

EPIC

Equal Partners
in Community

By J. L. Shattuck



EPIC OVERVIEW

- 25 sessions / hours of content for elementary school
- Uses supplies that most RE programs already have on-hand
- Designed to be dynamic for kids and flexible for churches

WELCOME TO EPIC!

As a religious educator whose work focuses primarily on young children, I've come to understand the elementary years as a sort of "first coming of age"---a period during which many kids become invested in the hows and whys of church. During this period, they may wonder about our rituals and traditions and become eager to participate in them.

I designed EPIC (Equal Partners in Community) as a play-based, skill-building framework to help congregations meet kids' spiritual need to engage in community. Through movement, art, conversation, and more, EPIC sessions help elementary schoolers become active and loving co-creators of Unitarian Universalist congregational life.

EPIC IS HANDS-ON: DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF KIDS

Because many elementary schoolers are concrete thinkers who learn most effectively through "doing together," EPIC introduces the idea of UU community life as a set of skills that community members practice together, both on Sunday morning and beyond.

During EPIC sessions, kids and religious education program volunteers are invited to engage in skill-building through what I call the "high five" of UU congregational life: Spiritual Growth, Community Care, Hospitality, Justice-Making, and Worship. Each "high five" category contains five class sessions that guide kids from observing community skills in action to using the skills themselves.

To account for elementary schoolers' high need for movement and engagement, each EPIC session is based on a hands-on activity through which kids can explore the category topic (for example, how elements of a worship fit together to form one whole experience.)

EPIC IS FLEXIBLE: DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHURCHES

EPIC is intentionally designed with the understanding that both age populations and attendance patterns are shifting in UU communities. It was originally created for a one-room, 45-minute RE program serving kids ages six to eleven, but could also be used in age-based classrooms for grades 2-3 or 4-5, depending on your church's needs.

If your church has several families attending weekly, the sessions in each "high five" category could be taught sequentially and close together (i.e., in five sessions over the course of five weeks). If families attend more sporadically, EPIC could form the basis for a series of once-a-month kids' chapel services or a series of kid-and-caregiver gatherings that allow elementary schoolers and their grownups to participate in EPIC together.

EPIC also takes into account that each church has its own unique rhythms of worship and events. Categories could be taught in order as written (from Spiritual Growth to Worship) or in any order that fits your congregation's pre-existing calendar.

EPIC SESSIONS

Each EPIC session has four parts:

- A short circle time for chalice lighting and sharing joys and concerns
- A time to wonder together about an object or question related to the session

- A hands-on activity (either a game / movement activity, a makerspace project done using loose parts, a mini field trip to some part of your congregation, or a building activity using legos or other blocks)
- A closing circle to share and reflect on what was learned together

Each session contains lists of needed supplies, including any links to internet resources. (These are active links and will not work if the curriculum is printed.) Sessions are designed to work on multiple levels and are lightly scripted to allow individual facilitators to speak to groups of participants in ways that feel natural for them. Some participants may understand the lesson or activity in only the most concrete way, and some may be able to explore it with more depth. No matter how children engage with the sessions, they'll be learning skills that will allow them to engage more deeply in community.

I encourage you to use this content in whatever ways best meet the needs of your RE program and community. If you have your own circle time format that already works well, feel free to swap it in; if you have an activity you'd prefer to use instead of the one I have written here, feel free to do that. If you'd prefer to stretch sessions over multiple weeks to allow more time to work on projects, please do!

If you have questions, comments, or just want to share how the program is working in your church, please reach out to me at jen@jshattuck.com. I love hearing from you!

In gratitude,

JL Shattuck

EPIC Spiritual Growth Session 1: Green Space Mini Field Trip

Session Theme: Everything that grows needs support to grow.

Session Goal: To help participants understand growth as a process that requires support.

Session activity: Green Space mini field trip OR Maker Space plant protectors.

Resources needed if doing the field trip:

- Access to a green space cared for by people
- Assortment of exploration tools (binoculars, magnifying glasses, etc.) to examine the green space or plant
- A blanket and portable chalice for doing opening circle

Resources needed if doing the session inside:

- A houseplant
- Makerspace materials (Small cardboard boxes and other recyclables, various forms of tape and glue, other loose parts) for plant protectors

Notes:

During this session you'll be taking a mini field-trip to any natural place (garden, field, forest, hiking trails) that people care for. Many congregations will have a garden on-site that could be used for this. If there's not a green space nearby or if weather doesn't cooperate on the day of the field trip, you could also do this lesson with a houseplant.

