)

**3.39:** *Crossing the Finish Line Together* (215 words)

***Sharing***

**3.40:** *The Best Meal* (690 words)

## 3.41: *Hare’s Gifts*, for five readers and one non-reading performer (Butterfly) (942 words)

**3.42:** *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, adapted from an Aesop’s fable (503 words)

**3.43:** *The Life of the Buddha* (721 words)

***Kindness***

**3.44:***The Picture on The Kitchen Wall* by Sophia Lyon Fahs (1,304 words)

**3.45:** *Russell* by Rev. Jose Ballester (425 words)

**3.46:** *The Gift of Giving* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (1,231 words)

***Selfishness***

**3.47:** *The Selfish Fox* (192 words)

**4.0: Children’s Books about Generosity and Kindness**

**Generosity**

**4.1:** *Extra Yarn* by Mac Barnett, author and Jon Klassen, illustrator (2012

# 4.2: *Miss Tizzy* by Libba Moore Gray, author and Jada Rowland, illustrator (1993)

# 4.3: *The Little Red Hen: An Old Story* by Margot Zemach (1993)

# 4.4: *The Quiltmaker’s Gift* by Jeff Brumbeau, author and Gail De Marcken, illustrator (2001)

# 4.5: *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts, author and Noah Z. Jones, illustrator (2007)

# 4.6: *Zen Shorts* by Jon J. Muth (2005)

# 4.7: *Mama Panya’s Pancakes* by May & Rich Chamberlain, authors and Julia Cairns, illustrator (2005)

# 4.8: *Should I Share my Ice Cream* by Mo Willems (2011)

**4.9:** *Under the Lemon Moon* by Edith Hope Fine and Rene King Moreno, illustrator (1999)

***Giving***

**4.10:** *Punchinello and the Most Marvelous Gift* by Max Lucado (2004)

# 4.11: *The Gold Coin* by Alma Flor Ada, author and Neil Waldman, illustrator (1994)

# 4.12: *Mmm, Cookies!* by Robert Munsch, author and Michael Martchenko, illustrator (2000)

# 4.13: *I Know a Lady* by Charlotte Zolotow, author and James Stevenson, illustrator (1992)

# 4.14: *Stone Soup* by J. Jon Muth (2003)

***Kindness***

**4.15:** *Here Comes the Cat!* by Frank Asch, author & illustrator, and Vladimir Vasilʹevich Vagin, author & illustrator. (1989/2011)

**4.16:** *The Sweetest Fig* by Chris van Allsburg (1993)

**4.17:** *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids* by Carol McCloud, author and David Messing, illustrator (2015)

**4.18:** *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* by Philip C. Stead, author and Erin E. Stead, illustrator (2010)

**4.19:** *Ordinary Mary’s Extraordinary Deed* by Emily Pearson, author and Fumi Kosaka, illustrator (2002)

**4.20:** *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller, author and Jen Hill, illustrator (2018)

***Selfishness***

**4.21:** *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe (1987)

**4.22:** *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde, author and Jeanne Bowman, illustrator (2019)

**4.23:** *It’s Mine* by Leo Lionni (1996)

**5.0: Music & Videos for Children**

**5.1:** *Sesame Street: Try a Little Kindness* (with Tori Kelly) (1:54)

**5.2:** *Try Some Kindness (The Letter K Song*) by Little Buds ABC’s (2:18)

**5.3:** *Generosity Bulletin Board* by Mr. Rozsa (2:29)

**6.0: Curriculum & Theme-Based Classroom Activities for Children for Authority, Leadership, and Power**

# *from Tapestry of Faith*

***Generosity***

**6.1: Chalice Children: A Program about Our Unitarian Universalist Community for Preschoolers**

**6.1.1:** *Session 10: Helping Others*

**6.2: Creating Home: A Program on Developing a Sense of Home Grounded in Faith for Grades K-1**

**6.2.1:** *Session 8: Hare’s Gifts*

**6.3: Wonderful Welcome: A Program for Children Grades K-1**

**6.3.1:** *Session 1: The Gift of Love*

**6.3.2:** *Session 7: The Gift of Helping*

**6.3.3:** *Session 11: The Gift of Stewardship*

**6.3.4:** *Session 15: The Gift of Ourselves*

**6.4: Love Surrounds Us: A Program on the UU Principles and Beloved Community for Grades K-1**

**6.4.1:** Session 12: A Peaceful and Fair World

**6.5: Moral Tales: A Program on Making Choices for Grades 2-3**

**6.5.1:** *Session 8: Do unto Others*

**6.5.2:** *Session 9: Generosity: Give and Ye Shall Receive*

**6.6: Love Will Guide Us: A Program for Grades 2-3 that Applies the Wisdom of the Six Sources to the Big Questions**

**6.6.1:** *Session 7: Give Love*

**6.6.2:** *Session 11: Love and Gratitude*

**6.7: Faithful Journeys: A Program about Pilgrimages of Faith in Action for Grades 2-3**

**6.7.1:** *Session 5: Finding Balance*

**6.8: Love Connects Us: A Program on Living in Unitarian Universalist Covenant for Grades 4-5**

**6.8.1:** *Session 14: Our Heritage’s Calling*

**6.9: Heeding the Call: A Program on Justice-making for Junior High School Youth**

**6.9.1:** *Workshop 7: The Call for Abundance*

**Resources for Youth & Adults**

**7.0: Reflections, Readings, Stories & Poetry**

**7.1:** *The Benefits of Generosity* by Lisa Firestone (250 words)

**7.2:** *A Guided Generosity Practice* by Amy Love (221 words)

**7.3:** *Generous Like an Onion* by Thích Nhất Hạnh (112 words)

**7.4:** *7 Habits of Highly Productive Giving* by Beat Generosity Burnout by Adam Grant and Reb Rebele (155 words)

**7.5:** *Where Are You on the Generosity Spectrum?* by Adam Grant and Reb Rebele (175 words)

**7.6:** *The “Flip Side” of Generosity* by [www.skillsyouneed.com](http://www.skillsyouneed.com) (244 words)

**7.7:***The Wisdom of Generosity* by Theodore Roosevelt Malloch (246 words)

**7.8: *Generosity First* by Jean Smith (223 words)**

**7.9:** *The Eight Degrees of Charity* by Michael Norton

**7.10:** *Rumi: Ten Thousand Miles Away* by [Andrew Harvey](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/search?author_first=Andrew&author_last=Harvey) (224 words)

**7.11: *Giving* by B.J. Gallagher (180 words)**

**7.12:** *The Gift of Needing Help* by Marilyn Chandler McEntyre (121 words)

**7.13:** *We Always Have Something to Give* by Diane Eshin Rizzetto (260 words)

**7.14:** *When Nothing is Everything* by Lama Yeshe (147 words)

**7.15:** *Be Generous with Your Time* by Joseph Telushkin (264 words)

**7.16:** *A True Saint* by Wendy Lustbader (97 words)

**7.17:***Cultivating an Attitude of Generosity* by Amy Love (307 words)

**7.18:** *Seven Gifts That Require No Possessions* by Monshu Koshin Ohtani (159 words)

**7.19:** *Bowls of Community* by Brenda Shoshanna (240 words)

**7.20:** *The Generosity of Kindness* by Jean Maalouf (199 words)

**7.21:***Room for Generosity* by Wendy Lustbader (237 words)

**7.22:** *Giving Becomes Love* David La Chapelle (158 words)

**7.23:***Spend it Now* by Annie Dillard (123 word)

**7.24:** *When Altruism Meant Generosity* by Jason Kreag (215 words)

**7.25:** *Following the Golden Rule and Finding Gold: Generosity and Success in Negotiation* by Lela P. Love and Sukhsimranjit Singh (297 words)

**7.26:** *Value Chain: Intentional Generosity* by Andrew Murphy (175 words)

**8.0: Curriculum & Theme-Based Classroom Activities for Youth & Adults**

***Youth***

**A Tapestry of Faith**

**8.1: Virtue Ethics: An Ethical Development Program for High School Youth**

**8.1.1:** *Workshop 9: Generosity*

**Adults**

**8.2: Spirit of Life: An Adult Program on Unitarian Universalist Spirituality**

**8.2.1:** *Workshop 3: The Stirrings of Compassion: Caring For One Another*

**8.3: What Moves U: A Unitarian Universalist Theology Program for Adults**

**8.3.1:** *Workshop 3: Hosea Ballou*

**9.0: Popular Music**

# 9.1: *Try A Little Kindness* by Glen Campbell (2:24)

# 9.2: *We Are the World* by USA for Africa (8:00)

# 9.3: *One Love* by Bob Marley (2:45)

**9.4:** *Stand by Me* by Ben E King, 1961 (2:57)

# 9.5: *Wonderful World, Beautiful People* by Jimmy Cliff (3:12)

# 9.6: *Dear Mama* by 2pac (4:40)

**9.7:** *Bridge Over Troubled Waters* by Simon & Garfunkel (4:40)

**9.8:***Give a Little Bit* by Supertramp (4:08)

**9.9:** *Humble and Kind* by Tim McGraw (4:29)

**9.10:** *Kind and Generous* by Natalie Merchant (3:58)

**9.11:** *Lean on Me* by Bill Withers (4:19)

**9.12:** *Gratitude* by Earth, Wind, and Fire (3:37)

**9.13:** *Point of Life* by Randy Travis (3:37)

**9.14:** *You’ve Got A Friend* by Carole King (5:10)

**9.15:** *You’ve Got A Friend in Me* by Randy Newman (2:08)

**9.16:** *Your Song* by Elton John (3:48)

**10.0: Videos, Short Films, Movie Clips, Audio Recordings & Photography**

**Generosity**

**10.1:** *Gratitude Revealed: Generosity* from MOVING ART by Louie Schwartzberg (4:10)

**10.2:** *On Generosity* by [David Altwege](https://vimeo.com/altweger) (0:59)

**10:3:** *The Most Generous Boy in The World!* by Meir Kay (2:06)

**10.4:** *The Generosity Paradox* by motiontv (22:20)

**10.5:** *Journey America | Dispatch #36 – Generosity* by Outwild TV (3:10)

***TED Talks***

**10.6:** *Why Some People Are More Altruistic Than Others* by Abigail Marsh (12:23)

**10.7:** *The Power of Kindness* by Orly Wahba (21:31)

**10.8:** *The Generosity Experiment* by Sasha Dichter (19:37)

**10.9:** *The key to true generosity* by Rachael Chong (8:18)

**10.10:** *Generosity: A Path to Deep Connection* by Rachel Delong (10:39)

**10.11:** *Excellence through generosity* by Gilmore Junio (15:54)

**10.12:** *The impact of generosity* by Wendy Steele (11:05)

**10.13:** *What If Generosity Was Taught by Those Who Have the Least?* by Nipun Mehta (18:01)

**10.14:** *Imagine Abundance: Everyone Wins!* by Carine Clark (11:46)

**10.15:** *Creating abundance from generosity* by Darrell Kopke (16:28)

**10.16:** *The Generosity of Scars* by Scott Mann (18:11)

**10.17:** *The Power of Gratitude and Generosity: serving Those Who Have Served* by Lida Citroen (15:17)

**Resources**

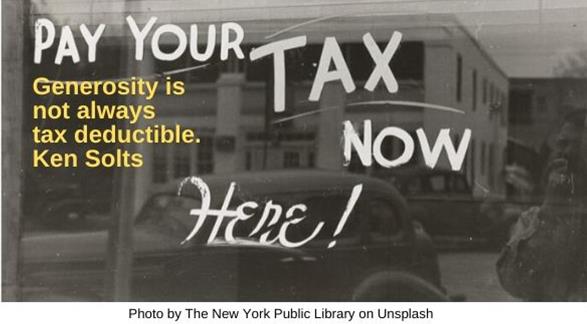
**1.0: Pins for Generosity**

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**Resources for Children**

**2.0: Children’s Homilies, Sermons, Time for All Ages & Resources**

**2.1:** *The Gift of a Raspberry* by Martha Dallas (446 words)

This was created as a Message for All Ages for a service honoring Yom Ha’Shoah, the Jewish holiday for Holocaust Remembrance. In 2016, Yom Ha’Shoah begins on the evening of Wednesday, May 4th and ends on the evening of Thursday, May 5th.

Once there was a place that was very bleak and dreary. All the colors there were only shades of gray and brown. Nothing grew there: no grass, no flowers, no trees. And this place was surrounded by walls and fences.

People lived in this place. Every day they were forced to work digging holes, and then shoveling the dirt they’d dug out, back into those same holes. This work made them feel tired and their bodies ached. And they felt hopeless, for their work never amounted to anything.

The food they ate was just a little bread and some broth. Their bellies were never full, and they were always hungry. Plus, they got sick a lot, for this food wasn’t nutritious enough to keep them healthy.

At night, they slept, if they slept, on hard wooden beds. They had no pillows nor blankets, so they were cold and they shivered much of the night. When they did sleep, they had bad dreams, and when they woke up, they were just as tired as they’d been the night before.

One morning in this place, a girl went out. And suddenly, she saw something on the ground. Something special and precious. It was...a red raspberry!! Quickly, she picked it up and slipped it into her pocket. She kept it safe there all day, and that night, she found a leaf that had blown in from the outside. She put the leaf in her hand and placed the red raspberry on the leaf, and went to her friend, and presented it to her friend as a gift. And her friend received it.

I tell you this story, not only because it reminds us that in the most sad, hopeless, bleak and dreary places, we can – if we keep our eyes open – find miraculous surprises – treasures that are bright and sweet and delicious, like that raspberry. But more importantly, when we find these treasures, we can give them up, give them away, give them to—a friend.

This story is true. It actually happened. And I want you to remember this story. So today I brought...some raspberries. And I invite you to come take one. Take it and hold it, and when everyone who wants one has one, I’ll tell you what to do next…

Now, holding your raspberry, imagine that your world is dreary, sad, hopeless, and bleak. And imagine that your friend has just given you this raspberry. This raspberry was the one thing your friend truly owned, and she chose to make it a gift for you. And when you’ve imagined that, I invite you to enjoy your raspberry, to eat your raspberry, and to always remember.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/story/gift-raspberry>

**3.0: Wisdom Stories about Generosity, Giving, and Kindness**

***Generosity***

**3.1:** *Sophia’s Guest* by Becky Brooks (821 words)

Once upon a time there was a teacher named Sophia. Sophia had been a teacher in the town where she lived for so long that the kids, she first had in her class grew up and had kids of their own and sent them to her class too. Nearly everyone in the town knew Sophia and loved her because not only was she an excellent teacher, but she was also very kind.  
 One day when Sophia got to work, she found a note on her desk. The note read:

Dear Sophia,I will be around tomorrow.I wonder if I might stop by your house for tea tomorrow afternoon.Your Friend,God

At first Sophia thought it was a joke. But the more she thought about it, the more she realized that if it was a joke, it wasn’t a very funny joke. And she couldn’t think of anyone who would play a joke on her like that.

Then she thought: what if it wasn’t a joke? What if God really was going to come to her house tomorrow afternoon? Sophia thought she should get ready, just in case.

On her way home from work, she stopped by the store and bought one of those mats people put on their porch that says, in big letters: WELCOME!

When she got home, she cleaned her house from top to bottom. She brought in fresh flowers from the garden and put them in a vase in the living room. She cleaned and cleaned until everything was sparkly.

In the morning, Sophia realized didn’t know what God liked to eat, so she baked bread and made a casserole and fruit salad, and baked some cookies too. And what about the tea? Did God like hot tea or iced tea? She thought she better make both. And what if God’s favorite thing in the whole world was lemonade? She thought she should make some of that too.  
She was so nervous! She didn’t know what to expect.  
Just then, there was a knock at the door. Sophia’s heart went pat pat pat.

She took a big breath, opened the door slowly, and on the other side was...the Mayor of the town.

“Hello Sophia! I was walking by and smelled the delicious fresh baked bread!”

Sophia said, “I’m so glad you’re here, come in, come in! I am expecting a very important visitor who you might want to meet! Please come in and make yourself at home.”

Sophia and the Mayor sat, having a nice discussion when there was a knock at the door. Sophia’s heart went pat pat pat. She took a deep breath, opened the door slowly, and on the other side was...a group of children from her class.

“Hello Miss Sophia! We were walking by and noticed the smell of fresh baked cookies!”

Sophia said, “I’m so glad you’re here, come in, come in! I am expecting a very important visitor who you might want to meet! Please come in and help yourself to some cookies.”

The children were giving the Mayor some much-needed advice when there was a knock at the door. Sophia’s heart went pat pat pat. Deep breath…open door… It was...the entire women’s covenant group from church!

“Hello Sophia! We heard the tea kettle and laugher and thought you might be having a party!”

Sophia said, “I’m so glad you’re here, come in, come in! I am expecting a very important visitor who you might want to meet! Please come in and make yourself at home.”

In the afternoon, people stopped by Sophia’s house, lured by the yummy smells and happy sounds. The townspeople filled her house, upstairs and downstairs and overflowed into the back yard and the front yard. As they got hungry, they made dinner together and ate as the sun set and the moon rose.

It was a great party. People were playing games and telling stories and baking and playing music and talking together. Sophia had such a nice time that she completely forgot about her very important guest. Even as she waved goodbye to her friends at the end of the night, she felt only contentment at having such a lovely party.

In the morning, though, Sophia woke up and remembered everything. She was confused. Whatever had happened to God?  
 All during her walk to work she tried to figure out what had happened. Along the way she smiled and waved to the people she ran into who had been at her party. She thought to herself that she really should do that again sometime.

When Sophia arrived at work, she was surprised to find another note on her desk. It read:

Dear Sophia,I had such a wonderful time yesterday. The bread was delicious, the cookies were divine! Tea mixedwith lemonade is my very favorite! Thank you for being such a wonderful host!I hope we can do it again soon!Love,God

Source: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/story/sophias-guest>

**3.2:** *The Umbrella Sanctuary* by Tim Atkins (1,066 words)

To prepare for this activity, place umbrellas in the pews. Instruct people to open the umbrellas when the man in the story receives the umbrella.

Today we have a very special item in our very special Mystery Box. This item is going to teach us more about sanctuaries. Who wants to guess the Mystery Object in the Mystery Box is today? <wait for guesses>

Some good ideas, some close, but nothing quite right. Would one of you be willing to open the box and pull out what it’s inside?

Go ahead and show it to everyone...That’s right. It’s an umbrella.

What is an umbrella used for?  
 That’s right. It’s to stay dry when it’s raining outside.

Once upon a time, a long time ago -- okay, it was Thursday -- in a faraway place known as North Carolina, I was caught outside in a sudden rainstorm! I was silly and didn’t look at the weather before I left and I was walking around outside when it started to pour! I got so wet; it took hours to dry off. And I didn’t have my trusty umbrella with me.

I have a story for you today, but you have two important parts in the story. Whenever I say “boom” I need you to shout “boom” as loud as you can. Let’s practice. “Boom.”

And there will be times when I say the word “Sanctuary.” Whenever you hear the word sanctuary, I want you to quietly say the word Sanctuary. Let’s try this one. “Sanctuary.”

Great job.

So once upon a time there was a little girl just like you who was also caught outside in a sudden rainstorm. She ran inside to the nearest store – I wish I had thought of that Thursday – to wait out the rain storm. As soon as she closed the door, a bright flash and a loud boom of thunder followed. I didn’t hear you – I said a loud BOOM <hold hand to hear> of thunder followed.

The little girl knew that she would be stuck in that store for quite a while. She started to look around at some of the different items in the store when the shop keeper appeared. The shop keeper was the oldest woman the little girl had ever seen! Her hair was as white as the snow and her face all wrinkly. The little girl was brave enough to admit she was a little scared.

“Young woman,” said the old shopkeep, “can I help you with something?”  
 The little girl pointed outside, too afraid to talk.

“Ahhh,” said the old shopkeep, “Did you run in here to escape the rain?”  
The little girl nodded slowly as another loud boom <hold hand to ear> of thunder shook the store.

“Well, you can wait here if you’d like in my little sanctuary. We’ve got a nice sturdy roof over our heads, and it will keep you safe and dry.”  
The little girl appreciated the offer, but she really needed to get back outside and continue on her way. The old shopkeep could tell the little girl was hesitating.

“Or,” continued the shopkeep, “You could head back outside with this.” The old shopkeep went behind the counter and what do you think she pulled out?

That’s right. An umbrella.

“Take this umbrella,” said the old shopkeep. “I don’t know why it’s raining. But I do know that you can keep dry under this portable sanctuary.”

The little girl beamed, but then stopped in her tracks. “But I don’t have any money” said the little girl.

The old shopkeep waved her off. “No worries little girl. Just be sure to offer the umbrella to someone else when they need it.”

The little girl accepted the umbrella, headed back outside, opened up her umbrella and went on her way.

The little girl was happy and dry. She started skipping down the street and was perfectly happy when she saw a man wearing a suit, trying to keep dry with a newspaper over his head. She heard another loud boom and the newspaper began to fall apart under the heavy rain. She skipped over to the man in the suit and held the umbrella up as high as she could.

“Thank you,” said the man.

Remembering the words from the old shopkeep, the little girl told the man, “I don’t know why it’s raining. But I do know that you can keep dry with me under this portable sanctuary.”

The man smiled in relief. He had been having a really bad day – see, he was wearing a suit because he was on his way to a job interview. He had been without work for a long, long time, and was desperate. He had to walk to the interview because he couldn’t afford a car. When it started to rain, he cursed his luck – he would show up to his really important job interview soaked, and he knew it would make a really bad first impression.

The little girl spotted her family in the store across the street.  
 “Here,” said the little girl, “take the umbrella with you. I see my family right over there across the street.”

“Oh, I couldn’t take your umbrella,” said the man feeling guilty.

“No! Take it! Just be sure to offer the umbrella to someone else when they need it.” The little girl put the umbrella into his hands and then ran off to meet her family.

The man couldn’t believe how nice the little girl was. He knew he had to hurry, though, because it was almost time for his very important interview. Another boom of thunder caused him to start running.

Well, I can tell you that the man got that job he was interviewing for. And soon enough, he was able to afford to buy a few umbrellas of his own. Whenever it would rain, he would bring not only his umbrella that the little girl had given him, he would bring two more small umbrellas to give away to people who were stuck outside in the rain. And every time he gave away an umbrella, he would say,

“I don’t know why it’s raining. But I do know that you can keep dry under this portable sanctuary.”

And soon, everyone in their town had an umbrella that they would take with them. And if the townspeople passed by someone without an umbrella, they would give up their own umbrella and pass on the words, now known by the entire town, “I don’t know why it’s raining. But I do know that you can keep dry under this portable sanctuary.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/story/umbrella-sanctuary>

**3.3:** *The Teachings of the Rain God* (525 words)

Adapted from a version on the 2003 [*International Year of Fresh Water website*](http://www.un.org/events/water/).

One day a long time ago, the elephant acted like a bully. He challenged the Rain God.

“You covered the Earth in green,” the elephant said, “and I’ll bet you feel pretty good about yourself. But guess what! If I tear up the grass and the trees and the bushes, the green will all be gone. What then?”

“What then?” answered the Rain God. “I’ll stop sending rain. No more green will grow, and you won’t have anything to drink or eat. That’s what!”

But a few words weren’t going to stop the elephant. He ripped up all the trees, the bushes, and the grass with his trunk. All the green disappeared from Earth.

That made the Rain God mad. He stopped the rain. Deserts began appearing everywhere.

Soon the elephant was dying of hunger and thirst. He tried digging where the rivers used to be, but he didn’t find a drop of water. So, the elephant changed his tune. He praised the Rain God and apologized.

“I’m sorry,” the elephant said. “I was too proud, and I misbehaved. But now I’ve learned my lesson. I repent, so please make it rain!”

But the Rain God said nothing. Every day the world dried up more.

The elephant knew the rooster was loud, so he asked the rooster to praise the Rain God.

After looking all over the place, the rooster found the Rain God hidden behind a cloud. The rooster praised the Rain God with such fine words that the Rain God relented. A little rain fell and made a small pool very close to the elephant’s home.

The same day, the elephant decided to go into the woods and look for food. He ordered the tortoise to protect the pool.

“Don’t let anybody drink here,” the elephant said. “Tell them the water is mine and nobody else’s.”

The tortoise tried to obey, and turned some small animals away. But then the lion came, and the lion wasn’t impressed. He growled at the tortoise and drank all he wanted.

When the elephant returned, he grew very angry at the tortoise.

“Sir,” said the tortoise, “what could I do? The lion was big and had sharp claws. And all the other animals were mad at me, so I got out of the way.”

“I’ll show you mad,” the elephant said. He raised one foot and stamped on the tortoise to crush her.

The tortoise was very strong, and the elephant did not kill her. But he flattened her out, and the tortoise has remained flat ever since.

Suddenly the Rain God spoke. His loud voice filled the sky, and he warned the animals not to follow the elephant’s example.

“If you want more rain, don’t be like the elephant,” the Rain God said. “Don’t challenge powerful gods or anything more powerful than you. Don’t wreck the things you need. Don’t make weaker animals protect your property, and don’t punish animals that are trying to help you. Most of all, don’t be too proud and don’t try to have everything for yourself. If you are lucky and have a lot, share it with others who need it.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop2/teachings-rain-god>

**3.4:** *A Brand, New Beginning* (485 words)

Curious, but wary, the villagers or Arkos came to a facilitated meeting arranged by Rev. Szekely Janos, the minister of the Unitarian church. An outsider trained by the congregation’s North American partner was going to facilitate a conversation about the town’s problems and possible solutions. Coming together for such a meeting was an extraordinary act for the people of Arkos. Under the communist government that ruled their country for more than four decades, voluntary association was discouraged. Fear of being reported by a neighbor squashed all thoughts of working together for the betterment of the village community. This gathering proved a brand-new beginning for all.

Villagers sat on benches as the meeting began, prepared to listen to someone else tell them what the problems were and what could be done. Quickly they learned that no one was going to tell them what they needed. It was up to them to identify the most pressing problems in their community, to explore possible solutions, and to create and follow through on action plans.

It did not take long for villagers to agree that clean water—water delivery and a sanitation system—was their most pressing need. They worked together to create a plan to tap into the water and sanitation systems of a nearby city. When they sought outside help, leaders in the newly formed water committee were equipped with a solid, village-created plan, broad community agreement, and the moral support of their partner congregation in Houston, Texas. The leaders succeeded in securing nearly $1 million in grants from European Union sources to build excellent water and sanitations systems. The cost to the Houston partner church for its support of Arkos’ effort was under $1,000.

The partnership model did more than help Arkos acquire needed water systems. It built local leaders’ capacity to help themselves. When young adults in the village wanted a shorter term, more manageable way to contribute to solving the village’s problems, they empowered themselves to organize an annual clean-up of the local streams. Removing old tires and other trash from the streams immediately made the water cleaner, even while the grant process for the larger project was underway. In addition, people in the village reactivated a local festival that had not been held in many years, and used the festival to showcase local arts and traditions. They improved space for their school and for a day care facility. They are solving the problem of how to conduct a traditional funeral while still honoring modern health codes by building a funeral house in the center of town near the Unitarian church. Arkos is a village alive and empowered, a village with the capacity to help itself—and the Unitarians of Arkos are credited by their village with making the transformation possible. The partnership between the Unitarians of Arkos, Transylvania, and the Unitarian Universalists of Houston, Texas, grounded in respectful partnership, is bearing wonderful fruit.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/ethics/workshop7/191956.shtml>

**3.5:** *A Hospital Blessing* (629 words)

As human knowledge has grown, we have come to know the immensity of the universe. The universe is big and we human beings can seem infinitesimally small. The hurting in the world, our community, and our families seems huge, and we can feel as though there is little we can do. There’s so much that needs care and compassion, so much pain and suffering, and so much hurting and injustice.

It’s a lot to wrap our brains around, to think about, to try to understand and work to solve. It’s a lot for our hearts to feel, to keep open and sensitive and responding. It’s a lot for our hands to try to do. It’s more than any of us can do on our own.

How do we keep ourselves from being overwhelmed? How do we keep our spirits from sinking into the pain and staying there? How do we keep ourselves going? How do we link with others in our efforts?

Ritual can be a powerful tool for raising our spirits and building our capacity for compassion. A story from one of our congregations offers an example; The Rev. Jurgen Schwing is an ordained United Church of Christ minister who is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley in California. He works at a nearby hospital, where members of the congregation also volunteer, offering spiritual care to patients. As they worked with patients, they noticed something: the patients and their families weren’t the only ones needing spiritual care. The hospital’s doctors, nurses, social workers, and other health care staff were often looking weary and stretched. Rev. Schwing could see how the constant care of patients was draining the staff, both emotionally and spiritually. He talked with the Unitarian Universalist volunteers and decided to offer a ritual for the staff: a ritual blessing of their hands.

It is a secular hospital. Many of the staff have no religious affiliation. The hospital administration initially had concerns about having a “blessing of the hands,” even if it was designed to be both voluntary and interfaith. But they gave their consent, mostly because they didn’t want to un-invite the clergy and volunteers whom Rev. Schwing had already invited!

The team thought thirty or forty participants might come to the ritual. Yet, when the day came, one hundred fifty nurses, doctors, and other staff lined up to receive a blessing of their hands.

Each participant was invited into the meditation room, where a member of the team spoke to them. “What is your name?” “What is your role in the hospital?” “May I hold and bless your hands?” The team member then held their hands and spoke words of blessing created for that individual.

For example, a phlebotomist, who takes a patient’s blood, received this blessing:

Susan, may your hands be blessed. May they be calm and steady. May you be able to induce confidence in the people you serve. May you provide great health care, and may you also share of your heart and of your compassion. May your work contribute to the detection of diseases and in this way contribute to health.

Susan, may those who come here for healing be touched not just by your work, but by your being. May you find wholeness, and may you go home at the end of each day feeling blessed and feeling that you have contributed to the healing of the world.

Since that first day, Rev. Schwing, his staff, and volunteers have offered thousands of those blessings. Hospital staff arrive stressed out, with jaws set, and very much in “work mode.” By the end of the blessing, there are tears or smiles or both. The staff are renewed, strengthened, and ready to bless their patients with attentive and compassionate care.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/life/workshop3/159187.shtml>

**3.6:** *The Caican Water Project* (1,032 words)

Based on information provided by Rev. Mike Young, The First Unitarian Church of Honolulu.

Sometimes, the moment you meet someone, you know they will be a very important friend in your life. Other times, friendships start slowly. You might not know how important the friendship is for many years.

The partnership between a congregation in Honolulu, Hawaii, and a Unitarian Universalist Church in Caican, Philippines began slowly, with children exchanging letters and pictures.

After some years, Mike Young, minister of First Unitarian Church of Honolulu, had a chance to visit the Philippines, and he went to Caican. He met many generous, wonderful people at the partner church. But it was the Caican children he fell in love with. One time a whole crowd, all ages, came swimming with him in the ocean of their coastal village.

The next year, Rev. Young went back to the Philippines and again, he spent a few days in Caican. Again, he swam in the ocean with the children. This time, one of their ministers came swimming too. Mike let the children use the dive mask he had brought. It was too big for them. Some water leaked in, but the Caican children did not mind because the mask helped them see their ocean fish, up close and personal!

Back on land, a Caican minister, Rev. Tirso Ponca, took Mike to one of the village’s hand-pumped wells to wash off the salt water. The fresh water felt good. Rev. Young cupped his hands to take a drink.

Rev. Ponca sounded angry. He told Mike, “You must never do that! The water is not safe!” Later, Mike learned why Rev. Ponca had tried to protect him. For 20 years, the children of Caican had been born with yellow eyes. They had a condition called jaundice; a sign of a disease called Hepatitis A. Hepatitis germs were in the well water—the water he had wanted to drink. Caican’s simple septic tanks and shallow aquifer could not adequately filter and recycle the village’s water. Water used for bathing and washing came back again through the public hand-pumped wells. The village of Caican had no safe drinking water.

Mike Young decided right then: Babies in Caican would no longer be born with yellow eyes! Now he knew their congregation’s partnership could be so much more than letters, photographs, or even visits and playing in the ocean together. In his heart, Rev. Young had already begun the Caican Water Project.

In a true partnership, partners make plans together. Rev. Young had to find out if the people of Caican wanted to work on getting clean water for the village. Maybe there was something else more important the Honolulu congregation could help them get done.

So, the people of Caican had community meetings. They talked about what was good about life in Caican, and ways they could make life even better. They listed problems they had tried to solve in the past and what had worked to solve them. For problems that were not solved yet, the people talked about what they could do differently to reach a solution. They talked about the time, the money and other resources they already had, which they could use to create solutions. They talked about ways local organizations or the government could help.

Because some people don’t like to talk at big meetings, community members went around to each person’s house to talk with them individually. Everyone had a chance to give their ideas to make life in Caican even better.

And the result of all this talk? The people of Caican agreed that clean water was the top priority to work on with their partner, First Unitarian Church of Honolulu. After Mike Young went home to Hawaii, the Caican people elected a committee to lead the water project. They started looking for sources of clean water.

They looked upstream of their aquifer and upstream of the recycling septic system. They found a clean, flowing spring that seemed to produce enough water for the village! The owner of the land agreed they could drill a well and put a pump there. When Mike returned to Caican, a happy parade of children, teenagers and adults took the American minister to see.

At first it seemed getting water from this spring would be a lot of work. They had to dig a well, get the pump and a tank and lay almost two miles of pipe to bring the water to Caican. They had to provide ways for people along the pipeline to get water, set up another tank and build faucets. But sometimes we get ahead of ourselves with what a big job we’ve got. Rev. Young remembered the first step was just to drill the well and make sure the water would really be clean to drink.

Drilling the well cost $385, a fortune in the Philippines but not so much for the American congregation to raise. First Unitarian Church of Honolulu sent the money. The well was dug and everyone waited for test results. Would the water be safe to drink?

The new well was polluted. Not with hepatitis, but with a common bacterium, E. Coli. The people cleaned the well head. They pumped more water. This time the tester said, “Clean!”

Plans went ahead to lay pipe and build six faucets so the village would have drinkable water. Soon, maybe there will be a tap in every home. And Caican babies will no longer be born with yellow eyes.

It sounds like a happy ending: A partnership that started out as letters and photos, and became very, very important. But there have been two surprising results. One is that just as the Honolulu partners helped Caican’s Unitarian Universalist congregation bring their village clean water, the Caican congregation has helped other villages in the Philippines. Caican villagers now teach people in other communities to organize the meetings and interviews that bring good community solutions to real community problems.

Another surprise—and not so happy—is that the water improvement in Caican may worsen the village’s sewage problem. More water means more flushing. Mike Young knows the partnership’s work is not finished. The next project is inevitable: a sewage system for Caican that works. Everything is connected.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop6/caican-water-project>

**3.7:** *Finding Balance* (1,159 words)

“So, Ray,” asked his mother, “what do you want for your birthday?”

It was a surprisingly hard question to answer. What did he want for his birthday? “I don’t know, Mom. Can I get back to you on that one?”

Ray grabbed his skateboard and went out to the driveway to think as he rode. What did he want for his birthday? It was the kind of question that deserved his best thinking. Ray remembered back to his birthday a year ago, when he unwrapped the skateboard he was riding now. He felt a wave of excitement rush over him once again as he pictured unwrapping the bright purple box. He had barely taken the time to yell: “Cool! Thanks!” before he ran off to call his best friend, Vikram, to let him know that they would be riding together now. Ray thought back to all the time he had spent on the driveway, practicing his tricks. He’d gotten pretty good in just a year! There must be something else for this year that would be as much fun.

As Ray cruised down the slope of the driveway, his mind drifted back to that first day, when Vikram had come over to teach him how to ride the board. “It’s all about balance,” he’d said, “and balance is all about knowing where your center is.” As he approached the bottom of the driveway, Ray shifted his center of gravity just a bit to the right, pushing the board into a turn. “It’s all about balance, and balance is all about knowing where your center is.”

“Funny,” thought Ray, “but I think my center is right here, riding my skateboard. This is where my life feels balanced, where I feel the most like me. What other birthday present is going to do that?”

All of a sudden, the idea came to Ray in a flash. He remembered how his church, the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, had started something different that people could do around Christmas. Every family in the congregation was asked to think about what they would usually spend on Christmas presents, and then to give half of that amount to a special fund at the church, the Greater Good program. Ray had been amazed when their one congregation had raised $64,000! The money had gone to help local families, and to help a village in Honduras get fresh water.

Ray had worried, at first, about having only half a Christmas. But it had been, after all, a whole Christmas, only with not so many presents. And somehow the good feeling of helping out families with so much less than he had lasted longer than the excitement of unwrapping a whole pile of gifts.

Ray wondered, “What would it be like to have half a birthday?” Maybe pretty good.

“Hey, Ray!” someone called, interrupting his thoughts.

“Oh, hi, Sebastian,” Ray said, jumping gracefully off his skateboard. “What’s up?”

Sebastian was in Ray’s class at school, but they did not usually play together outside of school. Sebastian was not a skateboarder. Now he was just sitting on the front steps of his building.

“Nothing much,” Sebastian said. “I just came outside for a little while. I’m not doing anything.” Ray noticed that Sebastian was looking at Ray’s skateboard.

“Do you want to try it?” Ray asked.

Sebastian frowned. “Sure I do, but I don’t know how. It looks hard.”

“Well, I could show you. I could help you,” Ray said.

Ray handed Sebastian the skateboard. Sebastian looked like he did not know what to do with it. “Okay,” Ray said, taking the skateboard back. He showed Sebastian how to place his left foot and kick off with his right. Then Sebastian tried it. He wiggled too much and quickly jumped off, looking embarrassed. But then he tried it again. Ray encouraged Sebastian. He heard himself saying the same words Vikram had said to him: “It’s all about balance, finding your center.”

By the time Ray had to go home, Sebastian was really catching on. He hopped off the skateboard and handed it back to Ray, a big smile on his face.

“You should get a skateboard, too,” Ray told him. “You could ride around with Vikram and me.”

“Yeah, that would be cool,” Sebastian said, “but I don’t think that’s going to happen. There’s not a lot of money for big presents at my house, but I had fun learning how to do it. Thanks a lot.”

“Sure,” said Ray. “See you tomorrow.”

“Yeah, see you tomorrow,” said Sebastian, and went back into his building. Watching the door close behind Sebastian, Ray felt sad. It wasn’t fair that some kids could have a skateboard, and other kids who would really like riding one could not. It wasn’t fair when kids wanted to play a sport, and their families could not pay for all the fees and equipment and special clothes.

Suddenly, Ray knew what he wanted for his birthday. He pushed his board back up the driveway as fast as he could go. “Mom! I know what I want for my birthday! I want half a birthday!” The words tumbled out of his mouth as Ray explained. It didn’t take his mother long to figure it out.

“A sports fund for kids. What a great idea! I think we could get a lot of people’s help at church.”

“Could a sports fund be part of the Greater Good program?” Ray asked. “There are so many people at church, and everyone has a birthday. Every year. Not just the kids, either. If all the kids and all the grown-ups at church were willing to have half a birthday, that’s a lot of money for skateboards and helmets for kids whose families can’t afford them.”

“Frankly, I had no idea what to get you,” his mother said. “Goodness knows there’s enough stuff in your bedroom, and all you really like to play with is your skateboard.”

“I could give away other stuff. But not my skateboard,” said Ray.

“Well, your idea involves giving up presents you don’t really need,” said his mother. “Then we can use the money to help other people get something they do need. It’s kind of like having your cake and eating it too.”

“Oh, I definitely want cake on my birthday.”

“That’s not what I meant.” His mom laughed. “I just meant it’s the kind of birthday present that is good in a lot of different ways. It’s very... “

“Balanced?” Ray filled in.

“Yes,” said his mom. “You give up some birthday presents, and you get back something much more valuable. You will know you helped make things fairer. When the gifts you gave up help someone else, that makes a kind of balance. If that makes any kind of sense.”

“Yep,” said Ray. “It does. If I can find my center and my balance, that’s the best birthday present I can think of.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session5/132324.shtml>

**3.8:** *The Dog at the Well* (730 words)

Permission to use “The Dog at the Well” in this curriculum granted by Marilyn McFarlane, author of Sacred Myths: Stories of World Religions (Sibyl Publications, 1996).

One day Muhammad told his friends and followers a story about a thirsty man, a well, and a dog. This was the story:

A man left his home to take a long journey. It was a hot day, and he had not walked far before his head began to ache and his mouth felt dry. The sun blazed overhead, the fields he passed were brown and withered, and no water could be seen.

“I’m so thirsty. I must find water,” he muttered. “Surely I will soon come to a well.”

Just as he had the thought, he saw a well by the side of the road. Thankfully, he hurried to it, almost tasting the sweetness of the cool water that lay in its depths. But when he peered into the well, he saw no water. The well was dry. Disheartened, and even more thirsty now, he continued along the scorching road, hoping to find another well. Sure enough, before long he saw one. “At last, water!” he whispered, looking into the well. But it too was dry.

There wasn’t a drop of moisture in the land. With a parched throat and feeling weak, the man walked on. “I can’t go much further without water,” he thought. And then he saw a well. Almost afraid to hope, he looked over the edge. Far below, in the darkness, water sparkled.

“Allah be praised!” the man said. He looked around for a rope and bucket to lower into the well so he could bring up the life-giving water. There was no rope, no bucket. How could he reach the water he needed so badly?

Only one way remained. If the water would not come up to him, he would have to go down to it. He scrambled over the top and carefully, bracing himself against the sides with his arms and feet, descended into the well. Deeper and deeper he went, until at last he touched the cool, wet water. Cupping his hands, he scooped the water and drank and drank. He murmured, “Praise Allah for the liquid of life.”

Feeling much better, the man began the long, difficult climb up out of the well. At last he reached the top and stood again on the road under the hot sun. He was starting to walk away when he heard a sound—a soft, sad whine. He looked down and saw a dog, sniffing at the ground. The dog looked miserable. His eyes were glazed, and he was panting with thirst. He came up to the man and licked the edge of his robe, which was wet from the trip down the well.

“This poor animal is as thirsty as I was,” the man thought. “He’ll die in this heat if he doesn’t get water.”

The dog looked up at the man and wagged his tail, grateful for the bit of moisture.

The man made his decision. “Wait here,” he said. “I will bring you some water.”

Into the well he went. Again, he descended down, down, all the way to the bottom where the cool liquid lay. When he got there, the man braced himself against the walls of the well and took off his soft leather boots. He dipped one boot and then the other into the water and filled them. He clamped the tops of the boots between his teeth and began to climb up again.

This time the trip to the top was much harder. The heavy, water-filled boots pulled on his mouth, and his teeth hurt. Once the slick, wet leather slipped, and he almost dropped the boots, but he tightened his grip and held on. Slowly he kept climbing until he reached the top.

When he was on the ground again, he knelt and opened the boots so the dog could drink. The dog drank all the water in both boots, his tail wagging happily.

The man smiled. “Now neither of us will die of thirst,” he said. He pulled on his damp boots, patted the dog again, and continued on his way.

Allah was pleased by this kind act. He was so pleased that all the man’s past sins were forgiven, and years later, when the kind man died, his soul was taken to heaven.

The blessed prophet Muhammad concluded his story by saying, “You too will be rewarded for being good to all living creatures.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop7/149663.shtml>

**3.9:** *The Rebirth of the Sun* (697 words)

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Circle round, and I’ll tell you a story about when the sun was born again ...

It was the middle of winter, and the sun had grown very old.

All year long the sun had worked very hard, rising and setting day after day. All year long the sun had fed everybody on earth, shining and shining, giving energy to the trees and the flowers and the grasses so they could grow and feed the animals and birds and insects and people.

All year the sun’s gravity held tight to the spinning ball of the earth and the twirling ball of the moon and the eight other whirling planets as they traveled around and around and around, until the poor sun was dizzy watching it all.

Now the poor tired sun could barely make it up in the morning, and after a very short time, needed to sleep again. So, the days grew shorter, and the nights grew longer, until the day was so short it was hardly worth getting up for.

Night felt sorry for the sun.

“Come to my arms and rest, child,” she said. “After all, I am your mother. You were born out of my darkness, billions of years ago, and you will return to me when all things end. Let me cradle you now, as I shelter every galaxy and star in the universe.”

So, Night wrapped her great arms around the sun, and the night was very long indeed.

“Why does the dark go on so long?” asked children all over the earth. “Won’t the sun ever come back again?”

“The sun is very tired,” the old ones said. “But maybe, if you children say thank you for all the things the sun does for us, the light may return in the morning.”

The children sang songs to the sun. They thought about all the things the sun gave them.

(Leader: Ask participants what they think the children might have thanked the sun for. Allow some responses. Then, resume the story.)

“Thank you for growing the lettuces and the corn and the rice and the wheat,” they said. “Thank you for growing the trees of the forests and the seaweed in the oceans and the krill that feeds the whales. Thank you for stirring the air and making winds that bring the rain.”

Every time a child said thank you, the sun began to feel a little warmer, a little brighter. Wrapped safely in the arms of Night, the sun grew younger and younger.

At last the children had to go to bed. “We will stay up and wait for the sun to rise again” the old ones said.

“Can’t we stay up, too?” the children asked.

“You can try, but you will get too sleepy,” the old ones said. “But you can each light a candle, because all fire is a spark of the sun’s fire. Put your candle in a very safe place, and let it keep vigil for you as you sleep and dream of sunrise.”

So, the children lit their candles and put them in very safe places, and each flame was a little spark of the sun’s fire. And the sun peeped out from between the arms of Night, and saw all the little fires, and began to feel warmer and brighter and younger still.

Early in the morning, the old ones woke the children. Together they climbed a high hill and faced to the east, the direction of sunrise. They sang songs to the sun and ran around trying to keep warm. They waited and waited to see what dawn would bring.

The sky began to turn from black to indigo to blue. Slowly the sky grew light. A golden glow crept over the horizon. Night opened her great arms, and in a burst of brightness, the sun appeared, new and strong and shining.

For in the long night the sun had rested well and grown young from the songs and the thanks of the children, young as a brand-new baby, born out of Night once more.

Everybody cheered, and the children jumped up and down.

“The sun has returned! The sun is reborn!” the people cried. And they danced and sang to celebrate the birth of a new day, and then went home to breakfast.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session11/168878.shtml>

**3.10:** *It’s Up to Us* (658 words)

Adapted from “The Real Heroes and Sheroes of New Orleans” by Lorrie Beth Slonsky and Larry Bradshaw. Original story appeared in the Socialist Worker.

The sixth strongest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded; Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast region in August, 2005. In the city of New Orleans alone, the failure of the levee system caused 80 percent of the city to flood. Families were trapped in attics and on roofs in sweltering heat for over one week in some places. The injustices of poverty, racism and political corruption were well documented in the region before Katrina hit. There were also concerns about environmental injustice given that the coastal wetlands and bayous which provided a buffer against surges brought on by hurricanes had been carved up to create shipping canals for the many industries in the region, especially the oil refineries. These canals destroyed the natural protection the people in the region once had. While the news focused on the people stranded on rooftops and the slow response of government agencies, there was another story to the disaster that most cameras did not show: the story of people coming together and working together. Lorrie Beth Slonsky and Larry Bradshaw were two medical workers trapped in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. This is what they witnessed:

“What you did not see on television were the real heroes and sheroes of the hurricane relief effort: the working class of New Orleans. The maintenance workers who used a forklift to carry the sick and disabled. The engineers who rigged, nurtured and kept the generators running. The electricians who improvised thick extension cords stretching over blocks to share the little electricity we had in order to free cars stuck on rooftop parking lots. Nurses who took over for mechanical ventilators and spent many hours on end manually forcing air into the lungs of unconscious patients to keep them alive. Doormen who rescued folks stuck in elevators. Refinery workers who broke into boat yards, ‘stealing’ boats to rescue their neighbors clinging to their roofs in flood waters. Mechanics who helped hotwire any car that could be found to ferry people out of the city. And the food service workers who scoured the commercial kitchens, improvising communal meals for hundreds of those stranded.”

Lorrie Beth and Larry helped organize a group of several hundred stranded survivors. Their first camp was broken up by police at gunpoint. Then they were told that busses were waiting in the neighboring town of Gretna to transport survivors to safety. When they tried to cross the bridge to Gretna, the Gretna police blocked their way at gunpoint and forced them to walk in the sweltering heat back into the ruins of New Orleans. So, they found an area beneath an overpass and began building yet another camp.

“Our little encampment began to blossom. Someone ‘stole’ a water delivery truck and brought it up to us. An Army truck lost a couple of pallets of C-rations on a tight turn and we ferried the food back to our camp in shopping carts.

Now—secure with these two necessities, food and water—cooperation, community and imagination flowered. We organized a clean-up and hung garbage bags from the rebar poles. We made beds from wood pallets and cardboard. We designated a storm drain as the bathroom, and the kids built an elaborate enclosure for privacy out of plastic, broken umbrellas and other scraps. We even organized a food-recycling system where individuals could swap parts of C-rations (applesauce for babies and candies for kids).

This was something we saw repeatedly in the aftermath of Katrina. When individuals had to fight to find food or water, it meant looking out for yourself. You had to do whatever it took to find water for your kids or food for your parents. But when these basic needs were met, people began to look out for each other, working together and constructing a community.”

The devastation and injustice of Hurricane Katrina showed us many things. Including what we are capable of when we rely on our strengths and look out for one another.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop12/its-up-to-us>

**3.11:** *Supriya’s Bowl* (636 words)

From The Broken Tusk by Uma Krishnaswami (Atlanta, GA: August House Publishers Inc.). Used by permission of the publishers.

Hard times starve people’s spirits, as well as their bodies. (Play all instruments.)

So, it was once, when the Buddha lived and famine struck the land. The rains failed, and the heat of the sun withered the harvest in the field. All around, the cries of pain and hunger could be heard. (sticks)

In the midst of this misery, some people (all instruments) grew greedy and selfish. The Buddha’s followers came to him, bringing stories of sadness and shame.

“One merchant (tambourine) in town stabbed another,” said one, “and all for a bag of grain.”

“I heard of someone (tambourine) who sold their last goat to buy some flour. On the way home they were attacked by robbers, and the flour was stolen,” said another.

“Saddest of all, Lord Buddha,” said a third, “are the stories of children (triangle) dying of hunger on the poor side of town, because the wealthy have hoarded all the grain and milk and sugar.”

“Call all the people together,” said the Buddha (drum). “Let us see what we can do to help.” (all instruments)

So, the Buddha’s followers called a big meeting.

Hundreds of people came. (all instruments) Rich and poor, well fed and starving—out of respect for the Buddha, they came to hear his words.

The Buddha (drum) said, “Citizens of this fair land, surely there is enough food in the storehouses of the wealthy to feed everyone. If the rich share what they have in the lean season, then you will all survive to enjoy the benefits of the next good harvest.”

The poor and the hungry looked hopeful at the Buddha’s words, but the rich people grumbled.

“My granary is empty,” lied one. (tambourine)

“The poor are lazy. Let them work for me; then they can use the money to buy the food I have stored,” said another. (tambourine)

“There are too many poor people,” said a third. “Let them go somewhere else.” (tambourine)

The Buddha sighed (drum) when his eye fell upon the people with hearts of stone. “Is there no one here,” he asked finally, “who will take on the job of helping to feed the poor and homeless in these hard times?”

There was silence. Then a small voice piped up, “I will, Lord Buddha.” (finger cymbals)

Out of the crowd stepped a child, no more than 6 or 7 years old—a merchant’s child, dressed in fine silk.

“My name is Supriya,” said the child, “and I have a bowl to fill with food for the hungry. When can I begin?” (finger cymbals)

The Buddha smiled. (drum) “Small child,” he said, “your heart is filled with love, but how will you do this alone?”

Supriya replied, “Not alone, Lord Buddha, but with your help. I’ll take this bowl from house to house and ask for food for the poor. I will not be refused. I know it.” (drum and finger cymbals)

Looking at the child, with earnest face and shining eyes, even the most selfish among those present grew ashamed.

“I have a little grain in my storehouse,” mumbled one. (tambourine)

“I have some pickled mango from summer’s harvest,” said another. (tambourine)

“My father was poor once. I’m ashamed to have forgotten,” muttered a third. (tambourine)

Then Supriya took the bowl, and went every day from house to house in the rich part of town. Wherever Supriya went, little by little, the bowl got filled. (finger cymbals)

Sometimes an old grandmother would fill it with rice. (tambourine) Sometimes children would give up their sweets for the day. (triangle) Often, others would join Supriya with their bowls and help take the food to the people who needed it. (finger cymbals and tambourine)

And sometimes, it is said, when Supriya was tired of walking, the young child would rest in the shade of the banyan tree. Supriya would awake to find the bowl had magically filled itself.

“Now,” said Supriya, “the hungry will eat, and the people of this town will take care of each other.” And so they did.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session12/supriyas-bowl>,

**3.12:** *The Stolen Soup Aroma* (482 words)

From the All Folk Tales website. Used with permission.

A long time ago in the village of Ipetumodu, there lived a poor woman. This woman was so poor that she did not have any soup for her eba. The eba is a starchy paste made from cassava flour and it is rather unappetizing to eat all by itself. Across the street from this poor woman lived another woman who cooked egusi soup every day. (Egusi soup contains protein rich egusi seeds, vegetables and sometimes meat.)

One day, as the poor woman was sitting down to her only meal for the entire day, a small bowl of eba, the aroma from her neighbors cooking wafted down through her window.

“Perhaps she will be kind enough to let me have a little soup for my eba” she thought. So, she took her bowl of eba and headed over to her neighbor who was busy stirring a big pot of egusi soup.

“Please, may I have a little soup for my eba?” the poor woman asked.

The woman stirring the egusi soup looked up to see her raggedy-looking neighbor and replied, “If you can’t make your own egusi soup, then you don’t deserve to have any.”

The poor woman went back to her own hut and sat outside her doorsteps where the aroma from her neighbor’s egusi was very strong. She would scoop some eba with her hands, inhale a big dose of egusi soup aroma while she swallowed the lump of eba.

The egusi woman, seeing this destitute neighbor eating her soup’s aroma got very angry. She ran out and yelled at the woman “Stop eating the aroma from my soup!” But the poor woman did not stop, she kept inhaling the aroma from the egusi soup while she ate her eba. She found the aroma from the soup very satisfying.

Every day, whenever the rich aroma of egusi soup wafted into the poor woman’s hut, she would quickly make a little bowl of eba and go outside to inhale the pleasant aroma. The egusi woman was getting very furious and she decided to take her case to the oba, the king of their village.

“This woman steals the aroma from my egusi to eat her eba. She must be punished,” the egusi woman told the oba. The oba heard the story and agreed that the poor woman should indeed be punished for stealing soup aroma and he ordered the egusi woman to carry out the punishment.

“She stole your aroma therefore you shall flog her shadow,” the oba told the egusi woman. “You shall flog her shadow forty times.” And she was given the big stick with which she would carry out her justice.

The egusi woman, wielding her big stick to beat the poor woman’s shadow felt very foolish. She felt so foolish that she asked the poor woman for forgiveness and offered to give her real egusi soup from that day on.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop7/172944.shtml>

**3.13:** *A Calabash of Poi* (698 words)

Based on “A Calabash of Poi,” originally published in In the Path of the Trade Winds by Coral Wells Thorpe (New York/London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1924).

It was a sizable house, as Hawaiian houses go, perhaps fifty feet long, its side thatched with ti-leaves—a sign of rank. Its only window, about a foot square, looked out on a carefully planted taro patch, while rows of coconut palms and fruit-laden banana plants made a pretty background.

Pele, the goddess of fire, was walking down the mountainside. Today she had disguised herself especially as an old, feeble woman with a hard face, and bitterness in her eyes. She grasped her cane, and hobbled up to the big house.

“Aloha,” she said to the small group of people sitting in the doorway.

“Aloha,” was the reply, in a not-too-friendly voice.

Pele waited. Apparently, there was to be no invitation to enter or to refresh herself.

“I have walked many miles,” she said finally, using a weak voice. “I am very hungry. Perhaps you have a calabash of poi for me.”

“We are very sorry, but we have no poi,” said the Hawaiian chief, the master of the house. “Besides our evening meal is pau.”

“Then, perhaps, a small piece of salted fish?”

“No, nor fish,” was the short rejoinder.

“Then, at least, some ripe berries? I am parched with thirst?’

“Our berries are all green, as you can see for yourself, providing your eyes are not too dimmed by age.”