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- If able to do the lesson outdoors, tell participants that today we're going to spend some time together here at the <church garden / nearby park / hiking trails / etc.>

If doing class indoors, show participants the houseplant and ask what they notice about it.

- Ask kids to name some things they notice growing around them.

(Possible answers: flowers, trees, moss, etc.)

If doing class indoors, wonder how the plant is able to grow. What does it need to be able to stay healthy and able to grow? (possible answers: water; sunlight; plant food / fertilizer)

- Wonder how these plants are able to grow. What do they need to be able to stay healthy? (possible answers: water; sunlight; plant food / fertilizer)

If doing class indoors, wonder how the plant is able to grow. What does it need to be able to stay healthy? (possible answers: water; sunlight; plant food / fertilizer)

- Tell students there's one more thing that the plants here need in order to grow: help and support from people! Explain that the place you're visiting is cared for by the community and name the community members who might care for it (examples: the garden club; the town maintenance people; group volunteers, etc.)

If doing class indoors, tell students there's one more thing that the plant needs in order to grow: help and support from people! Wonder out loud what a person might have done to keep this plant growing and healthy. (Possible answers: water it; make sure it has sunlight; give it plant food; keep it out of reach of pets who might nibble the leaves, etc.)

- Tell participants that together you're going to explore the green space and look for evidence that the things growing here have been cared for by people. What support have they gotten in order to grow?

If doing class indoors, tell students that today they're going to get a chance to build a plant protector container that could keep a houseplant like this one safe and well while being transported (through the mail, in a car, etc.)

Activity: Exploring Green Space / Maker Space Plant Protector

- Hand out the exploration tools you've brought and ask participants to look for signs that the space you're visiting has been cared for by people. Tell participants that they'll be able to use the exploration tools to look for evidence.

If doing class indoors, tell participants that they can build their plant protector from any of the available materials. Brainstorm briefly together about what a plant protector might need (examples: something to keep the plant hydrated; holes so it can get sun.)

- Explore the green space and look for evidence of care for as long as your class period allows. You can discuss the evidence of care you're seeing as you go, or (if time allows) save observations for the end of the session.

If doing class indoors, allow participants to work on plant protectors. Participants may need help getting started or may need assistance with some of the more complicated aspects of a design. Volunteers can be nearby to help.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- If doing class outdoors, what did we observe with our exploration tools? How could we tell this space was being cared for? What could participants do to care for a green space near them?

If doing class indoors, what was their vision or idea for their plant protector? What supplies did they use to complete the project?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck
Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

EPIC Spiritual Growth Session 2: Paper Plate Flowers

Session Theme: Our community is like a garden full of many different types of flowers. Just like plants need support to grow, so do people!

Session Goal: To help participants understand community as something that grows together with support.

Session activity: Paper plate flowers / Classroom wall garden

Resources needed:

- A photo of a blooming garden full of diverse plants
- Instructions for paper plate flowers (linked [here](#))

Note: These instructions suggest using liquid watercolors to decorate the flowers, but you can easily use other kinds of paint or markers to decorate them as well. Feel free to use what you have on hand in your classroom and / or what is easiest.

- Pre-assembled sample flower for participants to reference
- Paper plates for art activity (very cheap uncoated plates work best). The flower shapes / petal layers could be cut ahead of time if needed or could be done in class by participants themselves if your session is long enough.
- Staplers to attach plates together
- Paint, markers, glue, and any other art materials that could be helpful in decorating flowers
- An empty wall or bulletin board to display flowers (you may end up attaching the flowers to the wall or bulletin board at a later time,

especially if flowers are still wet)

- Chalice for doing opening circle

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Show participants the photo of the garden and ask what they notice about it. (Possible answers: it has a lot of different flowers in it; it's really colorful.)