Pele’s eyes were far from dim! At other times, flashes of fire blazed in her eyes at a moment’s provocation. But this time, bowing low, she made her way in silence to the gate. A few steps further down the hard road, she entered a smaller garden and paused at a small hut. The work of the day and the evening meal were over. The children played. A man and woman sat watching the last golden rays of the sun sinking behind the gentle slopes of Mauna Loa.

“Ah, I see your evening meal is past;” sighed Pele. “I am sorry for I am tired and hungry, and had hoped for a little refreshment after a day’s walk down the steep mountain.”

“Neither fish nor awa have we,” said the poor fisherman, “but to such as we have, you are most welcome.”

Even as he spoke, his wife had risen, motioned Pele to a place on the mat, and set before her a large calabash of poi.

Pele ate happily. Dipping her finger in the calabash, she raised it dripping with poi, and placed it in her mouth. She finished the entire contents in no time and, looking up, remarked:

“I am still hungry. Would it be too much to ask for another calabash?”

The woman arose and placed before her a second calabash of poi, not perhaps as large as the first, but filled to the brim.

Again, Pele emptied the calabash eagerly. She sighed as she finished the last mouthful, calling attention to the empty calabash in her lap.

This time, a third calabash—smaller than the second, but quite full—was placed before her. Pele finished half of it, arose to her feet, and, uttered these words:

“When your neighbors plant taro, it shall wither on its stem. Their bananas shall die on the stalk, and their coconuts shall fall on their favorite pig. But when you plant taro at night, you may pull it in the morning. Your cane shall mature overnight and your bananas ripen in one day’s sunshine. You shall have as many crops as there are days in the year!”

Then Pele trudged out of the gate and was seen to disappear toward Ha-le-mau-mau in a cloud of flame.

When the astonished fisherman walked outside his hut the next morning, yellow bananas hung on new plants, the full-grown taro stood ready to be pulled, and the cane-cuttings reached to the eaves of his house. Looking across to his rich neighbors’ land, he saw that, indeed, the curse of Pele had already come. In place of prosperous acres stood only sun-parched remnants of yesterday’s proud crop.

In modern times, they say: “Whether you believe in the old lady Pele or not, don’t ever forget to be nice to the old folks. It just might be Pele. You can’t always tell.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session10/calabash>

**3.14:** *The Fox and the Lion*, a retelling of a Sufi wisdom tale (291 words)

Once there was a woman who prayed to understand what path she should take in life. One night, after praying, she dreamed of walking in the woods. The next day, she journeyed to the woods, searching for the answer to her prayers. It was quiet and peaceful. Then she saw a patch of red fur: It was an injured fox, lying in the shade of a large tree. Before she could reach the fox, she heard the nearby bushes rustle and out came a lion, with a fish in its mouth. Frightened, the woman hid herself and watched as the lion laid the fish near the fox, turned around, and left the way it came. As she watched the weakened fox eat the fish, she said to herself, “There is my answer! The Great Provider—who takes care of the fox—will also take care of me. I do not have to do anything. I will be taken care of, if I just have faith.”

The woman went back home, happy to have her answer. And, indeed, she did not do anything. She did not go to work. She did not feed herself. She did not even bathe. She became hungry sitting in her house, so she went to town to see if she would be provided for there. Yet no provisions came. People avoided her. She grew weak from hunger. She fell into a restless sleep and dreamed that she was back in the woods.

“Oh, Great Provider!” she implored in her dream. “You took care of the little fox, but you will not provide for me?”

The Great Provider replied, “You are mistaken. I do not want you to be the fox. I want you to be the lion.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/chorus/workshop8/fox-lion>

**3.15:** *Jesus and the Loaves and Fishes*: A UU Telling by Sophia Lyon Fahs (239 words)

Jesus had not been speaking long—at least so it had seemed with all who were there, yet the day was now almost wholly spent. As the afternoon shadows crept over the hillside the air had begun to chill.

Two of his disciples stepped quietly up to Jesus and said: “Send the crowd away so that they can go into town before it is too late and buy food for themselves.”

But Jesus answered: “Is there need for them to go away? Can we not give them food?”

Philip answered in amazement: “Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings’ worth of bread and give them to eat?”

“How many loaves are there here among us?” asked Jesus.

A lad, overhearing Jesus’ question, stepped forward. “I have five loaves and two fishes. You may divide them.”

Jesus smiled and, beckoning the boy to come nearer, he stood with uplifted arms and in a strong voice spoke a prayer of thankfulness to God.

For a few moments afterwards, there was complete silence. Men and women looked wonderingly at each other as if to say: “What are these few loaves and fishes among so many people?”

But presently others in the crowd brought out baskets and bags. All who had shared generously with those who had not. Before long, everyone had eaten heartily and still there was bread untouched. The crowd seemed refreshed and lighter in spirits as their friendliness grew.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session7/287781.shtml>

**3.16:** *The Farmer on the Hill*, a wisdom tale from Japan (489 words)

On the top of the hill lived the village curmudgeon.

No one knew why the farmer was so ornery, yet he never seemed to have a kind word to say.

No one knew why he was so inhospitable, yet he would not even open his door to visitors.

No one knew why he lived isolated, at the top of a hill that was difficult to traverse, yet it was rumored that he had moved there after the death of his young son.

What everyone did know, was that he wanted to be left alone. And alone he was.

It was time for the festival. Everyone in the village would be there—except for the farmer at the top of the hill. The women sang, the men told tall tales, and the children played, screaming at the top of their lungs as they ripped and ran, trailing long streamers behind them.

It was all the noise that brought the farmer at the top of the hill outside. “What is all the commotion?” he wondered aloud. Looking down the hill, he could see the village festivities. But it was not the bright sights of the celebration that took his breath away. For looking beyond the village, out to the nearby sea, the farmer saw a huge wave rolling toward the shore with tremendous speed. Though he had never witnessed one, he knew what this was: a tsunami.

Though his house was safe, up upon the hill, the tsunami was heading straight for the village.

The farmer yelled out a warning. But because of the festivities, no one could hear him.

He jumped up and down and waved his arms. But because everyone was having so much fun together, no one saw him. The farmer was frantic. How could he stop the tsunami from drowning the entire village?

Suddenly, he knew. Though he might be ornery and inhospitable, he knew the village people were not. They had always reached out to him with kindness. The farmer did the only thing he could think to do. With no concern for his own safety, he rushed into his fields and lit all his crops afire.

A raging inferno ensued, as the dry vegetation quickly wilted and crumbled in the flames. Who saw the flames first? No one knew. Perhaps a bright-eyed child, or an elder with a nose finely attuned for smoke. Whoever it was, the cry of, “Fire!” spread quickly and all the festivities stopped as the villagers’ eyes turned toward the hill.

“Quick! Get buckets of water! We have to save the farmer and his land!”

And everyone did. All the villagers rushed up the hill—with buckets, with blankets, and with no concern for their own safety.

They reached the top and doused the last of the flames. By then, all the farmer’s crops were destroyed. Yet no one from the village drowned in the tsunami. And they all knew why.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop10/194607.shtml>

**3.17:** *Mullah Nasruddin Feeds His Coat* (733 words)

Adapted from a Middle Eastern Islamic folk tale which is attributed to different countries, including Turkey and Syria.

Mullah Nasruddin had been working in the fields all day long. He was tired and sweaty and his clothes and shoes were covered with mud and stains. Because he had been fasting all day long, for Ramadan, he was also quite hungry. But finally, it was almost sundown and Nasruddin knew that he would soon be able to eat.

The wealthiest man in town had invited everyone to come break their fasts in his home that evening with a huge feast. Nasruddin knew that he would be late if he went home to change his clothes before heading into town. He decided it was better to arrive in dirty clothes than to be late. Oh, what a party it would be! What a feast! As he walked to the wealthy man’s home, Nasruddin imagined the delicious foods that he would soon be eating: dates, lentils and chickpeas, olives and bread, hummus, falafel, chicken and beef — and best of all — the desserts — halvah, date rolls, figs and baklava!

When Nasruddin arrived, the wealthy man opened the door and looked Nasruddin up and down scornfully, from his worn, ragged clothes down to his muddy shoes. Without a word of welcome, he gestured for Nasruddin to come in and walked abruptly away.

(Leader — Say, “I wonder what the wealthy man was thinking or feeling,” and briefly take a few answers. Return to the story by saying, “Let’s hear what happens next.”)

Nasruddin joined the throngs of people, who were all dressed in their finest clothing. The tables were laden with all sorts of delicious foods: dates, lentils and chickpeas, olives and bread, hummus, falafel, chicken and beef — and best of all — the desserts — halvah, date rolls, figs and baklava!

Despite his efforts to hurry, the seats were all taken and nobody tried to move over or make a space for Nasruddin. In fact, nobody offered him food. He had to reach over and around people to get any food for his plate. Nobody spoke to him. It was as if he wasn’t even there.

(Leader — Pause and say, “I wonder how Nasruddin was feeling about this.” Briefly take a few answers.)

The other guests ignored him so completely that Nasruddin could not enjoy the food on his plate, no matter how finely prepared and how tasty it was. In fact, after only a few bites, Nasruddin was so uncomfortable that he decided to leave.

He hurried home and changed into his finest clothing, including a beautiful coat.  
 (Leader — Take off worn, ragged clothing and put on the coat or shawl.)

Nasruddin returned to the feast and this time the host welcomed him with a huge smile. “Come in, come in,” greeted the host. As Nasruddin entered, people waved and called to him from all corners of the room as they invited him to sit near them and offered him food.

(Leader — Ask, “I wonder what the host and the other guests were thinking now?” and accept a few answers. Then ask, “I wonder what Nasruddin was feeling,” for brief responses before you continue.)

Nasruddin sat down quietly. Picking up a plump fig, he carefully placed it into a coat pocket, saying, “Eat, coat, eat.” (Leader — If you have brought fake food, act this out.) Next, he took a handful of nuts and put them into the pocket, saying, “Eat, coat, eat.” Now he began to feed his coat in earnest, grabbing all sorts of foods. (Leader — Pause here and invite the children to try to name some foods Nasruddin might have fed to his coat. Use their suggestions: “Nasruddin put \_\_\_ in his pocket, saying, ‘Eat, coat, eat!’)

He fed the coat lentils and chickpeas, olives and bread, hummus, falafel, chicken and beef — and best of all — the desserts — halvah, date rolls, figs and baklava!

Nasruddin became silent as they watched this strange behavior. Soon everyone in the room was staring at Nasruddin, wondering what he was doing. The host hurried over. “Nasruddin, whatever are you doing? Why are you feeding your coat in this manner?”

“Well,” replied Nasruddin, “when I first came to this feast in my old farming clothes, I was not welcome. No one would speak with me. But when I changed into this coat, suddenly I was greeted warmly. So, I realized it was not me that was welcome at this party, but my clothing. And so, I am feeding my coat.”

*(Leader — Use the sound instrument to signify that the story has ended. Briefly ask children how they think the host and the other guests might have been feeling when Nasruddin told them why he was feeding his coat. After they have offered a few answers, ask them whether they think it was fair or kind when the people wouldn’t talk to Nasruddin.)*

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/123344.shtml>

**3.18:** *The Value of a Gift* (686 words)

What is the value of a gift given?

Is it just the dollar amount on the price tag or are some gifts worth much more?

Let me tell you about a gift that was not worth much monetarily, but which made a wealthy woman richer than she could have imagined.

I was fortunate to participate in an international charitable organization’s trip to Honduras. The trip was for educators, which was defined broadly: some of the people on the tour were schoolteachers, others volunteered at local schools to help children learn about the work of the organization. Our support for this organization and belief in the value of education was what we shared. Otherwise, we were an eclectic bunch, varied in age, location, ethnicity, and class. We were led by Rita, a local woman, married to the Presbyterian minister who organized the Honduras program.

I was assigned to a dorm with three other women. One of those women was Ann. Ann was tall and lanky. She was gregarious and loud. She wore comfortable clothes in muted colors, but they looked expensive. Even her shoes looked expensive. Ann did not need to work for a living; she lived in a small New England town and volunteered at the local historical society. After the trip, she planned to share her experiences with the rest of the ladies at the historical society. As her roommates, we heard all about it. We heard about her horses, her antique jewelry, her summer place, her two Mini Coopers. Ann’s conversation revolved around her possessions. We heard all about them because my other two roommates virtually drooled over her lifestyle. You could hear the longing and envy in their urges for her to tell more.

During the day, we toured sites where the charity was working with local partners to end hunger. Ann strode into villages, with a bright smile and jovial banter, and made easy friends. She was funny and a master of sparkling conversation — what was there not to like? She always had questions and was generous with her opinions.

She noticed other people’s possessions. She complimented our translator/guide, Rita, on her earrings. She raved about my green hiking boots. She was always the last one back from shopping trips, one time purchasing a large, hand-carved bench that was going to cost almost as much to ship to her home as what she had paid for it.

During one long bus ride, she leaned over to me and whispered, “Look inside their houses!” I started peeking quickly into open doorways of the simple huts sitting beside the road. In many of them, I only saw a hammock or two, maybe a plastic chair, pots and pans. This was poverty beyond what I had seen in the States. Still, Ann seemed more shocked than I. After all, if hunger was a reality for these villages, they would not spend money on extraneous furniture.

On the last day, we packed our bags, stripped our beds, and loaded the bus. I came back into the dorm room for the last time, to retrieve a bag I had forgotten. Ann was sitting on her naked bed, her head lowered, her arms outstretched in front of her. She said nothing as I entered the room, so I knew something must be wrong.

“Ann, are you okay?” I asked. For a time, she said nothing.

“She gave me her earrings,” she finally volunteered, still not looking up.

“Who gave you her earrings?”

“Rita. I complimented her on her earrings the other day and she brought them today just to give them to me. I can’t believe she did that. She has so little.” Her voice drifted off, her hands unclenched and I saw the inexpensive little beaded earrings in her palms. She looked up, deep into my eyes. Tears were rolling down her face. In the silence of the tiny room, I swear I could feel Ann’s heart beating stronger and louder than humanely possible. I smiled at her. She smiled back. Together, we picked up our bags and walked to the bus to start our journey home.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop8/194040.shtml>

**3.19:** *The Other Half* (647 words)

Hannah Salwen looked left. She saw a man who was homeless, sitting on a fence. She looked right, at the Mercedes beside them at the intersection. “Dad,” she said, “if that man”—she pointed to the Mercedes— “had a less nice car, that man there” —she pointed to the man who was homeless— “could have a meal.” Hannah’s father, Kevin answered, “Um, yeah. But you know, if we had a less nice car, he could have a meal.”

So began the saga of the Salwen family and how they learned you can give away millions, and still receive something greater in return.

The Salwen family was sitting pretty. Kevin and Joan had successful jobs, with nice incomes and benefits. In 1994, they moved with baby Hannah to Atlanta and bought a historic home on Peachtree Circle. Joseph was born soon after. They went to church and believed in helping others. Joan chaired the United Way campaign at her workplace to collect money for charity. Kevin and Joseph built homes for Habitat for Humanity. Hannah spent many more hours at the soup kitchen than she needed to fill a community service requirement at school. They were, by most standards, good people. Yet, after the stop light epiphany, Hannah began to wonder if it was enough. She challenged the rest of the family to think bigger. The stakes were raised when Joan asked if they really needed their two-million-dollar mansion. This question led to a series of family meetings. Opinions flew fast and furious. “What is it you want to accomplish?” “Am I supposed to give up everything I own?” “How much do we really need?” After many discussions—some ending in anger, some in tears—the decision was made: They would sell their house, give half of it away to people in need, and move into a smaller home.

One million dollars is a lot of money. More family meetings were called for to decide how and where to spend it. In the process, the Salwens made a discovery: They had drifted apart. Sports, time with friends, working late, electronic entertainment, and other distractions occupied so much of their time that quality time spent together was virtually nonexistent. Now that they were meeting to discuss how to spend “the half,” they remembered how much fun they had together. They discussed topics that were meaningful. Brother and sister became closer.

The family listened to presentations from several organizations eager to put their gift to good use. They picked The Hunger Project. There were complications. They committed to donating money, but their house was hard to sell. They had to repeatedly reduce the price. Now, the sale of the house would not amount to the money they pledged to donate. Family meeting. The decision? They would find ways to make up the deficit and stick to their original promise.

In the end, the Salwens donated enough money to build a community center in Ghana. The Salwens traveled to Ghana to meet the people in the villages. They listened to the villagers decide what they could use the most. The new center included a mill that villagers use to grind their grain so they could sell it for more to other villages. There was space for a schoolroom for girls, and a clinic. This relationship has grown over the last few years to include another village and the Salwens have donated more than the original million, as they have discovered other sources to generate income for projects, including writing a book, The Power of Half. One dollar from each book sale goes to Rebuilding Together, which provides money for critical home repairs to low income homeowners.

The Salwens keep giving. But they also want everyone to know that what they receive—the liberation from materialism, the joy of seeing other families pull themselves out of poverty—is more precious than gold.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop9/194335.shtml>

## 3.20: *The Good Samaritan* (576 words)

One day a lawyer came to Jesus and asked what he needed to do to live forever or, “to get into heaven” or “to become enlightened.”

Jesus asked him what the law of the Ten Commandments said. The lawyer answered, “You shall love God with all your heart, and with all of your soul, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself.” “Right!” said Jesus. Then the lawyer asked, “But, Teacher, who is my neighbor?” In other words, “who do I have to treat lovingly?” This is the story that Jesus told to the man:

Once, a man was walking on a lonely stretch of road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Suddenly a gang of thieves jumped out from the side of the road and surrounded him. “Give us your money,” they demanded. “I need my money” he cried. “I have to buy food with this money, for myself and my whole family.”

One of the thieves picked up a rock from the side of the road and hit the man in the head. He fell to the ground with a groan, bleeding. Seeing no one around the thieves jumped on the man and took everything he had, including his money, and his clothing. One of the thieves picked up a stick and hit the man hard several times before leaving him on the side of the road half dead.

After a time, a priest came walking down the road. He saw the man lying on the side of the road and crossed over to the other side as he hurried by.

Soon another man, a Levite appeared. He too, saw the wounded man lying in the hot sun, naked and bleeding and he scurried on by.

A long time passed. Flies buzzed around the man who was dying from his injuries. Luckily someone else was coming down the road. He was a Samaritan riding on his donkey. Now the people of Samaria were not friendly with the people of this man’s country. They were sworn enemies of each other.

But the Samaritan man did not hesitate when he saw the man lying by the side of the road. He didn’t stop to think about whether he should help him because of where he was from, or what group the man belonged to. He saw that this man needed help and he felt compassion.

The Samaritan took healing oil and wine from his bag and cleaned the man’s wounds and bound them up with bandages made from the cloth of his own shirt. He covered him with a robe. He gave the man a drink of water and helped the man onto his donkey. Slowly, for the man was in great pain and the road was long, they walked to the next town. There the Samaritan found an inn and asked the innkeeper to give him what was necessary to make the man comfortable.

The next day, the Samaritan gave money to the innkeeper to pay for the wounded man to stay at the inn until he got better. The Samaritan promised to come back in a few days and pay whatever else was needed to bring the man back to health.

When Jesus finished telling this story, he asked the lawyer, “Which one of these three men acted like a neighbor to the man who fell among thieves?” The lawyer said, “The one who showed kindness.” “Yes,” said Jesus, “go and do the same.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session8/123425.shtml>

**3.21:** *The Gift of a Gemstone*, a wisdom tale from many cultures, including Buddhist (280 words)

A wise woman, a teacher, was passing through a forest. There, among the leaves, was something shiny. She wiped away the leaves and dirt and beheld a beautiful, large gem. “My, this is pretty,” the wise woman said. She put the jewel in her pouch and continued on her way.

When the sun was high in the sky, she sat down under a tree to eat her simple lunch. She was barely settled, when she saw a figure approaching. It was a man and, to judge from his dress, a poor man. “Kind and gentle lady, do you have any food to share with a poor beggar?”

“I have plenty,” she replied with a smile, digging into her small sack. She pulled out the gem that was on top, a loaf of bread and a piece of cheese. She offered the bread and cheese to the beggar. But the beggar’s eyes had grown big at the sight of the lovely gem.

“Sweet lady, that is a magnificent jewel!” he exclaimed.

“Yes, do you like it? Here, take it, too.” And she gave the man the gem, the bread, and the cheese.

The beggar could not believe his luck! He wrapped the gem in his cloak and quickly scampered off.

The wise woman arose and started off on her way again.

She was surprised a few minutes later to hear footsteps behind her. She turned and saw the beggar before her again.

The beggar held out the jewel. “Wise woman, may I give this back to you. I don’t want it!”

“What do you want?” she asked.

“I want whatever it is you have that allowed you to give it away.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop9/194339.shtml>

**3.22:** *How Brigit Got Lands for the Poor* by Erica Helm Meade (634 words)

A Celtic pagan story from Ireland, told by Erica Helm Meade in her book of wisdom tales, The Moon in the Well (Peru, Illinois: Open Court/Carus, 2001). Permission pending.

Long ago in Ireland, a few wealthy landholders owned great tracts of fertile land, while the poor were forced up into the rocky hills to eke out a living from the sparse soil. One year the crops went bad and the poor could barely scrape together an onion or a carrot for their supper. Brigit went to one of the richest landholders and said, “The harvest is grim this year, and the peasants need your help.”

The landholder replied, “Ah, Brigit, I’ll think on it, but in truth, if the people would only work harder, they surely could fend for themselves.”

A few weeks passed and the situation grew worse. Brigit went again to the landholder and said, “The peasants have no food. They’ve taken to the hills to eat shamrocks and grass. What will you do for them?”

“Now, Brigit,” said the landholder, “Don’t get pushy. I’m a busy man. Why is it you’re here talking to me, when you should be talking to the peasants about what they can do for themselves? I’ve no time for this, now be gone with you.”

Another week passed, and the situation became grave. Brigit went again to the landholder and in a rage, she cried, “You’ve done nothing to help and now the children are starving! I demand that you give land to the poor!”

“Well, Brigit,” said the landholder, “It couldn’t be that bad. You don’t look to be starved yourself, nor lacking for warm clothes. ‘Tis a fine wool cloak you wear on your back. Let it not be said I’m a stingy man. Here’s what we’ll do: You go out to the plain. Choose any spot. Spread your white cloak on the ground, and the plot that it covers, I’ll donate to the poor.”

“Tax free?” asked Brigit.

“All right, tax free,” said the landholder, “but don’t ask for anything more.”

So that day Brigit and three of her sisters went out to the very center of the fertile plain. Each took hold of a corner of the white cloak.

Brigit said, “All right now, girls, pull it taut.” They did so, and then Brigit cried, “Now take a step backward.” Each of them took a step back, one to the north, one to the south, one to the east, and one to the west, and as they did, the cloak expanded. Then Brigit cried, “All right, keep walking!” They did, and as they did so, the cloak continued to expand until it covered the whole expanse of the plain.

That afternoon as usual, the landholder went up into his tower to look out and survey his lands. At first glance it looked as if a snow had fallen. Then he saw that the rocks above were bare. “The cloak,” he whispered, falling to his knees, now seeing providence at work in the matter. When he saw Brigit striding up the walkway, he leaned out the window and cried, “Mercy, Brigit, I’ll keep to my word! The whole of the plain belongs to the poor, and I’ll throw in a hundred bags of oat seed that they might prosper by it!”

“That’s fine for tomorrow,” said Brigit, “but what will you do for today?”

“For today?” said the landholder. “Why, a feast for today, a feast for all.”

“What sort of a feast?” asked Brigit.

“Why, a feast of stews, and roasts, and compotes, and mashes, and stuffings, and jellies, and cakes,” replied the landholder.

“And bags to take home?” asked Brigit.

“Why of course, bags to take home,” assured the landholder. “Very well, then,” said Brigit, “I’ll spread the word.”

“Aye, Brigit, I’m sure you will, and I don’t mind saying, that if you spread the word as efficiently as you spread the cloak, not a soul will miss this feast.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-5/brigit>

**3.23:** *The Real Gift* (661 words)

Nelson was worried. He had been worried about something all week and this afternoon; it was going to happen. During clean-up at church school, he decided to talk to his teacher, Lilia.

“Nelson, is everything okay?” she asked.

“Well, not really. My Nana Elsa is moving in with me and my dads today.”

“It sounds like you do not want her to move in,” Lilia said.

“Our house will be too crowded,” Nelson said. “And now I will have three grown-ups telling me what to do. My grandmother, and my dads.”

Lilia took a minute to think. Then she said, “You know, Nelson, both your dads are my friends, and I know your grandmother, too. I know they all love you very much. It may take time to get used to her living with you. But, I think it is important that you welcome Nana Elsa, even though you are worried.” Lilia said.

“Welcome her? Why? She is already in my family,” Nelson said, puzzled.

“Nana Elsa may be worried today, too,” said Lilia. “She is moving into a home where three people already live. She might be worried that you and your dads don’t really want her there. It will be important to let her know that you do love her.”

Nelson thought Lilia was probably right. Nana Elsa might be feeling worried, today too. When he got home, Nelson made a card for his grandmother. He drew himself, his dads, and Nana Elsa standing in front of their apartment building. He wrote, “Welcome, Nana. I love you, Love, Nelson.” He brought the card into the extra bedroom where his grandmother was putting her clothes into the dresser drawers.

“Hi, Nana. I wanted to give you something,” he said.

“Oh, thank you very much Nelson,” she said. “I love this card. I wanted to give you something too, but then I thought it would be better for us to make it together.”

“Make what?” Nelson asked.

“May I teach you how to crochet? It is easy. We could make a small blanket together, to put on your legs when you watch TV,” Nana Elsa said.

“Can I pick the color? I really like green,” Nelson said.

The next day, Nelson and his grandmother walked to the craft store and bought green yarn and crochet needles. For two weeks, almost every day, Nelson sat with Nana Elsa after school, talking and crocheting. When the blanket was finished, Nelson took it to church to show Lilia.

“Wow, you made that with your grandmother?” Lilia said. “That sounds like fun, and, it looks warm.”

Nelson loved that blanket. He took it everywhere with him. Because he took it everywhere, one day when he wanted to take it to bed with him, he couldn’t find it. Soon the whole family was looking for it. But the green, crocheted blanket was gone.

At bedtime, Nelson was still upset. Nana Elsa sat on his bed and held his hand. “Nelson, I hate to see you so sad,” she said.

“But Nana, we made that blanket together. I love it so much, and now it’s gone!” he cried.

“I know you feel bad, but you know, Nelson, the most important gift was not the blanket,” said his grandmother. “It was the time we spent making it.

“You made me so happy when you welcomed me into your home. I wanted to spend special time with you making something and we did that. The real gift was the time we spent being together. We will always treasure that time and our love for each other and our family.”

Nelson looked up at Nana Elsa. He rubbed the tears away from his face. He realized his Nana was right. The time they spent together was the real gift. And he realized he was glad, now, that his grandmother lived with him and his dads.

“I love you very much, Nana,” he said.

“I love you very much, too, Nelson.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session1/118116.shtml>

**3.24:** *Loaves and Fishes* (259 words)

From Christian scripture, John 6:1-19, New Revised Standard Version (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1990).

A large crowd kept following [Jesus], because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.”

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?”

Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so, they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also, the fish, as much as they wanted.

When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” So, they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-6/loaves-fishes>

**3.25:** *The Most Generous Gift* (387 words)

*Inspired by “The Widow’s Mite,” a parable from Christian scripture.*

Read or tell the story.

In a little village near Jerusalem, a long time ago, there was an old woman who didn’t have much money. She grew her own fruit and vegetables and had a chicken that gave her eggs.

One day, she was walking down the road when she saw two copper pieces on the ground. They looked like pennies, but together they were worth even less than one penny.

She put them in her pocket. “I will buy a piece of bread with this,” she thought.

A few days later, she heard from her neighbors that a teacher named Jesus would be speaking in a worship service at a nearby temple. She thought it might be interesting to go to the service and listen to this teacher.

When she got to the temple, many people had gathered to hear Jesus. Some people she recognized, and some she did not know at all. Some said “Hello” to the old woman and a man moved over so she could sit on a bench with him and his family.

At the service, she prayed and listened to Jesus speak. She found herself feeling full of love and wonder.

[You may wish to ask the children: What do you think she heard that made her feel full of love? What would make you feel of love? Have you ever felt full of love here in our congregation? When?]

There came a part of the service when Jesus asked people to donate money to support his ministry. There were people who were very rich and they donated a lot of money. The old woman reached into her pocket and found the two copper pieces, the only money she had in the world. She walked up to the donation box and put in one of the pieces, half of all the money she had.

[Ask the children: Why do you think she did that?]

Jesus saw the old woman put her coin in the box, and he knew what she had shared.

He told the people assembled that her gift was more special than any of the gifts given by the rich people there. She had given half of all the money she had. Jesus encouraged people to be generous always. To be generous not only with money, but also to be generous with their hearts.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session11/most-generous-gift>

**3.26:** *A Barn-raising In the City* (856 words)

This story is inspired by a true story, reported in the New York Times on May 10, 1987, about a Manhattan community that joined together to build a neighborhood playground designed by local schoolchildren. The article, [*“On West Side, an Urban Barn-raising,”*](http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B0DEFDD163FF933A25756C0A961948260&n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/People/G/Giovannini,%20Joseph) by Joseph Giovannini, reads, in part:

Young and old, rich and poor, skilled and unskilled have gathered at the park, nested in a valley of brick, in what has been called a community barn-raising. In this case, however, the barn is a new playground, scheduled to open tonight when the first child slides down the long stainless-steel tail of an ‘‘elephant-dragon.’’

Read or tell the story.

When Amy woke up, she was glad to see the sun shining. Today was the day her family would help build a playground, right in their own neighborhood. An ugly, empty patch of dirt and weeds sat there now, but soon there would be a tree house with swings, a sandbox shaped like a lemon, a bumpy, twisty slide, and even a castle tower. You would be able to climb up the tower on a ladder, and shimmy down on a rope. Or you could roll a wheelchair or a stroller to the top, along a ramp that spiraled gently all the way up.

The playground was going to be right next to Amy’s school, in between the tall apartment buildings like the one where she lived, and the stores, and the stone plazas with benches for grown-ups to sit. It would be fantastic!

Amy knew what the playground would look like because she had seen pictures of it. She had even helped to draw and color in some of them. In fact, a lot of the playground’s best ideas had come from the children in Amy’s school. The children had raised some of the money with a bake sale. Now they were going to help build the playground. Today!

You see, the school had never had a playground, and the parents had been upset about that for a long time. Amy’s school had a nice gym inside, and a beautiful art room, and a music room with a real piano, but no place outdoors for the children to have recess. Their teachers did not let them play in the empty dirt yard. There were too many weeds and too much litter. But soon, if enough people came to help, the dirt yard would be a beautiful community playground.

Amy put on her oldest jeans and an old shirt she didn’t mind getting dirty. She put on socks and sneakers, too. Then Amy and her mom and dad and her brother Eddie walked over to the empty dirt yard. Everyone was already busy. There was Dr. Jefferson, carrying some flat rubber squares that looked like big puzzle pieces. He said “Hi” to Amy’s family. Sharon and Andy Tran, whose mother owned the little grocery store, were helping some grown-ups stack large purple bricks. Amy knew those were for the castle tower. It had been her own idea to make it purple.

Mrs. Jefferson greeted Amy’s family. Right away, she handed Amy a fresh new sheet of sandpaper. “Go over and help Zinnia Goldstein sand those blocks,” she said. Zinnia was Amy’s babysitter, so Amy was happy to work alongside her. Zinnia showed her how to use the sandpaper to smooth the edges of the blocks. After a while, Eddie came over with a wheelbarrow to get the smooth blocks. Amy saw him carry them to Dr. Jefferson and Ms. Murano, from the library. They were painting the blocks purple. “Wow!” Amy said. “The blocks will be part of the castle tower, too!”

It was getting hot and Amy was feeling tired when Pete and his dad came by in their pizza delivery truck. Pete’s dad blew a whistle and the hammers and drills and talking quieted down. “Lunch for everyone who’s working!” Pete’s dad called.

In the afternoon, Amy and her friend Lucy counted out screws, nuts, and bolts. They were sitting in the shade, next to a pile of wooden boards. Amy was glad to have a job where she could sit down for a while. “What do you think these boards are for?” she asked Lucy.

“I don’t know,” said Lucy. “Maybe for the tree house.”

“Well, if someone paints them purple, we will know what they’re for,” Amy said.

“The castle tower!” both girls said, laughing.

The walk home seemed long that evening. Amy wished her mom or dad would pick her up and carry her, but they looked tired, too. Her mom said, “So many people came to help today, that the playground might be finished this week.”

“Well, it won’t be more than two weeks, anyway, if the weather holds out,” said her dad.

One week, or two. Amy didn’t mind if it took three weeks or all summer. She was going to go and help every day. When school started again in September, recess would be something special. Amy would climb the purple castle tower and look all around. She would see her friends playing in a tree house with swings, a sandbox shaped like a lemon, and a bumpy, twisty slide. That would be amazing! But, the best part was that Amy knew that she would always think of even more people every time she went to the community playground — Dr. Jefferson, Mrs. Tran, Zinnia, Pete and Lucy and more. Everyone who had helped.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session16/119914.shtml>

**3.27:** *Grandmother’s Lesson* by Elisa Davy Pearmain (995 words)

*A contemporary story by Elisa Davy Pearmain, based on the Jewish tradition of the Passover Seder.*

Before telling the story, set out a goblet for Elijah and invite a child to go and open the meeting room’s door. These actions are customary during a Passover Seder.

Once upon a time a there lived a brother and sister named Leah and Sam who were about your age. They were Jewish and Passover was their favorite holiday because there was so much to do. The day before the Seder they would help sweep the house clean of all bread crumbs, help set the table with special Passover dishes, and put an extra chair and cup for Elijah the Prophet. Then on the evening of Passover the relatives would arrive, and the Seder would begin just after sunset.

One year they came to a place near the end of the Seder where their father poured wine into Elijah the Prophet’s goblet and asked the children to go and open the door for him. This was one of their favorite parts because it was so mysterious. They ran to the door and looked up and down the street. They didn’t see anyone except the new children next door. They had just moved from Haiti and they were playing in their yard. No Elijah.

Leah came back to the table feeling sad. “Where is Elijah?” she asked. “Every year we pour him wine and open the door but he never comes. What does he look like? Will he ever come for Passover?”

Her parents looked at Grandmother.

*[Here you may wish to put on a shawl or reading glasses — something to set the grandmother’s character apart. If you are comfortable, you can slightly deepen your voice and slow the tempo to suggest an older person who is thinking back.]*

“I have seen him,” she said, “though I didn’t realize it at first. Elijah comes in many disguises.

“I saw him long ago when I was about your age. One cold day just before Passover I was minding my younger brothers and sisters and my mother was resting. There was a knock at the door. I opened the door and there stood a beggar. He was dressed in rags and had an old sack over his back. I saw that his shoes were full of holes.

“‘May I come in and sit by your fire and have some food?’ he asked. ‘I am so hungry and cold.’

“I knew we were not a wealthy family. My parents worked hard and still had barely enough for a simple meal, let alone a Passover feast. ‘We have nothing extra for you,’ I said, and I shut the door.

“I peeked out the window and saw the beggar walk to our next-door neighbor’s house. The neighbors had even less than we did, since the father had died. The mother worked very hard taking in sewing but she had many mouths to feed. I was sure that she would turn the beggar away. But I saw her open her door and invite him in.

“The next day, my mother was cooking our Passover meal and I was setting the table. Suddenly, there came a cry from the kitchen. Our dog had grabbed the chicken from the counter, knocking over the apple-raisin pudding my mother was preparing. When my father got home, he found us sitting and crying. There was no money to buy another chicken or to make another desert to celebrate our Passover.

“We were still sitting and crying when we heard a knock on the door. It was our poor neighbor. She smiled at us and said, ‘It seems that misfortune has come to you. I would like to invite you to celebrate Passover at our home this evening. I don’t have much, as you know, but somehow I was able to make more matzoh balls than usual from my flour, and my soup kettle is full.’ My parents thanked her and promised to bring the foods they had prepared that had not been spoiled.

“After our neighbor had gone, my mother asked me, ‘Who was that that knocked at our door while I was resting yesterday?’

“I said, ‘It was a beggar. I told him we didn’t have enough and sent him away.’

“‘Where did he go?’ she asked.

“‘To the neighbors,’ I shrugged.

“My parents looked at each other. ‘Do you know who that beggar was?’ my father asked.

“‘No.’

“‘That was the prophet Elijah,’ said my mother. ‘He comes to see if we are helping to make the world a better place by being welcoming and generous.’

“We had a wonderful Passover with our neighbors. We found that when we shared from our kitchen, there was plenty for all. When it came to the part in the Seder where my father poured wine into the Elijah cup, I asked if I could go and open the door for Elijah. My parents smiled.

Grandmother finished the story by saying, “I didn’t see Elijah again, but ever since then I try to treat everyone as if they were Elijah, and I find that there is always enough.”

*(Here, you might take off the shawl or glasses and return to being the narrator.)*

When Grandmother’s story was finished everyone was quiet. Then Sam asked, “What do you mean that you treat everyone like Elijah, Grandmother?”

Grandmother looked at them and asked a question: “What was the last kind and welcoming thing that you did for someone?”

“I helped my teacher to carry some books because she was tired,” Sam answered.

“I invited the new girl at school to play with me and my friends at recess,” said Leah.

“How did it feel?” asked Grandmother.

“Good.” “Warm and happy,” they replied.

“That is how it feels to treat everyone like Elijah,” Grandmother said.

Then Leah jumped up from the table. “I think Elijah would like us to invite our neighbors to celebrate Passover with us. Can we invite them to our Seder?”

Mother and father looked at each other and smiled. The new neighbors weren’t Jewish. They had recently moved to the neighborhood from Haiti. This was exactly the spirit of welcoming that Elijah taught. “Yes, go and tell them that if they would like to join our Seder meal, they will find our door open.”

It seemed that Elijah did visit that Passover day after all!

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session5/grandmothers-lesson>

**3.28:** *Growing Green* by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer (909 words)

*Holding up an apple (or other fruit) as you begin telling this story provides a focus. If no one responds to your questions, or if the group is too big, you can give your own answers. If appropriate, slice the fruit and hand out pieces to students.*

Have you ever eaten an apple?

Do you like to have them sliced up? Or do you like to bite into a whole apple with your own teeth and have it go crunch? Do you like red apples? Green? Maybe golden?

After you’ve eaten the apple, what do you do with the core, the part with the seeds and the stem?

[Hold it up if you have a real apple.]

At home? At school? Here?

Someday, this apple core will rot. It will get mushy and brown. It will fall apart into smaller and smaller pieces. After a long while, those little pieces of apple core will be part of the dirt. That’s called composting, when pieces of plants turn into dirt.

The apple seeds can grow in that dirt. The seeds can grow into apple trees. Those apple trees will make more apples. Those apples will have apple cores. And those apples cores will make more dirt, for more seeds, for more trees, for more apples.

That’s the circle of life. Things change and turn into other things, and everything works together to create something new.

Here is a story about people in a Unitarian Universalist congregation, who changed how they did things. They decided to work together and create something new.

First, they decided they wanted to have a Green Sanctuary. A sanctuary is a sacred place, a place where you can be safe. The room where we have worship services is a sacred place, and that room is called a sanctuary.

Now, having a green sanctuary doesn’t mean you have to paint the walls of that room green. Being green means, you help things grow, like plants. They’re green.

Being green means being part of the circle of life. Being green means taking care of the Earth, and treating the Earth like a sacred place. The Earth isn’t just our home. The Earth is our sanctuary.

The Earth is too big for one person, or even one group, to take care of. So, we all work together, and each of us takes care of the part where we are.

To help the Earth, the people in the congregation decided to make a garden and grow food. To have a garden, you need good dirt. To get good dirt, you need compost.

So, whenever the RE class has snacks on Sundays, they collect all the apple cores. Of course, they don’t always eat apples. Some days they collect orange peels, or watermelon rinds, or the green leaves off strawberries. Banana peels, celery leaves, carrot tops, cherry pits... All of those plants can become compost.

They need a place to put all the plant pieces, so the plants can have time to turn into dirt.

The older kids got hammers and nails and wood. They built a big, sturdy box, called a compost bin. Some grownups helped.

That compost bin sits outside near the garden. And every Sunday, all the leftover plant pieces from all the RE classes go into the compost bin. The apple cores and the banana peels and the carrot tops and everything else get brown and mushy, then fall apart bit by bit. People put leaves and grass in there, too. It takes a while, but finally, all the plants compost and turn into good brown dirt.

The people in this congregation have Garden days. Everybody gets shovels and rakes. They take the compost, that good brown dirt, and they mix it in with the dirt that’s already there.

In the spring, they plant seeds—tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries, all kinds of good things to eat. Some flowers, too.

All through the summer on Sundays, some of the kids in the RE classes go out and water the plants. Some kids pull out weeds. Some mix in more compost. Parents and teachers help, too. There’s always a lot to do in a garden.

But sometimes, it’s nice to just sit and look at a garden. A lot of people do that. They watch the birds that come. They watch the butterflies. They touch the plants and sniff their flowers and listen to the humming of the bees.

Gardens are good places to be.

Especially when the food is ready to eat. You can pull a little red tomato off its green stem and pop it right into your mouth. You can eat a strawberry that’s still warm from the sun. You can split open pea pods and eat the tiny green peas, one by one by one.

Yes, gardens are good places to be.

But not everyone has a garden. Not everyone has enough food to eat. So, the people in this congregation decided to share what they had grown. Some days, they pick the tomatoes and the cucumbers and the peas. They put them in bags and they take them to a food pantry, a place where anybody who’s hungry can get something to eat. Sometimes the grownups and the older kids stay and help to cook food there. They make sandwiches and soup.

And if there’s any food left over, any apple cores or carrot tops or celery leaves, they bring those plant pieces back to their garden and put them in the compost bin. There, the plant pieces will turn into good brown dirt, and the compost will help the garden grow again.

And so, the circle of life goes on, around and around, and in the green sanctuary that is the Earth, people work together and help make things new.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session15/growing-green>

***Helping***

**3.29:** *Beautiful Hands* by Barb Pitman (1,389 words)

In uu & me! Collected Stories, edited by Betsy Hill Williams (Boston: Skinner House, 2003).

She was bewildered. Bewildered and ashamed. The other hands in the classroom were smooth with nails cleanly cut. Hands raised to answer the teacher’s question. Hands engaged in the age-old art of spit-ball forming. Hands writing on the blackboard. They all seemed so new, so unused, so beautiful.

May hid her hands. In kindergarten she hid them under the table. In first grade she hid them under the table. In second grade, third grade, and even fourth grade, she hid her hands in this way. Winters were always easier, thanks to Grandma’s handmade mittens. Colorful and bold, decorated with baby ducks and later, with purple and blue stripes, the mittens meant May felt no shame walking to school carrying books and lunch for herself and her sister.

Exclamations like, “Oh, how beautiful,” and “I wish my grandma would make some mittens with stripes,” stirred up hope inside May and for a brief moment she would tell herself she was one of them, for they would forget her hands and remember instead her beautiful mittens.

Back in the classroom, May would catch someone looking in her direction and shove her hands back under the desk. She never raised her hand, never applauded with excitement. She wrote in hurried strokes of the pencil so as not to have her hands in full view for very long.

One day she was walking through the school hallway, with her hands shoved into her pants pockets. In the hallway that day, she saw a poster for an art class. It was a special art class, it was going to be taught by her favorite teacher, and each student was going to be able to learn to draw and paint. She signed her name on the poster and all the way home, she thought about the kind of art project she might make. Her mom worked all night long while she watched her younger sister, and she thought maybe Mom would like a pretty picture to look at when she got home from work. She also thought about how tired Mom was during the day, trying to sleep while the rest of the world was awake, and May thought she might make a “Do-not-disturb!” sign for the front door. And then she remembered her beautiful mittens, and thought she might draw a pattern to send to Grandma so Grandma could make new mittens, even some for her sister.

As soon as May got home, she sat her sister, Kate, at the kitchen table for a snack. As she did the breakfast dishes and tried to keep Kate quiet so they would not wake up Mom, May thought of all the wonderful art projects she could try. May was so busy planning her project, she forgot about her hands. She finished the dishes, got out the mop to clean up the milk that didn’t quite make it to Kate’s mouth, and chopped potatoes for dinner. Mom was up by now, and was rushing out the door to get to work. Mom kissed May on the head, told the girls she loved them so-o-o-o much, and went off to work.

May helped Kate with her bath, tucked her into bed, made up Mom’s bed, and vacuumed the front room. After doing her homework, May went to bed and dreamt of being a famous artist. Everyone in town marveled at her beautiful paintings, she won awards from her school, and even got to give a speech in front of the governor.

When May woke up, she jumped out of bed, excited about the art class. As she braided Kate’s hair, she saw her hands and suddenly realized she could not paint or draw without the other children seeing her hands.

She could not get Kate ready fast enough, and practically pulled her all the way to school. May ran to the hallway to cross her name off the poster. It was not there. The poster and sign-up sheet were gone. She went to class and told her teacher she needed to drop out of the art class. The teacher said she would have to go to the art class and tell the art teacher that she was no longer interested in the class.

When May went to the art class that day, she tried to get the teacher’s attention, but there were so many other children in the class and such a lot of noise that May decided she would wait until after the class to talk to the art teacher.

After the teacher got the class to quiet down, she talked a little bit about drawing things, how important it was to draw what you saw, even it no one else saw the same thing. She said they would eventually draw their pets and maybe even a family member, but that their first lesson was to draw their own hand. May was stunned, and tried her very best not to cry in front of the other children. Though there were many things she wanted to draw, her hand was certainly not one of them. Still, she did her best though she was ashamed to even look at the rough redness around her nails. She had little bumps on her palms, and the lines in her hands reminded her of Grandma’s hands. May finished her drawing and left as quickly as possible, even before the teacher had collected the hand pictures and told them what they would be doing the next day.

The following morning, May was determined to tell the art teacher she could not take the class anymore. When she got to art class, the teacher talked about all the wonderful hand drawings she had gathered from their desks the day before. The art teacher laughed about the hand drawing that showed pink-and purple-dotted fingernails. She laughed about the hand that had diamond rings on every finger, and four diamond rings on the thumb. Then she held up a hand drawing that was familiar to May. It showed a small hand, with fingers curled toward the palm as if holding a precious stone or delicate butterfly. May shoved her hands under the desk, and wanted to crawl under there to hide along with her hands.

The teacher said, “Of all the hand drawings I saw yesterday, this is the one I could not stop looking at. This is an interesting drawing, a beautiful drawing, for it shows a hand that is not idle. It shows a hand that has worked hard. The fingers are curved, as if to protect something fragile.” She walked to May’s desk, and asked May, “Could I please see your hand?” May did not want to show her hand, but being accustomed to obeying teachers, she pulled her hand out from under the desk. The teacher took May’s hand into her own.

“Now,” said the teacher, “as I hold in my own hand the hand from this drawing, I can see that I was not wrong. It is a hand that has caressed little kittens and held small daisies. It is a hand that has washed many dishes, folded laundry, given baths, and combed hair. Yes, this is a very interesting hand. It is a beautiful hand.”

With that, the teacher went back and started talking about that afternoon’s drawing assignment.

After class, May ran all the way home, dragging Kate part of the way, and carrying her the rest of the way. She put the drawing on Mom’s bed, and with her rough, red hands, she washed the dishes, fixed dinner, bathed Kate, and finished her homework. As she lay down in bed, she noticed that the glow from the moon was shining on her hands. They look different tonight.

May thought of the many dishes and counters she washed when Mom was sleeping. She thought of the times she had bathed her sister and cleaned up the house when Mom was at work. She thought about the way her palm fit over Kate’s cheek, and how wonderful her sister’s skin felt to her hand. She remembered the tender kisses Mommy gave her hands when she came home from work in the dark hours of the early morning. She would hear her mommy say, “Thank you, May, for all your help. I could not do this without you.”

Just as the little girl with the red, rough hands was starting to nod off, she looked one more time at her hands. And she smiled, for they really were most interesting hands.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/windows/session14/143879.shtml>

**3.30:** *The Woman Who Wouldn’t Give Up* (467 words)

This story appears in volume 5 of The Stream of Living Souls, the Rev. Denise Tracy’s self-published anthology of short stories for worship based on the lives of famous historical Unitarian and Universalists.

I have a question for you. How many of you have ever been to see or had an appointment with a doctor who is a woman?

What if we went back in time 150 or so years to 1847? How many women doctors do you think there were then?

Well, in 1847, there were exactly no doctors who were women. Nada. Zero. None. Zip. Zilch. Not a one.

But there was a woman who wanted to be a doctor, who dreamed of helping people and who changed our world because of who she was, how she lived and what she believed. Her name was Elizabeth Blackwell and she was a Unitarian. This is her story.

It is 1853. Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell closed her eyes and then slowly, ever so slowly opened the door just a crack. Then she opened one eye and peeked. She looked to the right. She looked to left. What she saw made her heart beat faster. They had put up signs all through the neighborhood. Free Clinic. No one knew if it would attract any patients. But it had worked! The room was full! There were patients waiting to see her. This was a dream come true!

She was the first woman to be accepted into medical school! She was the first woman to graduate from medical school. She had studied in England and in France and received the highest recommendations of anyone. She had worked in hospitals and in clinics. Even with all this, no hospital in the United States was willing to let her be a member of their staff. No one had been willing to hire her at any medical college, because she was a woman. She had studied and worked for many years. She was as qualified as any man but she could not find work as a doctor.

When Elizabeth first arrived in Geneva, it seemed all the people in town had heard of this woman who wanted to study to be a doctor. When she walked down the street, people turned their backs and some refused to speak to her.

So, since no one would hire her, she decided to found her own clinic. She bought a house in the poorest section of New York City. She lived upstairs and kept a room to see patients downstairs.

In the first year she treated over 200 patients, most of whom had little or no money to pay her. However, in only a few years, the demand for her services was so great she raised money and founded a hospital supported by the many people who believed in her. Elizabeth Blackwell was both compassionate and courageous. She wanted to be a doctor to help people, and no matter what obstacles she faced, she was determined to follow her calling.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session14/woman>

**3.31:** *The Brave Little Parrot* (859 words)

A Jataka Tale from India. Martin, Rafe. The Hungry Tigress: Buddhist Myths, Legends, and Jataka Tales (Somerville, MA: Yellow Moon Press, 1999). Reprinted with the permission of the author. www.rafemartin.com

Once, long ago, the Buddha was born as a little parrot. One day, a storm broke upon her forest home. Lightning flashed, thunder crashed, and a dead tree, struck by lightning, burst into flames. Sparks leapt on the wind and soon the forest was ablaze. Terrified animals ran wildly in every direction, seeking safety from the flames and smoke.

“Fire! Fire!” cried the little parrot. “Run! Run to the river!” Flapping her wings, she flung herself out into the fury of the storm, and, rising higher, flew towards the safety of the river. But as she flew, she could see that many animals were trapped, surrounded by the flames below, with no chance of escape.

Suddenly, a desperate idea, a way to save them, came to her.

She darted to the river, dipped herself in the water, and flew back over the now raging fire.

The heat rising up from the burning forest was like the heat of an oven. The thick smoke made breathing almost unbearable. A wall of flames shot up now on one side, now on the other. Crackling flames leapt and danced before her. Twisting and turning through the mad maze of fire, the little parrot flew bravely on. At last, over the center of the forest, she shook her wings and released the few drops of water which still clung to her feathers. The tiny drops tumbled like jewels down in the heart of the blaze and vanished with a hssssssssss.

Then the little parrot once more flew back through the flames and smoke to the river, dipped herself in the cool water, and flew back again over the burning forest. Back and forth she flew, time and time again, from the river to the forest, from the burning forest to the river. Her feathers were charred. Her feet were scorched. Her lungs ached. Her eyes, stung by smoke, burned red as coals. Her mind spun as dizzily as the spinning sparks. But still the little parrot flew on.

At this time, some of the Devas, gods of a happy realm, were floating high overhead in their cloud palaces of ivory and gold. They happened to look down and they saw the little parrot flying through the flames. They pointed at her with perfect hands. Between mouthfuls of honeyed foods, they exclaimed, “Look at that foolish bird!” She’s trying to put out a raging forest fire with a few sprinkles of water! How ridiculous! How absurd!” And they laughed.

But one of those Gods did not laugh. Strangely moved, he changed himself into a golden eagle and flew down, down towards the little parrot’s fiery path.

The little parrot was just nearing the flames again when the great eagle, with eyes like molten gold appeared at her side. “Go back, little bird!” said the eagle in a solemn and majestic voice. “Your task is hopeless! A few drops of water can’t put out a forest fire! Cease now and save yourself — before it’s too late.”

But the little parrot only continued to fly on through the smoke and flames. She could hear the great eagle flying above her as the heat grew fiercer, calling out, “Stop, foolish little parrot! Save yourself! Save yourself!”

“I don’t need a great, shining eagle” coughed the little parrot, “to give me advice like that. My own mother, the dear bird, might have told me such things long ago. Advice! (cough, cough) I don’t need advice. I just (cough) need someone to help”

And the god who was that great eagle, seeing the little parrot flying through the flames, thought suddenly of his own privileged kind. He could see them floating high up above. Yes, there they were, the carefree gods, still laughing and talking while many animals cried out in pain and fear from among the flames below. Seeing that, he grew ashamed, and a single desire was kindled in his heart. God though he was, he just wanted to be like that brave little parrot and to help.

“I will help!” he exclaimed, and flushed with these new feelings, he began to weep. Stream after stream of sparkling tears poured from his eyes. Wave upon wave they washed down like the cooling rain upon the fire, upon the forest, upon the animals, and upon the little parrot herself.

Where those tears fell, the flames died down, and the smoke began to clear. The little parrot, washed and bright, rocketed about the sky laughing for joy. “Now that’s more like it!” she exclaimed.

The eagle’s tears dripped from burned branches and soaked into the scorched earth. Where those tears glistened, new life pushed quickly forth-shoots, stems, and leaves. Buds unfurled and blossoms opened. Green grass pushed up from among still-glowing cinders.

All the animals looked at one another in amazement. Washed by those tears they were whole and well. Not one had been harmed. Up above, in the clear blue sky, they could see their friend, the little parrot, looping and soaring in delight. When hope was gone, somehow, she had saved them. “Hurray!” they cried. “Hurray for the brave little parrot, and for this sudden, miraculous rain!”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session15/123724.shtml>

**3.32:** *The Rooster Who Learned To Crow* by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer (1,150 words)

*A story from A Lamp in Every Corner: Our Unitarian Universalist Storybook (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004).*

Read or tell the story.

There once was a farm in a valley that was practically perfect in every way, except that it had no rooster to crow at the crack of dawn, and so everyone was always late getting out of bed. The dog never woke up in time to fetch the newspaper for the farmer. The farmer never woke up in time to milk the cows before the sun rose. The cows never woke up in time to eat the grass when it was still wet with morning dew, which is when it is most tasty. Everyone was always late on that farm, and so everyone was always a bit cranky in the morning, and sometimes that crankiness lasted all day.

Until one day, a chicken arrived at the farm. Everyone was excited because she had four little yellow balls of fluff peeping and cheeping behind her. “Uh, pardon me, Mrs. Chicken,” snuffled the pig, who was always exceedingly polite. “But would one of your chicks there happen to be, that is, might one be, a he?”

“Why, yes,” answered Mrs. Chicken, and she pointed with the tip of her wing to the last chick in line. “That’s my son.”

“A rooster chicken!” squealed the youngest of the lambs, and all the other animals squealed (or whinnied or quacked or oinked), too. “We won’t be late anymore! We have a rooster on the farm!”

But they didn’t. Not yet. They had to wait for the chicks to grow up. And grow they did, from little yellow balls of fluff with legs to bigger yellow balls of fluff with legs. As the days passed, all the young chickens grew fine white feathers and bright yellow feet, and then — finally — young Mr. Rooster Chicken began to grow long swooping feathers on his tail.

“A tail, a tail!” squealed the youngest of the lambs. “Soon you’ll be old enough to crow!”

“You look very handsome today, young Mr. Rooster,” snorted the pig, who was always exceedingly polite. “A very fine-looking fowl, if I so may say.”

“Thank you,” said young Mr. Rooster, with a bob of his head and a quiver of his cockscomb, but then he walked away, his long tail feathers drooping and his cockscomb down, too.

“What’s wrong?” asked his friend, the gray-and-white cat who lived in the barn.

“Oh, nothing.”

“Something’s wrong,” said his other friend, the yellow duck who swam in the pond. The pig came over to listen, too.

“Well,” said the young rooster, scratching in the dirt with his strong yellow toes, “everybody’s waiting for me to grow up and crow. I’m doing the growing-up part all right, but . . .”

“But what?” asked the cat.

“But I don’t know how to crow! I’ve never even heard a rooster. I don’t know what I’m supposed to do!”

“We shall help you,” announced the pig, who was always exceedingly helpful as well as exceedingly polite.

“We will?” asked the cat, with every single one of his eyebrow whiskers raised. “How?”

“Yes, how?” quacked the duck.

“We shall teach him,” said the pig. “You have heard a rooster crow before, have you not, Mrs. Duck?”

“Yes, I have!” said the duck. “I can show you.” She flew to the top of the chicken coop nearby. Then she folded her wings back, tilted her bill up, and crowed. “Quack-a-whack a-whack a-whack.”

The cat crouched down and flattened his ears.

“Hmmm,” said the pig. “Thank you, Mrs. Duck, though that’s not perhaps

quite . . .”

“I hope not!” said the rooster, looking very much alarmed.

“I shall demonstrate,” said the pig. “First, one must climb, though you will no doubt fly, to a high point.” The pig climbed to the top of the manure pile. “Then, tilt your head back — Mrs. Duck did that part quite well — clear your throat and . . . crow.” The pig tilted his head back and cleared his throat. “Oink a-snuffle, oink a-snort!”

The cat closed his eyes and shook his head.

“Hmmph!” said the duck, not at all impressed.

“Yes, well . . .” The pig climbed down from the manure pile. “That is not quite, uh, that is . . . it does sound a bit . . . you understand . . . with a real rooster . . .”

“I’ll show you,” said the cat, and he leapt to the top of the fence and curled his tail around his toes. He washed one paw and looked up at the sky. “Meow a-meow-a-meow-a-meow.”

“Hmmph!” said the duck.

“Hmmm,” said the pig.

“Oh, dear,” said the rooster, looking even more alarmed.

“Maybe another chicken,” suggested the duck, and they went to fetch one of the hens. But all she managed was “Cluck a-cluck a-cluck a-cluck!” The dog gave them “Woof a-woof a-woof a-woof!” The lamb went “Baa a-baa a-baa a-baa!”

The rooster sadly shook his head. “I’ll never learn how to crow. I won’t be any good at waking people up. Nobody will like me anymore.”

“Sure we will!” said the cat. “I like you right now, and you’ve never crowed a day in your life.” All the other animals agreed, with baas and moos and stomping of feet. “Besides,” added the cat, “I don’t want you waking me up. I like to sleep late.”

“You will,” said the rooster, as gloomy as a rainy day.

“I wonder,” said the pig, “have you yourself ever tried to crow, Mr. Rooster?”

“Me?” said the rooster. “But . . .”

“You’re more of a rooster than any of us,” said the duck.

“And we’ll like you no matter what you sound like,” said the pig.

“Even if you don’t make any sound at all!” said the cat.

And so, the rooster decided to try. He flew up to the top of the chicken coop. He folded his wings back. He tilted his head. And he tried to make the same noises all his friends had tried to make before. Softly at first: “Cock-a-doodle-doo!” and then again, louder, “Cock-a-doodle-doo!” and then very loud indeed: “Cock-a-doodle-doo!”

After that, no one had any doubt that young Mr. Rooster knew how to crow, not even young Mr. Rooster himself.

There is a farm in a valley that is practically perfect in every way. It even has a fine young rooster, who crows at the crack of dawn, and so everyone always gets out of bed exactly on time. The dog always wakes up in time to fetch the newspaper for the farmer. The farmer always wakes up in time to milk the cows before the sun rises. The cows always wake up in time to eat the grass when it is still wet with morning dew, which is when it is most tasty. Everyone is always wide awake on that farm, because they have a rooster whose friends helped him learn how to crow, just like this: “Cock-a-doodle-doo!”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session13/rooster>

**3.33:** *Dorothea Dix* (848 words)

Dorothea Dix lived in the 1800s. At a time when women had fewer choices than men did, Dorothea made extraordinary choices for herself. She did not grow up a Unitarian, but she chose to become one as an adult. Another choice she made was to work hard on behalf of other people.

Dorothea made one of the most important contributions to our society by helping to create hospitals for people with mental illness. In her time, there were no hospitals for people with mental problems. People who acted strange or could not communicate because they had difficulty thinking and interacting the same way most others did, were kept in prisons. Often, they were chained and given very little clothing. So, what if it was cold in the prison? Nobody cared whether these people were cold. Most people thought people with mental illness did not get cold or feel pain. In fact, many people thought that those with mental illness were not fully human at all.

What gave Dorothea Dix a different idea about them? Maybe it was some of her own troubles that made her think more compassionately.

Dorothea Lynde Dix was born on April 4, 1802 in the town of Hampden in Maine. She was the oldest of three children born to Joseph Dix and Mary Bigelow Dix. Dorothea’s mother was often sick and her father was not very nice to his family. He often hit his wife and children. The family moved a lot, from Maine to Massachusetts and finally Vermont. When she was 12 years old, her grandmother sent for Dorothea and her two younger brothers to come live with her in Boston. Dorothea’s grandmother was wealthy and she expected Dorothea to behave in a certain way. Dorothea only wanted to care for her younger brothers. She was not interested in learning to be a “lady;” which at that time meant taking lessons in how to behave in society.

It took time for Dorothea to learn and understand how to “behave.” But one thing that she did very well, and loved in fact, was to read books and study. It was unusual at the time for a young girl to know how to read and write, but Dorothea’s father, a Methodist minister had taught her. Even though he was difficult as a father, he did teach her something valuable.

As Dorothea grew up, her grandmother was very strict and very concerned about her status in society. When Dorothea became involved in opening a school for poor children, she wanted to use her grandmother’s barn as the school. Dorothea was so worried her grandmother would not let her teach the poor, especially in her own barn, that she wrote her a letter to ask permission. Dorothea’s grandmother said yes right away and Dorothea spent years as a teacher.

Dorothea was religious, attending her grandmother’s Congregationalist church every Sunday. One day, Dorothea decided to visit the Unitarian church where Dr. William Ellery Channing was speaking. What she heard that day changed her life forever. She heard Dr. Channing preach that God was love and we are all a part of that love and we are called to show that love to others. This was very different from the sermons she heard in her own church. Dorothea became a Unitarian. After she got to know Dr. Channing, he offered her a job helping to care for his children. She lived with the Channing family for six months, traveling with them and tutoring the Channing children.

When Dorothea was in her forties, she visited a women’s prison and saw women in chains with no clothes on. When she asked why, the prison matron told her those people were mentally ill and didn’t understand anyway. Dorothea was appalled. She was so upset; she called her friends in the Massachusetts government to tell them. They told her they would need a written report before they could act. Dorothea went to every prison in Massachusetts and wrote a detailed report about the conditions for the mentally ill in each one. With her reports, Massachusetts began to open hospitals that treated the mentally ill with respect and gave them good food and warm clothing.

Dorothea Dix began to travel to other states, investigating conditions in prisons, filing reports, and testifying before state legislatures. Some of the hospitals she started still stand. So does the view of the mentally ill that she put forth: Even when someone’s words or behaviors cannot be understood by others, they are still a person who deserve dignity, respect and love.

Dorothea deeply valued the right to make one’s own choices. She trusted her own choices about the right way to live her life. One of her choices was to become a Unitarian. Another was to work to help people with mental illness in ways they were not able to help themselves. She understood they were people whose right to make their own choices had been taken away. She helped everyone understand that people with mental illness are people like us, who deserve dignity and respect.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/windows/session16/143973.shtml>

**3.34:** *No More Turning Away* by Steven Cooper and Hannah Cooper (651 words)

My name is Hannah and I’m in the sixth grade. I attend a Unitarian Universalist church in Naperville, Illinois. This past year our church joined many other UU congregations in the Chicago area on a project called *No More Turning Away*.

The purpose of this project was to lead churches to help people who are homeless or near homeless. Many churches throughout Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri also participated in this project.

Each church did work in their own neighborhood to help people. Last Halloween my brother and I trick-or-treated for the food pantry in our town. We pulled a wagon behind us and filled it with canned food and grocery items from our neighbors rather than collecting candy for ourselves (although a lot of our neighbors gave us candy anyway).

One night a month our church was assigned to work at a homeless shelter. Many families from our congregation would bring meals, set up beds, and oversee the activities for the evening. My job was to help serve dinner to our guests. It was strange at first because I knew that they were homeless but they looked just like everybody else. Sometimes there was a mother with two kids who would visit. I tried to be friends with the girl but she was too shy.

At Christmas-time our church put up two Christmas trees in our social hall. One tree was not decorated at all. People were supposed to bring in mittens, hats, and scarves and put them on the tree to decorate it. Just before Christmas, we packed up all the items and took them to a pantry where people who needed them could get them for free.

The second Christmas tree was decorated with gift tags. Each tag was for a child we could buy a gift for, and gave the person’s age, whether they were a boy or girl, and what they wanted for Christmas. My dad helped me pick two tags, and then we went and bought those gifts and placed them under the tree. Later, all the gifts were distributed to the children’s families so they would have them for Christmas morning. My dad told me that most of these participants would not have had Christmas gifts if it wasn’t for us.

Throughout the year, we saw movies about homeless people. We talked about how people become homeless and what possible ways we can help them. We also did a simulation where we pretended, we were going to be homeless. We had to figure what personal items we would take with us and it had to all fit in a backpack.

In March, all the UU congregations participating in No More Turning Away had an event to help the homeless at the same time, and we were in newspapers and on the TV news. For this event kids and adults asked people to sponsor them by pledging money that would go to a homeless shelter or food pantry near their church. Then on a Saturday night, late in March, all the adults and kids slept outside their churches in cardboard boxes. We made a Cardboard City, just like some homeless people do. It was a chance to really feel what it was like to be homeless. I later found out that a lot of my UU friends from other churches were outside in boxes at the same time I was. We were lucky—the weather for us wasn’t too bad for March, but for my friends in Wisconsin the weather wasn’t as nice.

It was neat to think that over 300 UUs across the Midwest were doing the same thing at the same time that I was to help the homeless. Over $10,000 was collected and distributed to help homeless people in each community. I felt like our church was really doing something to help people and I can’t wait to do it again next year.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session15/162151.shtml>

**3.35:** *Snail Girl*, a Navajo Story (1,527 words)

Long ago, it is said, there was a mighty flood, and the People left their world, the Fourth World, the Underworld, and came up into the Fifth World, the world we live in today. They found themselves on the shore of a great ocean.

The People broke into groups by clan and went out to find new homes. But at the end of four days, they came back to the place by the ocean.

“There’s no fresh water to drink in this world,” they said. They stood by the biggest body of water they had ever seen, but it was salty and they couldn’t drink it without getting sick. “What are we going to do?” they asked.

First Woman stood in front of the People and spoke. “Someone will have to go back down to the old world below, back through the hole from which we emerged, to find some fresh water. If I could have just a little water, I could sing my water song and make many streams and rivers grow.”

First Woman was the first human being ever made. She was tall with strong arms and hands and a gentle, kind face. Her eyes shone with wisdom and strength. She looked at the People, and her eyes fell on the group that was the Water Clan.

“One of you should go,” she said. “You should have brought the water with you when we left the old world.”

Then First Woman made a beautiful water bottle out of sea shells. She put a stopper made of red coral in the opening and she wove some rainbow into a loop to carry it. When she finished, she held it up in front of her and faced the Water Clan.

“So, who will go?” she asked.

Out of the group came two Animal People, Otter and Beaver. Long, long ago, before the world was finished, they say there were Animal People. Otter and Beaver walked upright on two legs, but they had wide tails like paddles, just like the tails they wear today, and they were great warriors.

Otter said, “We’re from the Water Clan. We’re the best swimmers, and we should be the ones to go.”

First Woman smiled at them proudly. She hung the water bottle around Otter’s neck. Together, Otter and Beaver jumped into the water. They went down, down, down until they reached the bottom and walked along the ocean floor.

Soon they came to a valley of water lilies. There were lilies of every color. It was so beautiful that Otter and Beaver decided to stop.

Beaver said, “We should take some of these flowers and plant them in our new world!”

“Good idea,” Otter agreed.

So, Otter put down the bottle, and soon they were both covered from head to toe in water lilies, roots, and vines. When they had gathered all they could, they journeyed back to the world above.

When they came out of the water, the People waiting on the beach were amazed. Otter and Beaver looked like two trees coming out of the ocean.

“It’s us!” Otter yelled.

The people cried, “Otter and Beaver have come back!” Everyone was excited.

“Look what we found!” Beaver said. “We’re going to plant these here in our new home!”

First Woman anxiously waited for the water bottle.

Otter pulled and tugged at the roots and vines. “I’ve got it,” he said. “It’s here somewhere.” But he looked and looked and couldn’t find it.

“You have it, cousin Beaver,” Otter said. Together they pulled and tugged on the vines and flowers, but they didn’t find the bottle.

“Oh, no!” Otter cried. “I think we forgot it... down there....” Otter’s voice got smaller as he realized what they had done.

First Woman’s eyes narrowed. “This won’t do at all. You two go away from here. I don’t want to see you for a while.”

So, Beaver and Otter waddled away, dragging their tails between their legs, to plant their vines and flowers. Today we know that Otter and Beaver still surround themselves with water lilies and roots and vines.

Next, First Woman sent Frog and Turtle to get water. They brought the water bottle back when they returned, but it was filled with salt water. So, First Woman sent them away, too.

First Woman was growing weary of the Water Clan’s mistakes. She was not used to being this upset. “We still don’t have any fresh water,” she said.

Someone tugged on her dress. First Woman looked down and saw a thin little girl with long, raven-black hair.

“I am Snail,” the child said in a small, squeaky voice. “I’m from the Water Clan, and I’d like to help my people. I want to go get the water.”

First Woman looked at the People and the People looked at each other. Everyone knew that Snail was the slowest swimmer of the Water Clan. Nobody thought she would make it, but nobody else wanted to go. First Woman nodded. “You are very brave, Snail,” she said. And she tied the bottle to Snail Girl’s back. Snail slowly slipped into the great waters. She went down, down, down to the land at the bottom, her long black hair flowing behind her.

Snail Girl went past the valley of water lilies, past the place where Turtle and Frog had gone. Finally, Snail came to a hole in the sand with bubbles coming out of it. She went into the darkness of this hole, deeper and deeper, back to the Fourth World.

There she found some pure water. She tasted it, and it was delicious and fresh. There was just enough to fill up the water bottle. She carefully placed the coral stopper tightly in the bottle. She went back up through the hole and made her journey home.

The full moon was shining when Snail Girl came out of the water. She had been gone for such a long time that no one waited for her at the seashore.

Slowly, Snail Girl walked up the hill where she made her home. She was so tired that she didn’t feel the rainbow loop coming loose and the water bottle falling off her back. She was so worn out that she didn’t hear the bottle dragging in the dirt and rocks. She was so sleepy that she didn’t notice the water trickling out.

Snail Girl went to her home and took the bottle off her back. She looked at it and couldn’t believe her eyes. There was a hole in the bottom of the bottle.

“Oh no! It’s empty!” she cried.

She was so exhausted that she couldn’t even cry. She fell to the ground fast asleep.

First Woman woke up from a dream. “I dreamed Snail has returned!” she whispered. First Woman believed in the power of dreams.

She ran down to the ocean’s edge. She followed Snail Girl’s trail up the hill. Halfway up she saw something shining at her feet in the moonlight. She stopped and reached down to touch it. It was wet. She tasted it. “Fresh water!” she said, and she breathed a sigh of relief. “Snail did it!”

Long ago, they say, everyone had a magic song. First Woman began to sing her magic song, and the small drops of pure water began to grow. They turned into a trickle at first, then a stream, then a river. The river got longer and wider and deeper and faster, and soon the biggest river anybody had ever seen rushed into the ocean.

First Woman looked at the river and smiled, and then she remembered Snail.

First Woman ran to Snail Girl’s home and woke her up. Snail opened her weary eyes and saw it was First Woman, and she said, “All the water is gone. Look at the bottle. There’s a hole in it.” She began to cry.

But First Woman’s eyes lit up. “Come with me, Snail,” she said, and they went outside. A beautiful river ran down the hill to the ocean.

“You did it, Snail,” First Woman said. “You carried the water all the way back from the old world, and even though a hole wore through the bottle as you walked up the hill, I got here in time to take a seed of water and make it grow.” Snail smiled.

Snail Girl and First Woman stood together near the top of the hill and watched the sun rise over the river. As the People awoke and came out of their homes, they were amazed at what they saw. They whooped and hollered with joy and happiness.

The people held a giving thanks ceremony. Everyone sat in a circle and Snail was the Honored One.

First Woman spoke. “Snail, you are very brave, and we thank you. From this day on, you will carry the water bottle on your back as a symbol of your great journey. You will leave a trail of moisture behind you every place you travel. This will be a message to everyone that our pure water is precious and we must take care of it.”

And so, it was from that day on.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop1/149426.shtml>

**3.36:** *Maya’s Questions* by Elisa Pearmain (1,037 words)

*(Written by Elisa Pearmain, this story is an adaptation of the story, “The Three Questions.” This Buddhist-like story is often attributed to Leo Tolstoy who included it in his collection, Fables and Fairy Tales (New York: New American Library, 1962, origin)*

*Read or tell the story.*

Once upon a time a girl named Maya was playing in her front yard with her big sister and some of her sister’s friends, while her father watched from the kitchen window. Soon Maya’s friend Annie came along and wanted to join in the game. Maya’s big sister and her friends whispered to Maya, “You can play with us, but not Annie, she’s too little.” So, Maya said, “Sorry, Annie. I can’t play with you right now.” Annie walked away sadly.

Soon Maya’s father called her in for some lunch. “Hey,” he said, “how do you think it made Annie feel when you wouldn’t play with her today?”

“Sad, maybe,” Maya answered. “But it was because the big kids told me to say that.”

“I know,” he said, “but how did it feel to you?”

“Not so good.” She replied.

“Right,” he said. “I know that you want to be a kind person, but sometimes it is confusing as what is the right thing to do isn’t it?”

“Yes,” Maya replied. “I don’t always know who to pay attention to, or who I should listen to, or what to do.”

“I think those are excellent questions to think about,” said her father. “Let me see if I can repeat them: Who is the important person to pay attention to? And what is the best thing to do? I think you know the answer to the question of who to listen to, right?”

“Yeah, listen to my heart or ask a grown-up who I know,” Maya answered.

“Why don’t you take those questions and go ask your grandmother,” her father suggested. “She would like a visit from you this afternoon, and she will know the answers to your questions.”

So, Maya went over to her grandmother’s house which was only next door. Grandmom was out back working in her garden. She was transplanting seedlings into the ground in neatly divided rows. Maya could see that she was tired. Grandmom’s face was flushed, and she had swipes of dirt across her brow. “Grandmom,” Maya said, “why don’t I bring you some lemonade and you sit down and watch me work for a while. I want to ask you some questions so that I can be the kindest person possible.”

Grandmom settled herself on the steps. Maya went in the house and came out with two glasses of lemonade — one for her grandmother, and one for herself. “Thank you,” said Grandmom. “Now, what are your questions?”

“Well, who are the most important people to pay attention to? What is the most important thing to do?” Grandmom smiled, but she didn’t say anything. Maya thought that her grandmother was trying to think of the answers so she kept on working. She dug little holes, planted the seedlings, tamped down the dirt and watered each seedling with care as her grandmother had taught her.

After a while she got tired and stopped for some lemonade. “Can you tell me the answers now, Grandmom?” But it looked like Grandmom had dozed off. So, Maya went back to the seedlings that still needed to be planted. There were only a few more.

All of a sudden, a cry came from out in the street. Maya ran out the side of the yard and around the house. There was Annie, laying on the sidewalk all tangled in Maya’s bicycle with a bloody knee and elbow and tears streaming down her face. “Grandmom!” Maya called, and her grandmother came quickly, too.

They helped Annie into the house. Maya got a wet cloth to clean Annie’s scrapes. She was very gentle so as not to hurt Annie, who was still crying. Maya patted her on the back and offered her a cool glass of lemonade. Soon Annie was calm. Maya helped her grandmother put several large bandages on her knee and elbow.

“What were you doing?” asked Maya. She had noticed her bike on the sidewalk.

“I was mad at you for not playing with me,” said Annie. “So I took your bike from your driveway. I was going to hide it until you said you were sorry. But I hit a bump on the sidewalk and fell over.”

“I am sorry I told you I couldn’t play,” said Maya.

“I know,” said Annie, “And I can see you are a good friend by the way you are taking care of me and helping me feel better. I wanted to hurt you, but now I am sorry.”

“I’m glad you know I am your friend. I’m really sorry I hurt your feelings,” said Maya.

“Thanks,” said Annie. “And thanks for the band-aids and the lemonade.”

Maya and Annie picked up Maya’s bicycle and leaned it on the side of Grandmom’s house. Then Annie went home. Maya and her grandmother went back out into the garden and worked, side by side, for a while, to put the last seedlings in the ground.

“Grandmom, are you ever going to tell me the answers to my two questions?” Maya asked.

“Well I don’t need to, Maya,” she smiled. “You figured them out yourself.”

“I have?” Maya looked confused.

“Yes,” said Grandmom. “You asked me, ‘Who is the most important person to pay attention to?’ When you first came over the most important person to pay attention to was me, and the most important thing to do was to help me because I was tired. Because you stayed to help me, you were here to help Annie, and she got a chance to see how kind you are. Now she is no longer mad at you and she didn’t want to hide your bike anymore!

“When Annie hurt herself, she was the most important person to pay attention to,” Grandmom continued. “And the most important thing to do was to help her.”

“You mean, Grandmom, that the most important people to be with are the ones who need our attention right now? And the most important thing to do is to treat them kindly?” Maya asked.

“Yes,” said Maya’s grandmother. “If you pay attention to the people who are around you, and be kind, you will always be doing the most important thing. And I think you knew that, all along.

Source: [https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session15//mayas-questions](https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session15/mayas-questions)

**3.37:** *Helping with Hearts, Heads, and Hands* by Jan Devor (431 words)

At the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, Minnesota, people of all ages carry their own Passport to Justice. They are on a journey to help others. By the end of the church year, this congregation’s members, young ones and older, will have passports filled with stamps from the places they have been. But where have their travels taken them? Not Amsterdam, Bangkok, or Caracas. No place far, at all. Just destinations in their own community where their presence can make a difference.

Why volunteer at a soup kitchen? Why tutor younger children after school? Why work in a community garden? What is this journey all about?

It is a journey to follow the call of justice, simply because that path is the right one, and for what other purpose are we here on earth but to find and walk the right path? In the Passport to Justice program, people let their hearts turn them toward a place the world is hurting and they can help. They use their heads, to discover a way their time and talents can make things better for others and the world. Then they put their hands to work making, teaching, witnessing, doing—and earning a new travel stamp.

First Unitarian is one of Unitarian Universalism’s explicitly Humanist communities. A few years ago, the minister of First Unitarian Society, Reverend Kendyl Gibbons and a committee of members crafted these words to help explain what that means. Here is what they wrote:

*The First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis is a Unitarian Universalist congregation in the Humanist tradition, offering personal growth and service opportunities without supernatural beliefs. We affirm the radical notion that human connections and human resources solve human problems, and help us to become the people we hope to be. We welcome diversity of people, ideas, and questions as we build community together.*

Personal growth and service, without supernatural beliefs. It’s humans that the people of First Unitarian believe in—what we are, what we are capable of, and how we should help one another. No god or rule book tells them where to follow the call of justice, what to do when they get there, or why. The Passport to Justice holders are Humanists. They love, and care, and act because they know it is right.

If you are called to justice not by a god of any kind, simply by your belief in human potential, your moral sense of responsibility to others, and a wish to use science and reason to determine how you can help, then you might use a Passport to Justice, too.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/bridges/workshop18/hearts-heads-hands>

**3.38:** *The Journey of the Birds* (449 words)

Inspired by the ancient epic poem, “The Conference of the Birds,” by the Persian Sufi Muslim writer Fariduddin Attar.

Once upon a time, all the birds in the land decided they needed a leader for their community. A leader, they thought, would make their community stronger. Representatives of all the bird species gathered to discuss finding a leader.

“A leader will tell us the right things to do,” said the robin.

“Our leader must be wise,” said the owl.

“A leader must believe we each are important, big and small,” said the sparrow.

“I want the leader to be caring, like a friend,” said the dove.

“Yes, the leader helps us share and get along better,” said the jay.

“The leader must make us feel safe,” said the hawk.

“I know where you can find such a leader,” said the hoopoe bird. “It is the Simorgh and it lives far from here.”

The birds were very excited. They said they were willing to go anywhere to find such a leader. “It might be dangerous,” said the hoopoe. A few birds looked troubled, but all the birds voted to go find the Simorgh.

The hoopoe took off and all the birds followed.

They flew at night. They flew in sunshine. Days and days passed. Some birds got tired and left the group. Other birds were filled with doubt. How did they know the Simorgh really existed? Only the hoopoe had ever heard of this bird. Some of the doubters dropped out, but others kept flying.

One valley was filled with fiery mountains. All the birds were afraid.

“I’m too small to make it over that mountain,” lamented the sparrow.

“No, keep flying. We can make it together. We will help you.” And they did.

The strong flyers helped the weaker flyers. The birds with good vision helped find food for the group. Along the journey, the birds learned how to better respect, share and care for each other. It seemed that every bird had something special and unique to offer that made the journey easier.

Finally, the hoopoe announced, “We are here!”

The other birds look around in anticipation. “Where is the Simorgh? We don’t see it!’ they cried.

“Come. It is over here,” said the hoopoe.

The birds stood beside hoopoe and realized they were on the edge of a lake. They looked in... and saw their own reflections. Then, they understood.

The Simorgh was not another bird. The Simorgh was all of them, and all of them were the Simorgh. They remembered that each of them had something good and strong and special inside of them and that each bird had gifts to bring to the community. They were all that was needed to keep the community strong. They knew now that together they could do anything.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/signs/session9/journey>

**3.39:** *Crossing the Finish Line Together* (215 words)

Based on a true story which happened at the 1976 Special Olympics in Seattle, Washington.

Years ago, at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants lined up at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the sound of the starting gun, they all started off in their own way, making their best effort to run down the track toward the finish line. That is, except for the one young boy who stumbled soon after his start, tumbled to the ground and began to cry. Two of the other racers, hearing the cries of the boy who fell, slowed down and looked back at him. Then without hesitation, they turned around and began running in the other direction—toward the injured boy.

While the other contestants struggled to make it to the finish line, the two who had turned around to run in the other direction reached for the boy and helped him to his feet. All three of them then linked arms and together they walked to the finish line. By the time the trio reached the end, everyone in the stands was standing and cheering, some with tears rushing down their faces. Even though by turning back and helping the boy who fell, they lost their own chance to win the race, they all had smiles on their faces because they knew they had done the right thing.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session4/161765.shtml>

***Sharing***

**3.40:** *The Best Meal* (690 words)

*Inspired by a story in* Tales for the Seventh Day: A Collection of Sabbath Stories *by Nina Jaffe (New York: Scholastic Press, 2000).*

Once a there was a great chef who was famous throughout the land. She was so good she taught other people how to cook and their food was almost as tasty as hers. Just for fun, she would throw fancy dinner parties once a month. Everyone wanted to be invited to these dinners. For these dinners, she would instruct the student chefs to cook new and extravagant dishes. The dinner guests, in awe of the chef’s skills, would spend the dinner savoring each bite. All you would hear would be quiet, little “ooohs” and “aaahs.”

Because she wanted to always feature new goodies to eat at all her parties, she would travel far and wide all over the land to experience new food. Everywhere she went, the town would honor her. The best cooks would create dishes unique to their region. The great chef tasted them all and requested the recipes of the dishes she liked best. As you can imagine, she ate a lot of food and knew a great deal about how to prepare the best meals.

One evening, while traveling home, the chef stopped at a small country house to ask for directions to a hotel. The family insisted that she spend the night with them. Happily, she was in time for dinner. The mother took a casserole out of the oven. Brother tossed a salad with different vegetables. Sister sliced the bread.

“Let me help,’ said the chef, so she set the table for the four of them.

When everyone was seated at the table, the family held hands. The chef felt the young sister’s hand slip into hers and the chef, in turn, reached out for the brother’s hand.

The mother said, “To have food upon the table” and the children replied “Is a blessing!”

The mother said, “The sunset and the possibility of another sunrise tomorrow…”

“Is a blessing!” the children replied.

“The love of family, the warmth of friendship, and the grace of the Spirit…”

“Is a blessing!” the children and chef replied together. Then they laughed, happy that the chef had joined in their grace.

They ate and during the meal everyone told stories about their day. The chef could not believe how delicious the food was. She didn’t want dinner to end. All things must end, however, and off to bed the children went.

“May I have the recipes?” the chef asked the mother, who was flattered that the chef had so enjoyed their simple meal.

In the morning, the chef rode on towards home. When she got home, she went straight to the kitchen, gave the young chefs the recipes, and told them to start preparation for a dinner party tomorrow night.

Tomorrow came, the guests arrived, and the casserole, salad, and bread were served. The chef took a bite and chewed. Something was wrong. Something was missing. This was not like the meal she had at the farmhouse. She ordered the students to explain what they had done differently, but they promised they had only followed the recipes. So, she sent someone to go to the farmhouse to bring the mother to her house. The mother came and the chef asked her what missing ingredient had she left out of the recipe.

,,,,,”What’s missing cannot fit into a recipe,” she replied. “Did you and your guests make the meal together? Did you hold fast to each other while giving thanks? Did you share your stories during the meal?”

,,,,,”No,” the chef replied. None of that had happened. Then the chef realized that sharing a meal together – what we call “breaking bread together” – was about more than just eating good food. It was about working together, sharing lives, and sharing laughs. It was about being thankful for the food not because it was fancy or the best, but because being together to enjoy the food would nourish you, your family, and your friends.

,,,,,After that, the chef decided to give small, intimate dinner parties. She and her guests would work together with the student chefs and they would all sit together, give thanks, and enjoy the very best of meals.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session11/60158.shtml>

## 3.41: *Hare’s Gifts*, for five readers and one non-reading performer (Butterfly) (942 words)

*Characters: Narrator, Hyena, Hare, Crocodile, Ostrich, and Butterfly*

NARRATOR: This is a story about life back in the old days. It’s mostly about Hare and Hyena, but it’s also about the other animals of the grasslands. Back in those days, animals just settled down and built a hut any ol’ place. It made it hard sometimes to go and visit your friends. But no one put much thought into where they built their houses. Until Hyena had an idea.

HYENA: I know some of these guys really look down on me. I bet they wouldn’t be that way if I had a grand, fine home. I’m going to build one! It will be the finest hut anywhere in the grasslands!

NARRATOR: And that’s just what Hyena did. Hyena found a good site beside sweet water and in the shade of the baobab tree and started building. When it was finished, Hyena threw a party to show it off and invited all the animals, even that trickster Hare.

Crocodile, Ostrich, and Butterfly met on their way to Hyena’s party.

CROCODILE: Are you on your way to Hyena’s party?

OSTRICH: I can’t wait to see it! I hear it has enormously tall, white walls covered in gaily painted designs: spirals and circles and zigzags!

CROCODILE: I hear that after we tour the home, Hyena is having a great feast. All the guests are invited to eat all they want!

HYENA: Welcome, friends! Eat, drink and admire my new home. Surely this is the most magnificent hut ever to be built! (pause) I see everyone here but Hare. Has anyone seen Hare?

NARRATOR: Not one animal had seen Hare, who didn’t come to Hyena’s party at all. The next morning, a very insulted Hyena paid a visit to Hare’s hut.

HARE: Good morning, Hyena.

HYENA: Good morning indeed, Hare. Too bad you missed a good night! Where were you last night? Why did you not come see my fine new hut? Why did you not join the feast?

HARE: That old thing? I could build a better one in half the time. As for your feast, why should I come and be bored? I could give a feast that would make every animal in the land forget all about yours.

HYENA (SMILING SMUGLY): All right, Hare. It took me a full moon to build and decorate my hut. You have half a moon. And your feast had better be a good one or my winter robe will be made of hare skin. Goodbye!

HARE (SCRATCHING HEAD): You’ve really done it this time, Hare! When will you learn to keep your big mouth shut? (thinking pause) Hey, I’ve got an idea. I hope I can get the animals to help me!

NARRATOR: Hare jumped up and started running to all the other huts scattered across the land to ask all the animals to come and help. To get them to come, Hare promised to reward all the animals with two marvelous, unheard-of gifts and a wonderful feast when all the work was done. The animals were just as excited about Hare’s party as they had been about Hyena’s.

CROCODILE: Hello, Hare. Here we are. What should we do first?

HARE: Hello, Crocodile. Yours is the last family to arrive. Now we go to work.

NARRATOR: And work they did. Hare got the best woodworkers to set the poles to make the new hut, and then to set the poles to make new huts for all the other huts for all the other animals that had come. Hare got the best painters to paint the walls, the best artists to decorate them; and all the best cooks to prepare food for a feast. After giving every single guest a job to do, Hare went for a walk, found a hollow log and a couple of sticks, and spent the entire half-moon fiddling around with them.

HYENA: Well, well, Hare. Your half-moon is up. I see your new hut. It is very nice indeed. As nice as mine. In fact, it looks exactly like mine. Can you prove that yours is better?

HARE: Are you stupid? Just look around you and you’ll see. My hut is better than yours because it was built by all the animals. And, now they all live near my hut, where I can have my fun with them.

OSTRICH: You know, Hare is right! It’s sweet to live together: sharing and helping each other.

CROCODILE: And knowing each other.

HARE: That is my first gift: a village.

HYENA: A village? HMMMMMPH! Well…. You also promised a feast better than mine, remember?

HARE: Of course, I remember. (claps hands) Bring the food for the feast.

NARRATOR: The dishes for the feast were laid out for all to share. Since the work was divided amongst so many cooks, every animal had a chance to prepare their own, very best dish. So the food was as good as it gets. That left all the guests happy, which, of course, made the storytellers relax and tell better stories.

HARE: Now you are ready for my second gift. Be quiet and listen.

NARRATOR: With that, Hare began to tap out a simple beat on the hollow log with the sticks. As Hare warmed up, the rhythms became more complex. Soon the animals begin to twitch and sway and move. Suddenly, Butterfly jumped up, flapping beautiful wings in time to the drum beats. Butterfly began to move in a circle around the fire. Before long, all the guests, even Hyena, joined the dance to the beat of the drum, Hare’s second gift.

Now some people say Hare really presented three gifts: the village, the drum, and the music; while some say the drum and music are really one. You know what I think? I think it hardly matters, but I’m sure that Hare enjoys the argument.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session8/60094.shtml>

**3.42:** *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, adapted from an Aesop’s fable (503 words)

One summer’s day, a Grasshopper was hopping about in a field, chirping and singing to his heart’s content. Hard-Working Ant passed by, struggling with the weight of a kernel of corn she was taking to the nest. “Why not come and sing with me?” said Grasshopper. “You are working much too hard.”

“I am helping to store food for the winter,” said Hard-Working Ant. “You should be doing this too, since there won’t be anything to eat once it gets cold and the snow falls.”

“Why worry about winter?” said Grasshopper. “There is plenty of food around here!” Hard-Working Ant shook her head and continued on her way carrying the heavy kernel of corn.

Day after day, Hard-Working Ant trudged back and forth from the cornfield to the ant nest, struggling to carry kernel after kernel to store for the winter.

Day after day, Grasshopper danced merrily across the fields, teasing Hard-Working Ant.

“Forget about work! Listen up! Enjoy the summer!” Grasshopper sang.

When the cold winds of winter began to blow and the puffy flakes of snow began to fall, food did indeed become very scarce. Grasshopper soon found himself hungry and cold. But the ants were toasty warm, sharing all the food they had collected during the summer.

Poor Grasshopper came one day to the door of the ants’ house, shivering so badly he could hardly knock. Welcoming Ant answered the door and looked at poor, hungry Grasshopper. “Please,” Grasshopper begged. “It is so cold out here and I am starving. There is no food anymore.”

Welcoming Ant stepped aside to let Grasshopper in, but another ant stepped forward. It was Hard-Working Ant who had watched Grasshopper sing and dance all summer while she worked hard to gather food. “Don’t let him in,” Hard-Working Ant protested. “He wasted his summer singing and dancing while we worked hard to store our food. He does not deserve to reap the benefits of our hard work.”

Welcoming Ant, the one who had been about to let Grasshopper in, shook his head. “That may be so,” said Welcoming Ant. “But we cannot allow him to starve. He is a creature like us. Just because he made a foolish choice, it does not mean we can condemn him to death.” Welcoming Ant waved one of his six arms and invited Grasshopper inside.

Grasshopper eagerly walked into the ants’ house and sat right down at the table filled with food. He stuffed himself until he was full, while Hard-Working Ant stared resentfully at him. Then Grasshopper pushed himself away from the table and began to sing. It was a catchy tune, a happy one and soon all the ants found themselves laughing and dancing, even Hard-Working Ant.

And all through that cold, long winter, the ants shared with Grasshopper their food, and Grasshopper shared with them his songs and his joy. They all had a wonderful time together—even Hard-Working Ant. She had to admit the winter time was more pleasant with Grasshopper and his songs around.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session6/161838.shtml>

**3.43:** *The Life of the Buddha* (721 words)

The name “Buddha” means “enlightened one” or “awakened one.” However, the founder of the Buddhist religion was not born enlightened. He was born Siddhartha Gautama, son of King Suddodana and Queen Maya, rulers of Kapilavastu, India, in the foothills of the Himalayas in 566 BCE. When Siddhartha was born, a wise man predicted, “If the prince remains in the royal household, he will become a great king. But if he leaves the household, he will find Truth and become a great holy man.” King Suddodana envisioned Siddhartha as a holy man: giving up all worldly possessions, a wandering teacher with a begging bowl. That was not the life he wanted for his only son, so he surrounded his son with everything he would ever need or want.

Sadly, the queen died seven days after Siddhartha’s birth. Her sister moved to the palace to raise the baby. The days passed quickly, and Siddhartha grew. Despite having his every whim catered to, he was a sensitive and meditative boy. At age 16, he married his cousin, Princess Yasodhara. The king hoped that married life would keep the prince happy and at home. And so, it was for the next 13 years.

One day, when he was 29, Siddhartha asked his friend and charioteer, Channa, to take him for a ride far away from the palace. On their journey, they encountered an old man. Siddhartha wondered what was wrong with this person. “Nothing is wrong,” replied Channa. “He is just old. We will all be old one day.” Siddhartha was very disturbed and asked to be taken home, where he could not stop thinking about the old man. “What good is youth if you will get old?” he wondered.

The next day, he asked Channa to go out again. On the way, they encountered another sight new to the prince. When he asked Channa about it, Channa replied, “That man is very sick. We are all vulnerable to sickness.” Siddhartha reflected on this all day and all night, thinking, “What good is health if you will eventually get sick?”

In the morning, they went riding again. This time, Siddhartha witnessed a body being carried through the streets. Channa explained, “That man is dead. Death comes to all men, even princes.” Siddhartha asked himself, “What good is life if you will someday die?”

Once more Channa and Siddhartha rode out into the city. There they saw a holy man in saffron robes. The prince asked, “Who are you?” The man replied, “I am a monk, a seeker of Truth, of life over death. To find it, I have given up everything on this earth.” Siddhartha decided he must do the same if he was to find peace.

That night, Siddhartha crept out of the palace, regretfully leaving his father, his wife, and his newborn son. For a while, he traveled with monks. But he did not feel any closer to the Truth.

He spent the next six years living as an ascetic. Asceticism taught that the way to Truth was to deny the body. Ascetics denied themselves food and comfort and lived as hermits. Yet, after six years, Siddhartha felt no closer to the Truth. He decided that Truth was not to be found in extreme circumstances or by denying the body, but through the mind and the heart. From that day forward, he chose to follow a middle path of moderation.

After six years of seeking, one day Siddhartha came to a bodhi tree and sat down beneath it, vowing not to leave until he knew the Truth of how to conquer suffering and death. While meditating and searching his heart, he came to understand how he was connected to all life, and how to conquer suffering and death. He had become the Buddha—the awakened one.

He expressed what he had learned in the Four Noble Truths:

* Life is suffering.
* The cause of suffering is selfish desire.
* The end of selfish desire will end suffering.
* The way to end selfish desire is through the Eightfold Path.

The Buddha shared his insights with many disciples across the land, including his father, wife, and son, who joined him in practicing the Middle Way. At the age of 80, he lay down and entered permanently into nirvana, the state of eternal peace without rebirth or death.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/bridges/workshop9/185202.shtml>

***Kindness***

**3.44:***The Picture on The Kitchen Wall* by Sophia Lyon Fahs (1,304 words)

*A story from China. Sophia Lyon Fahs, From Long Ago and Many Lands.*

Long, long ago in the land of China there lived a very old grandfather, named Chang Kung, who had a very large family. First, there were Chang Kung’s own sons. When his sons grew up, they all married and their wives came to live in Chang Kung’s house. Then grandchildren were born. When these grandsons grew up, they also married and their wives were added to Chang Kung’s family. Then came the great-grandchildren. So Chang Kung’s family grew and grew until there were several hundred people in it — all living together. There were old people and young people, middle-sized people and children. Always there were a number of babies.

Besides all this, Chang Kung’s family was very fond of pet animals, especially dogs. It is said that at one time one hundred pet dogs belonged to the household.

As Chang Kung’s family grew larger and larger, his house had to grow bigger and bigger too, until it became a collection of houses standing side by side around a large open courtyard. A high stone wall stood like a fence around all the houses, and that made all the houses together seem like one big home.

The larger his family grew; the happier old Chang Kung became. He liked to eat at one of the big long tables with his big and little children beside him. He enjoyed sitting in the sunny courtyard where he could watch his great-grandchildren play.

But Chang Kung’s family is not remembered after these many years simply because it was such a large family. Many people of China have large families. Chang Kung is still remembered because, it is said, the members of his family never quarreled. At least so the story goes. The children never quarreled in their play. The old people never quarreled with each other and never scolded the children. Nobody—big or little—ever said a cross word. Nobody ever did a mean thing. Some said jokingly that even the dogs did not quarrel or bite. When they were brought their bones, they would not even bark, but all would wag their tails and wait their turns.

Stories about this remarkable household spread far and wide over the country just as the breezes blow far and wide in the spring. Finally, news of Chang Kung’s happy family reached the ears of the Emperor.

Now it so happened that the Emperor was about to make a journey to the Western Hills, to a place not far from the home of Chang Kung. So, he decided to visit this wonderful household on his way back, and to see for himself whether or not the rumors he had heard were true.

What a sight it was the day the Emperor arrived outside the village gate. First in the royal procession came the very tall guards dressed in blue and red, carrying long bows and arrows in their hands.

Then came the mandarins, those important men in the Emperor’s court. Their long silk gowns were beautifully embroidered with figures of colored birds. Blue and green peacock feathers waved from their round hats. Other attendants followed, playing flutes and harps as the procession marched down the street.

At last came the Emperor himself in his richly adorned sedan chair, carried on the shoulders of four men in red. When the Emperor entered the gate of Chang Kung’s home, the old man himself was there, to bow many times and to greet his Emperor with very polite words.

“Very excellent and very aged Sir,” said the Emperor, “it is said that inside your walls no cross words are ever spoken. Can this be true?”

“Lord of ten thousand years,” said Chang Kung, “you do my poor house far too much honor. It is true that my family does not quarrel, but it would please us greatly if you would consent to walk about our humble courts and judge for yourself.”

So, the Emperor made his way from one house to another and from one room to another. He talked with everyone he met. In the great Hall of Politeness, he was served delicious food and drink. As he sipped his tea from a dainty cup, he said to Chang Kung: “You must have a golden secret in order to keep so many people living together in such order and peace. I, too, should like to know your secret. “

Then old Chang Kung called his servants to bring a tablet of smooth bamboo. (In those long-ago days there was no paper. All writing was done on wood or on stone.)

Chang Kung asked also for his brush and ink, and the ink stone with its little well of water. He took the brush in his hand and, dipping it into the water and then on the ink, he wrote one word on the tablet. He wrote the word a second time and a third time. He wrote the word over and over until he had written it one hundred times. Then with a low bow, he placed the tablet in the hands of the Emperor.

“You have written many words,” said the Emperor, “but at the same time you have written only one word.”

“Ai, ai,” said Chang Kung, “but that one word is the golden secret, 0 Son of Heaven. It is KINDNESS over and over without any ending.” Chang Kung nodded his gray head as he spoke.

The Emperor was so pleased with the golden secret that he, too, called for a bamboo tablet. Taking the brush that Chang Kung had used, the Emperor wrote these words on his tablet: “Let all the families of China learn the golden secret of Chang Kung and his family.”

When the Emperor had finished writing, he said: “Let this tablet be fastened to the outside of the gate where everyone passing may read it.”

Not many years after the Emperor’s visit Chang Kung died, but the story of his happy household has never been forgotten. People asked the Emperor to have pictures of the old man painted and sold so that families might hang his picture on the wall above their kitchen stoves to remind them to keep the golden secret that Chang Kung and his family had learned.

That is why, after these many, many years, in thousands of homes in China, at the New Year season, a fresh bright picture of Chang Kung is pasted on the wall behind the kitchen stove. Many Chinese will tell you it is a picture of a god, but you should know that Chang Kung was once just a very kind and good man who helped the members of his family to learn to live happily together without quarreling. Since so many people think that God is perhaps much like the very best person that can be imagined, such a good person as Chang Kung seems to them to be like God himself.

To look at the picture of Chang Kung over the kitchen stove every morning helps to remind many thousands of people in China to speak kindly to one another. They feel as if Chang Kung were watching them and listening as they go about their work. They can sometimes imagine they hear him speak that golden word — KINDNESS.

Once a year on the night before New Year’s, the picture of Chang Kung is taken down and burned. As the flames and smoke go upward, the people think: “Chang Kung is flying back to heaven to tell the great God of all the people just how well everyone has behaved during the past year.”

Three days later, they will paste new pictures of Chang Kung on the walls over their kitchen stoves and they will say: “He has now come back again to the earth to keep watch over us for another year.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session8/the-picture>

**3.45:** *Russell* by Rev. Jose Ballester (425 words)

Russell was an amateur geologist, paleontologist, and professional teacher. He took his young charges on an overnight field trip. While sitting around the campfire, he brought out a bag, took out five rocks, and held up a round, grapefruit-size rock. “This rock,” he began explaining, “looks ordinary on the outside. But inside there is hidden beauty.”

He opened the two halves of the rock to reveal all the purple crystals inside. He then picked up another rock of equal size and opened it to reveal a fossil inside. “This is the fossil of a trilobite,” Russell explained. “It was a sea creature that lived millions of years ago. All that remains is this impression of him. Minerals seeped into the mud that held his body, and this is all that remains.”

Next, he picked up something that looked like a small, wooden object and said, “This branch is another fossil that looks like wood, but it really is a rock. And as we know, wood burns, but not rocks.”

Russell threw the rock that looked like a branch into the fire; it did nothing. He then took out a flat, palm-sized rock and said, “Now watch closely.” He threw the flat rock into the fire, and it soon began burning. “That rock is called ‘oil shale’ and has been used for fuel for hundreds of years.”

He then began our lesson in earnest. “People can be as complex as these rocks. Too often all you see is a dull, rough exterior and never suspect there is beauty inside in the form of a crystal or a fossil. Sometimes people look like something else and behave in unexpected ways. And here is the true lesson from the rocks.”

He picked up a round, black stone from a water-filled container.

“I found this stone earlier today in the stream. As you can see, the water has rounded the rock, and the minerals have turned it black.” He then hit the stone with a hammer and it broke in two. “You can also see that the outside is still wet, and the water has made it round and dark, but the inside is still dry and gray. A human heart—like a stone—can be shaped by outside forces, but its inside remains unchanged. Over time, this stone will be further reduced, perhaps becoming a grain of sand that will find its way into an oyster and become a pearl. You never know what a human heart will become over time, so never lose hope in its potential.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/btwwdaya/workshop6/russell>

**3.46:** *The Gift of Giving* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (1,231 words)

On Steve’s sixth birthday, many people gave him gifts.

His mother gave him a chess set and promised to teach him how to play after dinner.

His grandfather gave him a black rope that was twenty-five feet long and would be good for making forts and building bridges and all kinds of things.

His friend Shanaya gave him modeling clay, his friend Tom gave him a toy racing car, his aunt sent him ten dollars with a birthday card, and his dad gave him a book about dinosaurs. Steve took cupcakes to school, and his classmates sang “Happy Birthday” to him. His teacher let him be first in the line when they went outside to play.

Steve thought it was the best birthday he’d ever had.

That night after dinner, Steve was waiting for his parents to finish watching the news on TV so he and his mom could play chess. He was busy making a dinosaur out of the modeling clay when he heard the man on the TV say, “It’s his sixth birthday today.”

Steve looked up right away, but the TV man wasn’t talking about him. On the screen was a picture of a boy in a T-shirt and shorts standing on dusty ground in front of a small building. It looked like the tool shed in Steve’s back yard, except it was kind of crooked. The boy was barefoot and he wasn’t smiling, even though it was his birthday, and Steve didn’t see any gifts anywhere.

“He lives here with his parents, his grandmother, and three brothers and sisters,” the TV man said. “Usually they eat only one meal a day. Some days they don’t eat at all.”

“Why don’t they eat?” Steve asked.

“There’s been no rain,” his dad answered. “Their plants won’t grow.”

“Can’t they go to a store and buy food?”

“They don’t have money,” his mom said.

Steve had money. He had the ten dollars his aunt had given him, plus a lot of coins hidden in his sock drawer upstairs. “How much does food cost?” he asked.

The TV man answered that question. “Just a few dollars a day would provide food for this family of seven.”

While Steve and his mom were getting out the chess pieces, he said, “How long would ten dollars last, for food for that family on TV?”

“About four days,” his mom answered.

“Can I send my birthday money to that boy?”

“Oh, Steve,” she said. “That’s very nice of you! We could ask the TV people where they live.”

That sounded good. “But what happens after the four days?” Steve asked next. “When the ten dollars is used up?” He wouldn’t have any more money to send, except the coins.

His mom nodded. “That is a problem,” she agreed. “But I heard about an idea at church last week. I’ll ask your RE teacher if you can talk about it next Sunday.”

Sunday finally came, and Steve and his family went to church. In the RE room, pictures of animals were on the walls: bunnies and chickens and ducks, goats and sheep, a pig and a black-and-white cow, and a big animal that looked like the cow except it was all black and had bigger horns and sideways ears.

“That’s a water buffalo,” his friend Shanaya said. “They live in China and Korea and places in the east.”

“That’s right, Shanaya,” said their teacher. Then it was time to gather in a circle and light the chalice and sing. After that, everyone sat down and talked more about the animals, how the birds laid eggs, and the sheep grew wool, and the goat and the cow gave milk. “People use all those things,” said the teacher. “We get food and clothes and help from animals, every day.”

Steve nodded. Animals didn’t get all used up in four days, like his money would have. They lasted for a long time. “What’s the water buffalo do?” he asked.

“They give milk, too,” the teacher said, “and people also use them to carry things or pull plows and help farm the land.”

Steve wondered if a water buffalo would help the boy on TV.

“One of the most important gifts these animals give,” said the teacher, “is more animals. They have babies, and when those babies are grown up, they make milk or eggs or wool, too.”

“And those babies make babies!” said Shanaya.

“Then after a while, everyone can have an animal,” Steve said. That meant everyone would have food and clothes. This was great! “How do we give other people an animal?” he wanted to know.

“We don’t have any ducks or goats or pigs,” said Shanaya. “And definitely no water buffalos.”

“We give money to an organization that does, and they give an animal to a family who needs one. Does everyone want to do this?”

Everyone said yes, and then they started talking about what kind of animal to give. Steve and Tom voted to give a water buffalo, and two girls voted for bunnies, but Shanaya and five others all voted to give a goat, so the goat won.

“A goat costs one hundred twenty dollars,” the teacher told them. “How can we get that?”

“I’ll give my birthday money,” said Steve. “Ten dollars.”

“I have five dollars to give,” said Shanaya, and the other kids said they had money too. When they added it all up, they had sixty-two dollars.

“We need fifty-eight more dollars,” their teacher told them.

“We could sell cookies,” suggested Tom. So, the next Sunday they used the church kitchen to make cookies and sell them after the service. They put out a donation jar, too, and some of the grownups put in five dollars or even ten dollars. When Steve told his aunt what he had done with his birthday money, she sent him twenty more dollars for the goat.

Soon, they had the one hundred twenty dollars they needed, and the class sent the money to the organization that gave animals to people who needed them.

“Who is the goat going to?” Steve asked. “What’s their name? Where do they live?”

“We don’t know,” answered his teacher. “There are many, many people all over the world who need animals. The goat may be given to a family in China or Uganda or Poland or maybe in our own country.”

Steve had wanted to give the goat to the boy on TV. And maybe the goat would live there. Or maybe the goat wouldn’t. Maybe the family the goat lived with would have another six-year-old boy. Or a six-year-old girl. Or maybe they’d have all older children, or only babies. It didn’t really matter.

Because Steve knew that wherever the goat lived, and whomever she lived with, the family would take care of her. And when the goat had her kids, the family would take care of the kids, too. The people could drink the goat’s milk or maybe sell some of it to buy clothes or other food. They would give the kids away to other families, and soon everyone would have a goat. And one of those people would probably be having a birthday, and maybe that person would be six years old.

Or maybe not. And it didn’t matter, because Steve knew those ten dollars were the best birthday gift he’d ever given away.

# Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session7/118343.shtml>

***Selfishness***

**3.47:** *The Selfish Fox* (192 words)

Once upon a time, there lived a selfish fox. One day, the fox invited his friend stork for dinner. In the evening, the stork went to the fox’s house and knocked. The fox opened the door and let his friend get in. He said, “welcome my friend, let’s have dinner.”

The fox brought two bowls of soup. The stork was very hungry. She wanted to drink the soup quickly, but the bowl was too shallow for her. She had a long beak and she couldn’t eat in the shallow bowl. At that moment, the fox drank all the soup. He saw the stork and asked, “Why haven’t you drunk your soup my friend?”

The stork replied, “Thank you for inviting me. I also want to invite you to dinner tomorrow.”

The fox accepted her offer and the next day he went to the house of the stork. The stork served two bowls of soup. This time, the soup was served in the deep bowls. The stork drank easily in a deep bowl, but the fox couldn’t reach the soap. It was his turn to return home hungry. Moral: We shouldn’t be selfish.

Source: <https://www.shortstoriesforkids.net/short-stories/the-selfish-fox/>

**4.0: Children’s Books about Generosity and Kindness**

**Generosity**

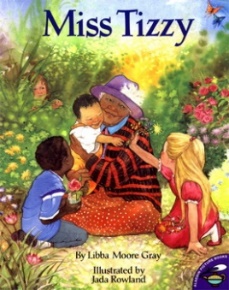
**4.1:** *Extra Yarn* by Mac Barnett, author and Jon Klassen, illustrator (2012

# ”Annabelle finds a box of colorful yarn and knits sweaters for everyone in her town, then moves on to knit sweaters for trees and buildings and cars. She never runs out of yarn. One day an archduke offers to buy her box of colorful yarn for ten million dollars, but Annabelle refuses to sell it. At night, the archduke steals the box of yarn, but when he opens the box, he finds it empty.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ykRfsECYlo> (6:09)

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/ExtraYarn>

# 4.2: *Miss Tizzy* by Libba Moore Gray, author and Jada Rowland, illustrator (1993)

”Miss Tizzy is an elderly, eccentric woman who the neighborhood kids love. They love her colorful house, vibrant garden, and quirky clothes - but most of all they love the special attention she gives to them. This book chronicles several activities that Miss Tizzy orchestrates for the children, which they always perform together. One day Miss Tizzy falls ill and spends some time in bed, and her child-friends make kind gestures to cheer her up and demonstrate their love for her.”

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/MissTizzy>

# 4.3: *The Little Red Hen: An Old Story* by Margot Zemach (1993)

## ”The Little Red Hen is centered around a red hen who finds some seeds on the ground and decides to plant them so as to ultimately make bread. For each of the steps required to make the bread, she asks the other farm animals—the pig, goose, cat and duck—for assistance, but they all decline. The little red hen responds, “Then I will do it myself.” This cycle continues until the hen finishes baking the bread and asks the unhelpful animals one last time if they will help her eat the bread. This time, they all chime and agree to help her eat the bread, but the little red hen declares that she will eat it herself and does so.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXyZiZ6XrMg> (3:31)

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/TheLittleRedHen>

# 4.4: *The Quiltmaker’s Gift* by Jeff Brumbeau, author and Gail De Marcken, illustrator (2001)

“The Quiltmaker spends all of her time making quilts only to give them away. The King meets the Quiltmaker in a search for the one thing that will finally make him happy. When the generous quiltmaker finally agrees to make a quilt for a greedy king but only under certain conditions, she causes him to undergo a change of heart.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzz8Sek4Mds> (13:59)

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/TheQuiltmakersGift>

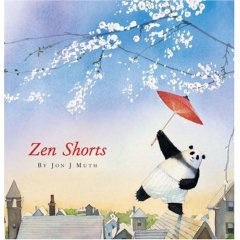
# 4.5: *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts, author and Noah Z. Jones, illustrator (2007)

“Jeremy really wants a pair of black, high-top shoes. His Grandma tells him that they can’t afford the expensive shoes because he needs winter boots. When Jeremy’s old shoes break, his guidance counselor provides for him a Velcro pair of shoes in which everyone makes fun of him except Antonio. Jeremy goes to thrift stores and finds a pair of those black, high-top shoes, but they are too small. At school, Jeremy notices that Antonio’s shoes are duct taped together at recess. Jeremy struggles internally for a while but decides to give his shoes to Antonio. Soon after, it snows and Jeremy remembers that he has brand new winter boots.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjUFJEduguk&vl=en> (6:47)

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/ThoseShoes>

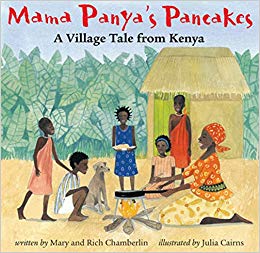
# 4.6: *Zen Shorts* by Jon J. Muth (2005)

****”Stillwater the panda moves into the house on the hill and shares valuable lessons with his new friends through classic Zen stories designed to challenge our perspective on our own lives through emotions such as anger, worrying and jealousy.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOvh9e_-LcQ> (11:01)

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/ZenShorts>

# 4.7: *Mama Panya’s Pancakes* by May & Rich Chamberlain, authors and Julia Cairns, illustrator (2005)

”On market day, Mama Panya s son Adika invites everyone he sees to a pancake dinner. How will Mama Panya ever feed them all? This clever and heartwarming story about Kenyan village life teaches the importance of sharing, even when you have little to give.”

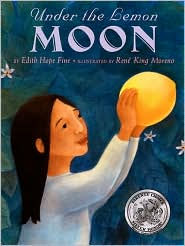
# Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=No6QgFpY_lY> (6:00)

# 4.8: *Should I Share my Ice Cream* by Mo Willems (2011)

# “Gerald is careful. Piggie is not. Piggie cannot help smiling. Gerald can. Gerald worries so that Piggie does not have to. Gerald and Piggie are best friends.Image result for should i share my ice cream by mo willems”

# Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHCfEQEbxfw> (5:03)

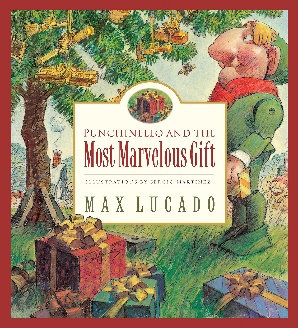
**4.9:** *Under the Lemon Moon* by Edith Hope Fine and Rene King Moreno, illustrator (1999)

”When Rosalinda discovers a man has been stealing lemons from her beautiful lemon tree, she turns to La Anciana, the town’s wise old woman, for advice on how to handle the situation, but the answer she gets is very different from what she had expected.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3bELLiYqv8> (8:49)

Teacher’s Guide: <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/under-the-lemon-moon/teachers_guide>

***Giving***

**4.10:** *Punchinello and the Most Marvelous Gift* by Max Lucado (2004)

“With the Maker-Day Festival fast approaching, Punchinello wants to do something really big for Eli, the woodcarver. But everyone else he meets in Wemmicksville is also trying to make the best contribution to the festival.

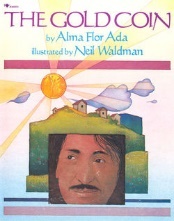
“Hans believes that his seven-layer chocolate cherry truffle cake with double butter-cream frosting will be the best part, but Violet is sure her bountiful bouquet will come out on top. Lucia knows her vocal solo will make the day, and Dr. Marvel is eager to show off his magnificent Marvellaphony-organoni. What can Punchinello do?

“When all of Wemmicksville gathers for the unveiling of the cake and the bouquet and Lucia’s solo, Punchinello accidentally destroys the cake, the bouquet, and the Marvellaphony-organoni! What could have been a disaster results in the marvelous gift, and the people of Wemmicksville realize that Maker-Day is not about a cake or a bouquet-it’s all about Eli.”

Animated Movie Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPmmZQBwz2Y> (29:58)

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/PunchinelloAndTheMostMarvelousGift>

# 4.11: *The Gold Coin* by Alma Flor Ada, author and Neil Waldman, illustrator (1994)

”Juan makes his living as a thief. He hears Dona Josefa,

an old woman and healer in her town, declare that she is

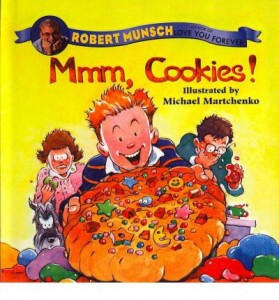
the “richest woman in the world.” Juan follows her, determined

to take her money, for he believes that the money

will make him happy.”

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/TheGoldCoin>

# 4.12: *Mmm, Cookies!* by Robert Munsch, author and Michael Martchenko, illustrator (2000)

”Christopher is making cookies out of clay and he gets his parents to eat them. When Christopher gives the cookie to his mom, she eats it and then runs to the washroom to wash out her mouth, so Christopher does it again with his dad. In the end of the book Christopher’s teacher teaches him a lesson by giving him a fake cookie, and finally Christopher makes a real cookie to give to his parents.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-J7jS4hHwHQ> (4:14)

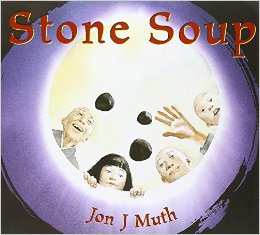
Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/MmmCookies>

# 4.13: *I Know a Lady* by Charlotte Zolotow, author and James Stevenson, illustrator (1992)

”When Sally wonders what it must have been like for her favorite elderly neighbor when she was a little girl, we find out just how much Sally loves her. She imagines herself as the woman in her youth, and how there must have a nice elderly neighbor whom she too loved very much.

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/IKnowALady>

# 4.14: *Stone Soup* by J. Jon Muth (2003)

”Traveling down a mountain road, three monks, Hok, Lok, and Siew, inquire what it means to be happy. They come upon a small famine-ridden and war-torn village in the mountains that seems to be empty. Upon closer inspection they find that everybody here is afraid of them and hiding in their homes due to suspicion. To teach these people about happiness, the three monks begin to make ‘stone soup,’ a soup concocted of nothing more than water and three round stones. This entices the villagers out of their homes in the hopes to learn how to make soup from nothing but stones. One by one the monks convince the village people to help them make their soup by sharing with the monks their spices, vegetables, and other valuable ingredients. This act of sharing brings kindness and trust to the village, and together they make a feast for the three monks who have now discovered what it means to be happy.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1Avo5FJ250> (7:48)

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/StoneSoup>

***Kindness***

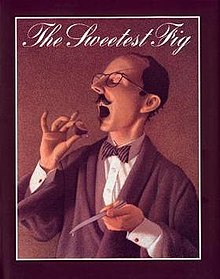
**4.15:** *Here Comes the Cat!* by Frank Asch, author & illustrator, and Vladimir Vasilʹevich Vagin, author & illustrator. (1989/2011)

”In this first collaboration between an American author and a Soviet illustrator, a skeptical mouse warns his friends to run from a huge cat, constantly yelling, ‘Here comes the cat!’ Only to finally realize that this is a friendly cat pulling a wagon full of cheese. A tale of fear meeting kindness.”

Video Link: <https://archive.org/details/herecomesthecat201706011> (11:45) by Moscow Animation Studio (low sound quality)

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/HereComesTheCat>

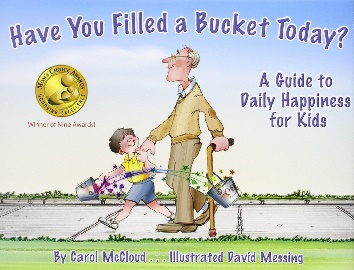
**4.16:** *The Sweetest Fig* by Chris van Allsburg (1993)

”‘These figs are very special,’ the woman whispered. ‘They can make your dreams come true.’ Thus, Monsieur Bibot, the cold-hearted dentist, was given two ordinary-looking figs as payment for extracting a tooth from an old woman’s mouth. Monsieur Bibot refused to believe such nonsense and proceeded to eat one of the figs for a bedtime snack. Although it was possibly the finest, sweetest fig he had ever tasted, it wasn’t until the next morning that Monsieur Bibot realized it indeed had the power to make his dreams come true. While dragging his poor dog, Marcel, out for his walk, he discovered that his strange dream from the night before was becoming all too real. Determined to make good use of the second fig, Monsieur Bibot learns to control is dreams. But can he control Marcel?”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bNiJoUa8P4> (8:15)

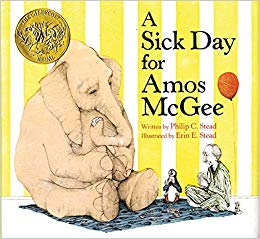
Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/TheSweetestFig>

**4.17:** *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids* by Carol McCloud, author and David Messing, illustrator (2015)

”While using a simple metaphor of a bucket and a dipper, author Carol McCloud illustrates that when we choose to be kind, we not only fill the buckets of those around us, but also fill our OWN bucket! Conversely, when we choose to say or do mean things, we are dipping into buckets. All day long, we are either filling up or dipping into each other’s buckets by what we say and what we do. When you’re a bucket filler, you make the world a better place to be!”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EuemNAo6XE> (5:24)

**4.18:** *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* by Philip C. Stead, author and Erin E. Stead, illustrator (2010)

”Friends come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. In Amos McGee’s case, all sorts of species, too! Every day he spends a little bit of time with each of his friends at the zoo, running races with the tortoise, keeping the shy penguin company, and even reading bedtime stories to the owl. But when Amos is too sick to make it to the zoo, his animal friends decide it’s time they returned the favor.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIU0ZFbHBKo> (4:51)

**4.19:** *Ordinary Mary’s Extraordinary Deed* by Emily Pearson, author and Fumi Kosaka, illustrator (2002)

 “A kindness story that promotes caring and compassionate behavior for children and adults.

“Can one child’s good deed change the world? It can when she’s Ordinary Mary―an ordinary girl from an ordinary school, on her way to her ordinary house―who stumbles upon ordinary blueberries. When she decides to pick them for her neighbor, Mrs. Bishop, she starts a chain reaction that multiplies around the world.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h08eyMPw_v0> (11:02)

**4.20:** *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller, author and Jen Hill, illustrator (2018)

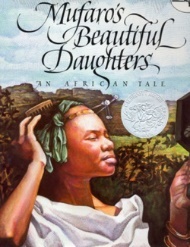
”When Tanisha spills grape juice all over her new dress, her classmate wants to make her feel better, wondering: *What does it mean to be kind?*’

“From asking the new girl to play to standing up for someone being bullied, this moving story explores what kindness is, and how any act, big or small, can make a difference—or at least help a friend.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0W6CI1eg1eU> (7:02)

***Selfishness***

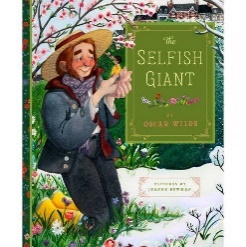
**4.21:** *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe (1987)

”Mufaro’s two daughters react in different ways to the King’s search for a wife—one is aggressive and selfish, the other kind and dignified. The king disguises himself to learn the true nature of both the girls and chooses Nyasha, the kind and generous daughter, to be the queen.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dP9cQkS8p2Q> (10:10)

Teaching Resource: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/MufarosBeautifulDaughters>

**4.22:** *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde, author and Jeanne Bowman, illustrator (2019)

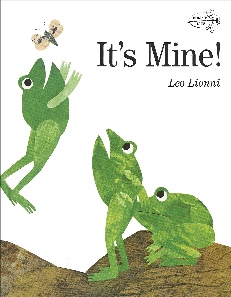
 “A beloved tale that has lasted for generations, The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde, one of the world’s greatest writers, tells the tale of a very selfish giant, his wonderful garden, the curious and playful village children, and, of course, the little child who changes the giant’s heart. A beloved classic in English literature, The Selfish Giant may be Oscar Wilde’s greatest story of redemption and forgiveness.

“Newly illustrated by renowned artist Jeanne Bowman, this fantastic edition of this famous tale showcases Wilde’s story in a pallet and composition that will delight and inspire both young and old….”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drnBTmmJkkQ> (22:44) multiple voices

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZmvaj05xek> (9:48) (animated)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jtLTS7T8cc> (26:31) (animated)

****4.23:** *It’s Mine* by Leo Lionni (1996)

“Three selfish frogs live together on an island in the middle of Rainbow Pond. All day long they bicker: *It’s mine! It’s mine! It’s mine!* But a bad storm and a big brown toad help them realize that sharing is much more fun.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ny25RTHX4vo> (5:00)

**5.0: Music & Videos for Children**

**5.1:** *Sesame Street: Try a Little Kindness* (with Tori Kelly) (1:54)

# Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enaRNnEzwi4>

**5.2:** *Try Some Kindness (The Letter K Song*) by Little Buds ABC’s (2:18)

# Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZukLiEsIv0E>

**5.3:** *Generosity Bulletin Board* by Mr. Rozsa (2:29)

This is the video we made in Mr. Rozsa’s class to highlight our month’s virtue, Generosity. We focus on the ways that Lebron James and Mr. Rozsa’s class are generous! How are you generous in your school?

# Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/194748332>

**6.0: Curriculum & Theme-Based Classroom Activities for Children for Authority, Leadership, and Power**

# *from Tapestry of Faith*

***Generosity***

**6.1: Chalice Children: A Program about Our Unitarian Universalist Community for Preschoolers**

**6.1.1:** *Session 10: Helping Others*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session10>

“Participants will:

* Understand that caring for others is an important part of being a Unitarian Universalist
* Express their own caring by creating cards for people who are lonely or sick
* Connect the story with their caring feelings”

**6.2: Creating Home: A Program on Developing a Sense of Home Grounded in Faith for Grades K-1**

**6.2.1:** *Session 8: Hare’s Gifts*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session8>

“This session will:

* Introduce communities as places within which we can also establish homes, places where people are together for a purpose
* Introduce the term “giving gifts” to describe a way of being in service to the communities to which we belong
* Help children experience how we co-create community by doing things together
* Provide an opportunity for children to have their gifts appreciated and to appreciate the gifts others bring to the group”

**6.3: Wonderful Welcome: A Program for Children Grades K-1**

**6.3.1:** *Session 1: The Gift of Love*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session1>

“This session will:

* Introduce the concept of gifts that cannot be seen, that is, “intangible gifts”
* Guide participants identify the intangible gifts they bring to and receive from others
* Explore the gift of love and how it can be demonstrated
* Demonstrate that Unitarian Universalism values welcoming others
* Engage participants in the spiritual practices of opening and closing rituals”

**6.3.2:** *Session 7: The Gift of Helping*

Link**:** <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session7>

“This session will:

* Introduce the concept of the interdependent web through a concrete example and an experiential activity
* Engage participants in helping people whom they will never meet and giving money to make the world more just and equitable
* Show how the intangible gift of helping affirms our first, second and seventh Principles: the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; and the interdependent web of life.”

**6.3.3:** *Session 11: The Gift of Stewardship*

Link:<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session11>

“This session will:

* Introduce stewardship as an intangible gift
* Introduce stewardship as the idea that everyone in the congregation is responsible for its well-being through financial donations and volunteer commitments
* Guide children to make the connection between a generous congregation and its ability to welcome others
* Demonstrate that stewardship is a collective responsibility; it takes a community working together to make a congregation a welcoming place
* Engage participants in the spiritual practices of opening and closing rituals.”

**6.3.4:** *Session 15: The Gift of Ourselves*

Link:<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session15>

“This session will:

* Introduce the intangible gift of being oneself, and demonstrate how to give this gift intentionally by being aware and present
* Make concrete the concepts of ‘being present’ and ‘being aware’
* Demonstrate how the connections between being oneself, being aware of others, and being generous in spirit are naturally connected to one another”

**6.4: Love Surrounds Us: A Program on the UU Principles and Beloved Community for Grades K-1**

**6.4.1:** Session 12: A Peaceful and Fair World

Link:<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session12>

“Participants will:

* Engage with a story of a community caring for one another
* Connect receiving and giving as they learn that a bowl is used for both
* Identify four basic human needs in relationship to the sixth Principle, “working for a peaceful, fair, and free world”
* Become confident, empowered peacemakers who act in accord with our sixth Principle”

**6.5: Moral Tales: A Program on Making Choices for Grades 2-3**

**6.5.1:** *Session 8: Do unto Others*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session8>

“This session will:

* Foster participants’ pride in sharing acts of goodness and justice that they have done (or witnessed)
* Create a forum for children to share with one another about acts of goodness and justice
* Explore the meaning of the ‘Golden Rule’
* Explore the meaning of the words, ‘Love thy neighbor’ and their application in a variety of situations
* Guide participants to experience offering help to others
* Strengthen participants’ connection to and sense of responsibility to their Moral Tales group.”

**6.5.2:** *Session 9: Generosity: Give and Ye Shall Receive*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session9>

“This session will:

* Help participants understand the connection between generosity and the second Unitarian Universalist Principle: justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
* Develop participants’ empathy as they are encouraged to think about the needs and wishes of other people
* Communicate that generosity is an important part of justice and goodness
* Give participants opportunities to experience themselves as capable of creating and giving a gift
* Give participants practice in being generous with their time, talents, and treasure
* Encourage participants to experience themselves as helpers and mentors to younger children in your congregation.”

**6.6: Love Will Guide Us: A Program for Grades 2-3 that Applies the Wisdom of the Six Sources to the Big Questions**

**6.6.1:** *Session 7: Give Love*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session7>

“Participants will:

* Learn the second Unitarian Universalist Source—in children’s language, ‘people of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind and fair’—by hearing, saying, singing, and writing it
* Experience giving the gift of time to younger children in the congregation
* Understand giving one’s time as an expression of love
* Introduce Ralph Waldo Emerson as an important figure in Unitarian history
* Reflect on a story in which a daughter teaches her father how giving one’s time can express love.”

**6.6.2:** *Session 11: Love and Gratitude*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session11>

“Participants will:

* Learn about the sixth Unitarian Universalist source, ‘The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life,’ through a story about the winter solstice in which children express their gratitude to the sun.
* Experience and articulate emotional and physical feelings that accompany a focus on gratitude
* Appreciate the gifts we receive from nature’s cycles and rhythms, and embrace our responsibility to care for the Earth just as the Earth cares for us
* Practice saying thank-you meaningfully to one another, in a gratitude circle.”

**6.7: Faithful Journeys: A Program about Pilgrimages of Faith in Action for Grades 2-3**

**6.7.1:** *Session 5: Finding Balance*

Link**:** <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session5>

“This session will:

* Demonstrate our power to make personal choices about sharing resources that can affirm second Principle values of justice, equity, and compassion
* Encourage participants to take pleasure and pride in sharing
* Introduce concepts of ‘balance’ and ‘finding one’s center’ as spiritual practices as well as fun games
* Explore the question of what is “enough” and how one can find balance in life
* Build community through games, rituals, and reinforcement of the group behavior covenant.”

**6.8: Love Connects Us: A Program on Living in Unitarian Universalist Covenant for Grades 4-5**

**6.8.1:** *Session 14: Our Heritage’s Calling*

Link**:** <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session14>

“This session will:

* Highlight our Unitarian Universalist heritage of persisting through obstacles to help others when we are called to do so
* Demonstrate, through the story of Elizabeth Blackwell, how our faith heritage calls us to help others
* Demonstrate how working together cooperatively can produce better results than working alone.”

**6.9: Heeding the Call: A Program on Justice-making for Junior High School Youth**

**6.9.1:** *Workshop 7: The Call for Abundance*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop7>

“Participants will:

* See a feeling of abundance as an important quality in justice making and imagine ways to appreciate abundance more
* Examine their lives in relation to abundance and scarcity
* Understand privilege and think of ways to create a world where more people have access to resources.”

**Resources for Youth & Adults**

**7.0: Reflections, Readings, Stories & Poetry**

**7.1:** *The Benefits of Generosity* by Lisa Firestone (250 words)

The Dalai Lama famously said, “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.” The same is certainly true for generosity! Generosity — the quality of being kind and understanding, the willingness to give others things that have value — is often defined as an act of selflessness; however, [studies](http://www.springerlink.com/content/un76v5x36w7l7n76/) are now showing that generosity is actually (selfishly) in *your* best interest. Practicing generosity is a mental health principle, and it could be the very key to a happy and healthy life.

Year after year, more and more studies are highlighting the benefits of generosity on both our physical and mental health. Not only does generosity reduce stress, support one’s physical health, enhance one’s sense of purpose, and naturally fight depression, it is also shown to increase one’s lifespan.

If a longer, less stressful and more meaningful life is not enough to inspire you to rev up your practice of generosity, consider that generosity also promotes a social connection and improves relationships. According to Jason Marsh and Jill Suttie of the Greater Good Science Center, “When we give to others, we don’t only make them feel closer to us; we also feel closer to them.” This is because being generous and kind encourages us to perceive others in a more positive light and fosters a sense of community, a feeling of interconnectedness.

Being generous also makes us feel better about ourselves. Generosity is both a natural confidence builder and a natural repellant of self-hatred.

Source: <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-benefits-of-generosit_b_5448218>

**7.2:** *A Guided Generosity Practice* by Amy Love (221 words)

Sit in a position that feels stable yet comfortable.

If it feels right for you, close your eyes. If it feels better to keep your eyes open, gently gaze down in front of you.

Settling into this moment by noticing your breath.

Now, I’d like to invite you to bring to mind a time when someone was generous toward you, a time when someone did something nice for you. Bring that time to mind in full color, reflecting on who was there, where you were…How did it make you feel? Where does that feeling live in your body? Really feel into what this time was like for you.

If your mind begins to wander, that’s okay. Gently escort your attention back to feeling the time when someone did something nice for you.

Now, I’d like to invite you to bring to mind a time when you were generous with someone, a time when you did something nice for someone else. Again, really sinking into this memory by recalling who was there, where you were, and what was happening. How did it make you feel to be generous in this way? Where do you feel that in your body? What are the sensations of generosity like in your body?

Ending this short contemplation by resting back in your breath for a moment.

Source: <https://www.mindfulschools.org/personal-practice/what-does-it-mean-to-be-generous/>

**7.3:** *Generous Like an Onion* by Thích Nhất Hạnh (112 words)

There is a kind of vegetable in Vietnam called *he* (pronounced “hey”). It belongs to the onion family and looks like a scallion, and it is very good in soup. The more you cut the *he* plants at the base, the more they grow. If you don’t cut them, they won’t grow very much. But if you cut them often, right at the base of the stalk, they grow bigger and bigger. This is also true of the practice of generosity. If you give and continue to give, you become richer and richer all the time, richer in terms of happiness and well-being. This may seem strange but it is always true.

Source: <https://www.mindfulschools.org/personal-practice/what-does-it-mean-to-be-generous/>

**7.4:** *7 Habits of Highly Productive Giving* by Beat Generosity Burnout by Adam Grant and Reb Rebele (155 words)

1. Prioritize the help requests that come your way — say yes when it matters most and no when you need to.
2. Give in ways that play to your interests and strengths to preserve your energy and provide greater value.
3. Distribute the giving load more evenly — refer requests to others when you don’t have the time or skills, and be careful not to reinforce gender biases about who helps and how.
4. Secure your oxygen mask first — you’ll help others more effectively if you don’t neglect your own needs.
5. Amplify your impact by looking for ways to help multiple people with a single act of generosity.
6. Chunk your giving into dedicated days or blocks of time rather than sprinkling it throughout the week. You’ll be more effective — and more focused.
7. Learn to spot takers, and steer clear of them. They’re a drain on your energy, not to mention a performance hazard.

Source: <https://hbr.org/cover-story/2017/01/beat-generosity-burnout>

**7.5:** *Where Are You on the Generosity Spectrum?* by Adam Grant and Reb Rebele (175 words)

TAKERS see every interaction as an opportunity to advance their own interests. They will run you ragged if you don’t protect yourself. But you can get better at spotting takers if you know what clues to look for: They act as if they deserve your help, and they don’t hesitate to impose on your time.

MATCHERS trade favors evenly. They can give as good as they get, but they expect reciprocity. Matching is a transactional, defensive stance — it adds less value for both you and others, but it can be helpful when you’re dealing with a taker.

SELF-PROTECTIVE GIVERS are generous, but they know their limits. Instead of saying yes to every help request, they look for high-impact, low-cost ways of giving so that they can sustain their generosity — and enjoy it along the way.

SELFLESS GIVERS have high concern for others but low concern for themselves. They set few or no boundaries, which makes them especially vulnerable to takers. By ignoring their own needs, they exhaust themselves and, paradoxically, end up helping others less.

Source: <https://hbr.org/cover-story/2017/01/beat-generosity-burnout>

**7.6:** *The “Flip Side” of Generosity* by [www.skillsyouneed.com](http://www.skillsyouneed.com) (244 words)

The Widow’s Offering: Jesus saw people giving gifts and offerings to the temple. Among them was a poor widow who put in two very small copper coins.

He said to those around him: “*Look, the widow there has put in much more than any of the others. They all gave gifts which were only a very small part of their total wealth. She, however, has given nearly all she has to live on.*”

All virtues have a ‘flip side’ or, more usually, two: one for excess and one for not going far enough.

In the case of generosity, these two are *selfishness*, which is not being generous enough or taking more than you need, and *wasteful*, which is giving too much when it is not needed.

Neither selfishness or wastefulness are attractive qualities and, as so often, it is important to find a balance.

In the case of generosity, the balance lies in focusing on the needs of those to whom you are giving. If you give what you can afford to help meet their needs then that will be generous.

Using this definition, it would be possible to argue that the widow in Jesus’ parable was in fact being wasteful: she gave more than she could afford, and left herself in need.

However, the precise balance point is up to the individual concerned. The widow obviously felt that she had enough without those coins, and that it was appropriate to give them away.

Source: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/generosity.html>

**7.7:***The Wisdom of Generosity* by Theodore Roosevelt Malloch (246 words)

…In virtually every tradition (religious as well as secular) humankind has known — every faith community on every continent and also among those who are agnostic or even atheistic — there exists a diverse set of teachings that emphasize generosity. Being generous is …a universal moral urge, our defining nature. Since generosity so defines our human nature, it is one of the few things on which people around the entire globe, though on different pathways, can agree.

There is a long religious history of wisdom, commonly defined as the judicious application of knowledge. …Nearly every religious tradition venerates wise thinking and the persons who do it. The Jewish proverb ‘fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom’ (Prov. 1:7) is not atypical. For the ancient Hebrews, this fear started with hating evil, arrogance, and pride. The wisdom of giving, and of giving generously as a habit, can also be traced to pre-modern times. In fact, generosity as a virtue has long been considered a central part of wisdom.

Seeds of unity have been planted around the world throughout the ages. I believe it is not too much to hope that today, in a world beset by momentous choices and unprecedented problems, people will take a closer look at the virtue of generosity and, as a result of this examination, seek and work toward a global community and local communities united by giving.

…Giving is for everyone.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/19736>

**7.8: *Generosity First* by Jean Smith (223 words)**

When early scholars began the list of the perfections with generosity, they did so as a reflection of the way the Buddha offered his teachings. Numerous discourses record that the Buddha’s first talk in a new community was often about generosity. …I …assumed he wanted to make sure that he and his followers got enough to eat. Wrong. Generosity is a foundational building block of spiritual development. Perhaps the Buddha began with generosity because it is and has been so widely accepted as one of the most basic human virtues by so many cultures.

…When the Buddha went into a new community, he regularly used a particular sequence of teachings: he began with a talk about generosity, then spoke about morality, then about karma, then about the benefits of renunciation. When he felt that his listeners had understood all these teachings, only then would he give his first talk on suffering, its cause, and its end. …The end of suffering is non-clinging or nonattachment, and the path to liberation begins with generosity, the natural antidote to greed or clinging. The great value of generosity would become clear.

Clinging or attachment — the source of suffering — cannot exist at the same time as true generosity. By cultivating generosity, we can bring an end to clinging, an end to attachment to stinginess, to material things, even to our most cherished ideas and sense of self.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/27812>

**7.9:** *The Eight Degrees of Charity* by Michael Norton (166 words)

Charity is a part of every religion. Moses Maimonides was a Jewish sage who lived in the 12th century. He suggested that there were eight degrees of charity:

* Bottom level: Giving to a poor person unwillingly. It is better not to give at all.
* Seventh level: Giving to a poor person with a glad heart and a smile.
* Sixth level: Giving to a poor person after being asked.
* Fifth level: Giving to a poor person before being asked.
* Fourth level: Not knowing who you are giving to, but allowing the recipients to know who their benefactor is.
* Third level: Knowing who you are giving to, but not allowing the recipients to know who their benefactor is.
* Second level: Giving to the poor, but not knowing who you are giving to, nor allowing the recipients to know who their benefactor is.
* Top level: Investing in a poor person, so that a solution to his or her problem is found.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/16453>

**7.10:** *Rumi: Ten Thousand Miles Away* by [Andrew Harvey](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/search?author_first=Andrew&author_last=Harvey) (224 words)

One day Rumi asked one of his young, snotty disciples to give him an enormous amount of rich and delicious food. This young disciple was rather alarmed because he thought Rumi was living an ascetic lifestyle. Rumi used to pray all night and eat hardly anything. The disciple thought, “Aha, now I’ve really got the master — what he really wants to do is to go off somewhere secretly and eat all this food!” So, he decided to follow Rumi. He followed him through the streets of Konya, out into the fields, out into yet further fields. Then he saw Rumi go into a ruined tomb. “I’m finally going to unmask his pretensions,” the young disciple thought. But what he found was a totally exhausted dog with six puppies, and Rumi was feeding the dog with his own hands so that she could survive to feed her children. Rumi knew that the disciple was following him, of course, and turned to him smiling and said, “See?” The disciple, extremely moved, asked, “But how on earth did you know that she was here? How did you know that she was hungry? This is miles away from where you are!” Rumi laughed and laughed, “When you have become awake your ears are so acute that they can hear the cries of a sparrow ten thousand miles away.”

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/17219>

**7.11: *Giving* by B.J. Gallagher (180 words)**

It’s better to give than receive,”  
my mother used to say.  
But it took some years  
of experience  
before I fully understood  
what she meant.  
  
When I gave my subway seat  
to an old lady,  
I felt kind.  
  
When I dropped a dollar  
into the street musician’s hat,  
I felt generous.  
  
When I let the harried driver  
cut in front of me on the road,  
I felt patient.  
  
When I lent a hand  
to someone at work,  
I felt a part of the team.  
  
When I brought a meal  
to my grieving neighbor,  
I felt empathetic.  
  
When I gave some water  
to a thirsty dog,  
I felt happy.  
  
When I wrote a check  
to a worthy cause,  
I felt virtuous.  
  
When I gave my friend  
the benefit of the doubt,  
I felt compassionate.  
  
I discovered that  
when I give my time,  
my attention,  
my money,  
my thoughtfulness  
to another —  
I feel wonderful.  
  
Mom was right . . .  
it IS better to give  
than receive.  
  
In giving,  
we generate warmth;  
in giving,  
we feel connected;  
in giving,  
we discover love.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/21043>

**7.12:** *The Gift of Needing Help* by Marilyn Chandler McEntyre (121 words)

The Amish teach that the sick, the elderly, and the dying are gifts to the community because of the love and care they bring forth. That’s a beautiful and generous way to think about what my ‘contribution’ may be now to a community in which I used to be much more ‘useful.’ Allowing others to be generous and tender, giving them occasion for the sacrifices of time and energy that deepen their investment in my life, may seem like a necessary evil, but perhaps it’s a necessary good. I am still a participant. And I cling to the poet Wendell Berry’s helpful observation: “Love changes, and in change is true.” The way they love me, and I them, has to change.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/28055>

**7.13:** *We Always Have Something to Give* by Diane Eshin Rizzetto (260 words)

We always have something to give. Sometimes, all we can give is the gift of ourselves — our intention to be fully present and respectful, to meet others with openness. We can give our story or listen to another’s story. We can give our fearlessness, encouragement, or silent support of all kinds. We can give our stability or effort. We can give speaking and listening from the heart.

We can also be practicing giving to ourselves with an open magnanimous mind. Putting ourselves first is sometimes the generous thing to do, but without magnanimous mind, it’s self-indulgence. This is a tricky one and not always easy to discern. But, from the perspective of Zen, all giving begins with ourselves. We can give ourselves the opportunity to be fully present in the experience of anger, aware of our clenching teeth and tensing muscles. We can give ourselves the experience of the pounding heart of fear. We can give ourselves the experience of the heavy body and tearful eyes of sadness. To open our heart and minds to our experience is a form of giving and receiving.

When we open to our experience in this way, we relinquish the boundaries, we can lean into its circumference and question deeply held requirements in the self’s thinking about how it should be or needs to be. This is also generosity. When we give ourselves the gift of relinquishing that requirement, we open up the space to turn toward the experience of what’s happening. And we open to those experiences. This is generosity — openness, acceptance, allowing.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/28487>

**7.14:** *When Nothing is Everything* by Lama Yeshe (147 words)

A rich benefactor came to a monastery with an offering equivalent to thousands of dollars. In the temple sat a beggar who had nothing. When he saw the rich man make the offerings, he rejoiced with all his heart: “What this rich man is doing is wonderful. I’m so poor. I wish I were rich so that I could make such offerings.” At the end of the ceremony, when the abbot, who was obviously clairvoyant, did the dedication of merit, he emphasized the beggar’s merits, the virtue created in his mind by rejoicing, rather than the merit created by the benefactor. Why? Because the benefactor was proud and wanted people to think that he had done a fantastic thing. He came with expectations and ended up with nothing. The beggar, on the other hand, came with nothing and ended up with incredible merit and with the dedication.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/14027>

**7.15:** *Be Generous with Your Time* by Joseph Telushkin (264 words)

Be generous with time, particularly when the consequences to the other person are significant. I remember reading a comment of Simone Weil (a philosopher and member of the French resistance) that during the Nazi occupation of France, she knew many people who would willingly have stood on line for hours to procure rationed eggs, but who would not have done so to save the life of someone unrelated to them. Yitta Halberstam Mandelbaum relates an incident about the late rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, the great Jewish spiritual teacher, songwriter, and performer…. The rabbi’s flight was fully booked and about to be boarded when an airline representative made an announcement: “There are two people who have medical emergencies and desperately need to get back to New York. We’re asking for two volunteers to give up their seats for the sake of these people. The next flight to New York is in three hours. We know it’s a great sacrifice and we’re sorry to put you in this position. Is there anybody here willing to extend themselves to help these people?” One hand in the crowd immediately shot up. “I’m ready,” shouted Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach. A man known to be extraordinarily busy, Carlebach was constantly traveling from concert to concert, and then meeting with and counseling people late into the night. The woman who was present …told Yitta: “Of all of us gathered there that morning, it was Shlomo who probably had the most compelling need to get back fast. He had the least time to spare. But miraculously, he also had the most time to give.”

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/20692>

**7.16:** *A True Saint* by Wendy Lustbader (97 words)

Antonio Luis Alves de Souza, a Brazilian drummer, was offered an expensive new car after his band recorded The Rhythm of the Saints. Paul Simon wanted to thank him for the excellence of his artistry, beyond what he had already been paid. Instead, Souza requested money enough to buy an old building where he could teach theater arts, singing, and dancing to poor children and women from the streets. Fifteen years later, when he died of a heart attack at the age of fifty-four, his funeral procession ‘was followed by 4,000 people dancing and singing his songs.’

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/21404>

**7.17:***Cultivating an Attitude of Generosity* by Amy Love (307 words)

The University of Notre Dame’s Science of Generosity Project defines generosity as “the virtue of giving good things to others freely and abundantly.” When we think deeply about this definition, three parts stand out clearly. Generosity is giving “good things”, giving “freely”, and giving “abundantly.”

We can deepen our experience of generosity by moving from acts of generosity to cultivating an attitude of generosity. When we embody an attitude of generosity, the good things we share expand out from deep within our hearts as an offering of freedom from fear–no one need fear that I will harm them, no one need fear that I will take from them what is not mine, no one need fear that I will cause harm with my words. To show up in the world, especially when working with youth, as love and safety, is generous beyond measure.

When we practice generosity, the “good things” that we give can take many forms. Certainly, some “things” are tangible items like toys, blankets, and food. Giving material things to help others is both a valuable and needed act of generosity. We can also give things like our time, our talents, and our full presence…. I have come to know that it is critical that we remember to give with respect and humility, acknowledging ourselves as equals in the giver-receiver relationship.

…The scientific consequences of generosity have been studied for many years now. On an individual level, the Greater Good Science Center White Paper on Generosity shows the benefits of practicing generosity to be far reaching. Scientists are discovering generosity to be an ally to our health–from positive effects on mortality to physical and emotional wellness. On a relational level, generosity can be like connective tissue, connecting us with others through honest, loving engagement. Our communities thrive when we give freely and abundantly.

Source: <https://www.mindfulschools.org/personal-practice/what-does-it-mean-to-be-generous/>

**7.18:** *Seven Gifts That Require No Possessions* by Monshu Koshin Ohtani (159 words)

In Buddhism there is the phrase, “the seven gifts that require no possessions.” The seven gifts are:

1. The gift of gentle eyes, looking at others kindly.
2. The gift of a smile and kind expressions.
3. The gift of words, speaking kindly to others.
4. The gift of the physical body. Acting properly yourself, and treating others with respect.
5. The gift of heart, touching others with a heart full of love.
6. The gift of a resting place, offering others a place to sit and rest.
7. The gift of shelter and lodging, providing others with a room or warm place to stay.

These seven gifts do not require any money or goods in the least. Of course, we cannot live the way the Buddha did. However, we can emulate the Buddha. When we do so, we can better appreciate what a truly wonderful heart the Buddha must have had in order to accomplish what he did.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/19259>

**7.19:** *Bowls of Community* by Brenda Shoshanna (240 words)

A beautiful, ancient part of Zen practice is *takahatsu*. This is the time when monks put on straw sandals, wear straw hats with large brims, form a line and go on foot, one behind the other, down into the villages with their begging bowls. The villagers can hear the monks coming from a distance as they chant ‘Ho, ho, ho’ over and over again.

When the villagers hear the chanting, they know the monks are coming to receive offerings. The monks never ask directly. They simply stand with their begging bowls chanting. When a villager comes to make an offering, the monk and villager bow to one another at the same time. Due to the large straw hat the monk is wearing, he cannot see who is making the offering, nor can the person see the face of the monk. The giving and receiving are done anonymously. The giver does not become inflated, thinking how wonderful it is that he gives. The one who receives is not shamed, feeling he is needy. The monk is giving the villager the gift of having an opportunity to share. The villager is providing sustenance for the monk who chants, meditates and cares for him. There is no separation; in this moment, the giver and receiver become one.

…As I watched the monks wind their way down the hill, I knew that I’d received a gift that went beyond anything I was deserving of.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/27791>

**7.20:** *The Generosity of Kindness* by Jean Maalouf (199 words)

People all over the world are hungry for peace of mind, for finding solutions to their problems, for finding ways to improve their relationships with others, and for finding meaningful ways of life. A loving and generous kindness can certainly make a difference. Kindness, a precious God-given gift to us, is one of the sweet expressions of love.

Giving, not because we have to, but for the sheer sake of giving, just out of love, is something really beautiful — out of this world! This kind of gratuitous goodness — a lavish kindness — makes our world a better place in which to live, and makes us better people.

Everyone benefits from kindness. We are so deeply touched by it that we are transformed. In the holy of holies of our being, we feel connected, centered, involved, engaged, and deeply bonded to others, regardless of our divisions due to ideology, religion, race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, economic status, or other factors. After all, we are all made of flesh, bones, and blood. We belong to one human family. We all have the same basic needs. We are one. We are whole. We are human together. We are in the same boat of destiny.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/14224>

**7.21:***Room for Generosity* by Wendy Lustbader (237 words)

We are fortunate when aging extricates us from an excessive focus on ourselves. More than anything else, losses in later life can awaken our sympathy and make us stay attuned to the importance of living in concert with others. An interest in serving broader aims may keep mounting — contributing to our local community, helping to ensure the health of natural areas in our vicinity — whatever we can do that connects us to the human prospect as a whole, even in a small way.

Most of us become convinced that the spirit for a life well lived derives from what we give to others, not from what we amass for ourselves.

…We naturally get caught up in making our way in the world during youth and middle age. There is little time or energy for endeavors beyond our personal sphere — maintaining a home, going to work, raising children. Two or three decades may elapse before we find these involvements less consuming. In the meantime, a longing for connection to something beyond these spheres slowly gains force.

Later life is the time when we tend to have room in our lives for generosity. It gives us reasons to prevail over our personal difficulties and grants us access to vital sources of renewal. We find there is strength in doing what good we can for others, not as an intellectual construct but as a robust way of meeting each day.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/21404>

**7.22:** *Giving Becomes Love* David La Chapelle (158 words)

If nature can give away its bounty with such abundance, then why can’t the human community? Historically, some communities did. First Nations people in the Pacific Northwest organized regular potlatches in which individuals gained social and spiritual benefits by giving away much of their tangible wealth — an exercise in economic redistribution that may have helped stabilize their culture over hundreds of generations.

It is the habit of the universe to give. Maintaining tight control over money, protecting one’s assets, and living from a Darwinian perspective of survival of the fittest may create sinkholes in the ecology of economics that will doom the system in the long run. When the capacity to give becomes an anchor point of one’s identity and stature, the synthesis of spirituality with rightful economic activities can help restore integrity to a system that is currently failing to meet the needs of the planet. In the end, as in the beginning, this is about love.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/13652>

**7.23:***Spend it Now* by Annie Dillard (123 word)

One of the few things I know about writing is this: Spend it all, shoot it, play it, lose it, all, right away, every time. Don’t hoard what seems good for a later place in the book, or for another book; give it, give it all, give it now. The very impulse to save something good for a better place later is the signal to spend it now. Something more will arise for later, something better. These things fill from behind, from beneath, like well water. Similarly, the impulse to keep to yourself what you have learned is not only shameful; it is destructive. Anything you do not give freely and abundantly becomes lost to you. You open your safe and find ashes.

Source: <https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/03/28/annie-dillard-writing-the-abundance/>

**7.24:** *When Altruism Meant Generosity* by Jason Kreag (215 words)

The original use of the concept of “altruism” is traced to Auguste Comte, a French mathematician and philosopher during the first half of the 1800s. The French word that was later translated to “altruism,” was an adjective that meant, “of or to others, what is another’s, somebody else.” When the word was translated into English, it was defined as, *“devotion to the welfare of others, regard for others, as a principle of action: opposed to egoism or selfishness.”*

The above definition remains fairly accurate, but today we are more inclined to use a more restrictive definition of altruism. In the definition from the *Oxford English Dictionary* presented above, there is no mention about whether or not one’s self can be considered in altruistic action. The definition clearly states that altruistic action is motivated by regard for others, but it does not go so far as to state that this prevents one from considering oneself at least peripherally in the action. A modern definition of altruism does include the restrictions on activity that is at all motivated by one’s self-interest. *Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language* defines altruism as, “consideration for other people without any thought of self as a principle of conduct.” The injunction against *any* thought of self, is what distinguishes the definition today.

Source: <https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/altruism>

**7.25:** *Following the Golden Rule and Finding Gold: Generosity and Success in Negotiation* by Lela P. Love and Sukhsimranjit Singh (297 words)

Our friend, who is a landlord, told us a curious story. He rented an apartment in a lovely old Victorian house to a couple, who were very happy with the arrangement. Happy, that is, until they discovered that a cat of the previous tenant had urinated for a period of time in an upstairs closet. The discovery led to uncovering a drenched carpet that needed to be replaced, a floor that was permeated with the odor of cat urine and affected floor moldings. It gets worse. When the carpet was pulled up in the closet it was clear that it couldn’t be replaced without replacing the carpet for the entire room. The landlord had to devote several weekend days to address the situation, as well as many thousands of dollars (he worked in another city during the week). He became increasingly irritated that the tenants made no week-time efforts to move the situation forward (e.g., applying coats of urine extractor and later floor sealer that required periods of time between applications), feeling that they could have been more proactive during the week when he was away. When the rent check arrived, the landlord reported that he held the envelope in his hands and thought, “If they deducted something from their rent, I will be annoyed and disappointed.” However, when he opened the envelope and found that the full rent was paid, he immediately returned one half of the rent to the tenants. Their generosity in not asserting an arguable claim begot his, creating an infection of generosity. The tenants gained a reduced rent and a top-of-the line new carpet—one much better than the old carpet. The tenants stayed patient and appreciative as repairs dragged on, and ultimately the landlord had an upgraded apartment and happy tenants.

Source: <https://cardozo.yu.edu/sites/default/files/Following%20the%20Golden%20Rule%20and%20Finding%20Gold_0.pdf>

**7.26:** *Value Chain: Intentional Generosity* by Andrew Murphy (175 words)

*The Golden Rule.* Treat others the way you want to be treated. By giving more than you receive, you place your faith in the fact that others will return the favor. Generosity, however, is not quid pro quo—rather, each generous action pays into a culture that you hope will benefit you indirectly. So, if you want to be treated generously, act that way toward everyone….

…Intentional generosity creates a virtuous cycle of supporting one another, and yields better work through true collaboration. The byproduct is a positive environment of abundance – not scarcity – maximizing everyone’s benefit….

It feels better to give than to receive. Too many people have this backwards. The satisfaction of giving is much greater than receiving. Giving is accompanied by a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment because, put simply, you have something to give. While giving is more rewarding, the model does not work unless you also receive generously. And part of being a generous person is receiving generously. The combination of giving and receiving fosters a culture of abundance over scarcity….

Source: <https://loupventures.com/value-chain-the-golden-rule-of-leadership-intentional-generosity/>

**8.0: Curriculum & Theme-Based Classroom Activities for Youth & Adults**

***Youth***

**A Tapestry of Faith**

**8.1: Virtue Ethics: An Ethical Development Program for High School Youth**

**8.1.1:** *Workshop 9: Generosity*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop9>

“This workshop will:

* Examine the meaning of generosity
* Highlight resources, other than financial, that youth can give generously
* Explore situations where generosity is used or called for
* Guide youth to identify themselves as generous people.”

**Adults**

**8.2: Spirit of Life: An Adult Program on Unitarian Universalist Spirituality**

**8.2.1:** *Workshop 3: The Stirrings of Compassion: Caring For One Another*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/life/workshop3>

“This workshop engages participants in experiencing and reflecting on spiritual moments connected with giving, receiving care, and compassion. Discussion helps participants identify and articulate the aspects of life on Earth that call out for their caring attention to others. The activities help participants recognize, practice, and claim their ability to exchange compassionate spiritual support with others.”

**8.3: What Moves U: A Unitarian Universalist Theology Program for Adults**

*Workshop 3: Hosea Ballou*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/movesus/workshop3>

This workshop will:

* Build historical knowledge about a Universalist theology of happiness
* Engage participants in thinking theologically about happiness.

**9.0: Popular Music**

# 9.1: *Try A Little Kindness* by Glen Campbell (2:24)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvswocNN-g8>

# 9.2: *We Are the World* by USA for Africa (8:00)

# Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9BNoNFKCBI>

# 9.3: *One Love* by Bob Marley (2:45)

# Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdB-8eLEW8g>

**9.4:** *Stand by Me* by Ben E King, 1961 (2:57)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwZNL7QVJjE>

# 9.5: *Wonderful World, Beautiful People* by Jimmy Cliff (3:12)

# Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SapwrvSOfIc>

# 9.6: *Dear Mama* by 2pac (4:40)

# Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb1ZvUDvLDY>

**9.7:** *Bridge Over Troubled Waters* by Simon & Garfunkel (4:40)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrcwRt6J32o>

**9.8:***Give a Little Bit* by Supertramp (4:08)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9JOut9yh5g>

**9.9:** *Humble and Kind* by Tim McGraw (4:29)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awzNHuGqoMc>

**9.10:** *Kind and Generous* by Natalie Merchant (3:58)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAwyIad93-c>

**9.11:** *Lean on Me* by Bill Withers (4:19)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-59COFjB6Sk>

**9.12:** *Gratitude* by Earth, Wind, and Fire (3:37)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQ1e6lmVluw>

**9.13:** *Point of Life* by Randy Travis (3:37)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qiBjtI4MLc>

**9.14:** *You’ve Got A Friend* by Carole King (5:10)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAR_Ff5A8Rk>

**9.15:** *You’ve Got A Friend in Me* by Randy Newman (2:08)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRBIMTK73wY>

**9.16:** *Your Song* by Elton John (3:48)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlPlfCy1urI>

**10.0: Videos, Short Films, Movie Clips, Audio Recordings & Photography**

**Generosity**

**10.1:** *Gratitude Revealed: Generosity* from MOVING ART by Louie Schwartzberg (4:10)

A powerful portrait of the diversity of generosity.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/134157961>

**10.2:** *On Generosity* by [David Altwege](https://vimeo.com/altweger) (0:59)

A short video about artistic collaboration as generosity.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/83637958>

**10:3:** *The Most Generous Boy in The World!* by Meir Kay (2:06)

“In a world that constantly tells us to get all we can, every so often it’s important to be reminded of the power of generosity.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eTbs6cZ61I>

**10.4:** *The Generosity Paradox* by motiontv (22:20)

“Winston Churchill once said, ‘We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.’ Joel Pilger runs his business based on this model. In The Generosity Paradox, Joel shares how generosity has been key to his success as a creative.”

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/112785239>

**10.5:** *Journey America | Dispatch #36 – Generosity* by Outwild TV (3:10)

“Although the road through Northern Mexico has been rough at times, the overwhelming generosity of the Mexican people has made the journey one to remember.”

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/64243979>

***TED Talks***

**10.6:** *Why Some People Are More Altruistic Than Others* by Abigail Marsh (12:23)

“Why do some people do selfless things, helping other people even at risk to their own well-being? Psychology researcher Abigail Marsh studies the motivations of people who do extremely altruistic acts, like donating a kidney to a complete stranger. Are their brains just different?”

Video Link: <https://www.ted.com/talks/abigail_marsh_why_some_people_are_more_altruistic_than_others?referrer=playlist-on_generosity>

**10.7:** *The Power of Kindness* by Orly Wahba (21:31)

“From Dream to Reality: Orly Wahba takes us on a personal journey; from the dream of a young child to change the world through the power of kindness, to the obstacles and challenges that helped her transform it into reality.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DawgEK9muY>

**10.8:** *The Generosity Experiment* by Sasha Dichter (19:37)

“In this inspiring talk at the NextGen:Charity conference, Sasha Dichter of the Acumen Fund shares the results of his month-long ‘Generosity Experiment’ where he said ‘yes’ to every request for help.”

Video Link: <https://www.ted.com/talks/sasha_dichter>

**10.9:** *The key to true generosity* by Rachael Chong (8:18)

The simplicity of her message is powerful.

“Rachael Chong is the Founder and CEO of Catchafire, an innovative platform that connects nonprofits with professionals looking to volunteer their skills. Since its founding in 2009, Catchafire has become the world’s largest online skills-based volunteer platform.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiM2BobJk_U>

**10.10:** *Generosity: A Path to Deep Connection* by Rachel Delong (10:39)

“‘Even after all this time, the sun never says to the earth, ‘You owe me.’ Look what happens with a love like that. It lights up the whole sky.’ - Hafiz

‘Generosity is about receiving as much as giving.’- Rachel Delong

Delong facilitates Children’s Global Alliance taking youth to teach and serve globally, go to www.africayogaproject.org for Family Seva Safari. She is their teacher, teaching them not just to study hard in school, work hard at their sport, but also teaching them what it means to give and receive, and what it means to be part of this human family we have!”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCKad4_ETjI>

**10.11:** *Excellence through generosity* by Gilmore Junio (15:54)

“Gilmore Junio shares his personal story of generosity and how building a culture of selflessness can lead to personal excellence. Junio recounts the story of how and why he gave up his place in the 1000 meter Olympic final in Sochi 2014 to his teammate who won the Silver Medal for Canada. Gilmore teaches us that we have more to win when we are generous.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psN_qlfhdws>

**10.12:** *The impact of generosity* by Wendy Steele (11:05)

“OK, so we’ve all heard we are ‘supposed to’ give back. But what does that mean? Why should I care? What’s in it for me? In a new paradigm of contribution, we learn that it really matters that we give - not only because it’s good for those who receive and it makes the world a better place - but because - it’s good for us. When we find ways to contribute in the world from our own gifts and passions, we actually live more meaningful, happy and fun lives while improving our families, businesses and communities.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufp5iGh0agA>

**10.13:** *What If Generosity Was Taught by Those Who Have the Least?* by Nipun Mehta (18:01)

“When one of Gandhi’s chappals famously dropped onto the track as he was boarding a train, without hesitation, he let his other chappal also fall. Why? Well, so that whoever would find one would have a usable pair. The kind of generosity that someone like Gandhi practiced, with an alignment of body, speech, and mind, is accessible to each of us. Nipun found examples of this alignment everywhere he went, and here he shares stories of generosity he’s experienced on his life journey.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80KlmzU3sKA>

**10.14:** *Imagine Abundance: Everyone Wins!* by Carine Clark (11:46)

The ability to imagine abundance is a foundation of generosity.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0q5H0Vz5Ow>

**10.15:** *Creating abundance from generosity* by Darrell Kopke (16:28)

A presentation about the power of generosity in an organization.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdlU0tbhaDo>

**10.16:** *The Generosity of Scars* by Scott Mann (18:11)

“Your darkest struggle can be your greatest gift to those you lead...if you are willing to pay the price. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Scott Mann spent nearly 23 years operating in the trust-depleted communities of Afghanistan, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia, building deep relationships and mobilizing thousands of indigenous people to stand up against hostile threats. After going through a turbulent transition to civilian life, Scott learned to use storytelling to help heal from the wounds of war and reconnect with his community.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_szAosvdWdM>

**10.17:** *The Power of Gratitude and Generosity: serving Those Who Have Served* by Lida Citroen (15:17)

“In this moving and powerful talk, international reputation management expert, Lida Citroën, takes you through the process of finding your passion in life and serving others along the way. She shares how the power of gratitude and generosity led her to work with military veterans – a community she knew nothing about – which opened her eyes, heart and ability to impact millions of veterans.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BloWnsJCRw>

**Generosity**

**10.1:** *Gratitude Revealed: Generosity* from MOVING ART by Louie Schwartzberg (4:10)

**10.2:** *On Generosity* by [David Altwege](https://vimeo.com/altweger) (0:59)

**10:3:** *The Most Generous Boy in The World!* by Meir Kay (2:06)

**10.4:** *The Generosity Paradox* by motiontv (22:20)

**10.5:** *Journey America | Dispatch #36 – Generosity* by Outwild TV (3:10)

***TED Talks***

**10.6:** *Why Some People Are More Altruistic Than Others* by Abigail Marsh (12:23)

**10.7:** *The Power of Kindness* by Orly Wahba (21:31)

**10.8:** *The Generosity Experiment* by Sasha Dichter (19:37)

**10.9:** *The key to true generosity* by Rachael Chong (8:18)

**10.10:** *Generosity: A Path to Deep Connection* by Rachel Delong (10:39)

**10.11:** *Excellence through generosity* by Gilmore Junio (15:54)

**10.12:** *The impact of generosity* by Wendy Steele (11:05)

**10.13:** *What If Generosity Was Taught by Those Who Have the Least?* by Nipun Mehta (18:01)

**10.14:** *Imagine Abundance: Everyone Wins!* by Carine Clark (11:46)

**10.15:** *Creating abundance from generosity* by Darrell Kopke (16:28)

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