- Wonder what the photo of the garden might have in common with your congregation or community (possible answers: it has a lot of different kinds of flowers and we have a lot of different kinds of people; it's always growing and people are always growing, too)
- Say that one of the things you notice is that, just like your community is made up of all different kinds of people, the garden is full of many different colors and types of flowers. The flowers are all growing together just like people do.
- Say that just like the flowers in a garden, people can get bigger and taller. We can also grow in other ways: we can get kinder, we can get braver, we can get more loving. Part of what we do in Unitarian Universalist communities is to help each other grow in these ways.
- Tell participants that today we're going to make a garden in our class that represents all the different kinds of people that are part of our community—each participant will be able to make a flower that looks like them, using their favorite colors and designs.
- **Activity: Paper Plate Flowers**
- Show participants your pre-assembled flower and explain how the different-sized petals get put together to make the flower.
- If participants are able and you have time, have them cut flower shapes out of paper plates. If you've pre-cut the flower shapes, move on to the next step.
- Have participants decorate their flower petals however they choose. If there's time or participants are inclined to, they could add stems and leaves to their flowers
- Have volunteers help participants layer their flower petals and staple them together to make flowers.

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- Show participants your pre-assembled flower and explain how the different-sized petals get put together to make the flower.
- If participants are able and you have time, have them cut flower shapes out of paper plates. If you've pre-cut the flower shapes, move on to the next step.
- Have participants decorate their flower petals however they choose. If there's time or participants are inclined to, they could add stems and leaves to their flowers
- Have volunteers help participants layer their flower petals and staple them together to make flowers.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have kids share their flowers with the group if they wish
- What was their vision or idea?
- What colors or supplies did they choose to make the flower feel like them?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Spiritual Growth Session 3: Plant Talk

Session Theme: *Just like communities of people do, plant communities support each other in their growth by communicating their needs and sharing resources.*

Session Goal: *To help participants understand the communication helps with growth*

Session activity: *Plant Talk Game*

Resources needed:

- *Chalice for doing opening circle*
- *Newsprint pad for taking any notes*
- *Plant sound recordings [here](#)*

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

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And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Ask participants to remember a time when they were hungry or thirsty or needed some other kind of help. Wonder how they were able to get the help they needed. Allow participants to share answers.
- Tell participants that just like people ask their community for what they need when they feel hungry or thirsty or uncomfortable, plants do too! Say that while plants in a garden don't speak to each other in language that people can hear or understand, scientists have discovered that they'll make noises to tell their neighboring plants that they need more food or water.
- Wonder together what those plant noises might sound like. Brainstorm some ideas together.
- Play the plant sound recordings from the link in the list of resources. What do they sound like? Do they sound the way participants expected?
- Tell participants that today they're going to get a chance to practice communicating the way plants in a garden do.

Activity: Plant Talk Game

- Ask participants if anyone has ever played the game Telephone, where messages are passed from person to person by whispering.
- Explain that plant talk is like Telephone, but that instead of passing messages by whispering, messages are passed by hand squeezes that pulse like the sounds made by the plants that you heard on the recordings.
- Ask participants to brainstorm some squeeze patterns that could mean things like “help”, “hungry”, “thirsty,” or more important words. Write these down on newsprint so that the group will remember what the squeeze patterns mean.
- Have participants form a line, either standing or sitting, and join hands. Choose a person at one end of the line to be “it” and reassure the group that everyone who wants to will have a turn to be it.
- Ask the person who’s “it” to choose a message to send down the line (for example: three hand squeezes for “help”) and tell them to squeeze the message into the hand of the person next to them. Tell the group to keep squeezing the message until it gets to the end of the line.
- Ask the person at the end of the line what message they received. Was it the same one that the person who was “it” sent?
- Ask the group what help the community could provide to the plant who asked for help. Brainstorm how the community could work together.
- Tell the person who just received the message to move from the end of the line to the front of the line to be the new sender.
- Play the game as many times as time allows.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- What did you think of the game?
- What skills did you need to use to understand the messages that were being passed to you?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Spiritual Growth Session 4: Jenga Covenant

Session Theme: Just like plants need help to grow, people need help too. One way we can help each other grow is through making and keeping our promises to each other

Session Goal: To help participants understand how covenant promises help growth

Session activity: Jenga covenant game

Resources needed:

- A houseplant
- A yard jenga set or other large blocks assembled into a tower by stacking wooden blocks in rows of three, alternating directions
- Painters' tape and markers

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

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For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Show participants the houseplant and ask them to imagine that you're going to have this plant live in your classroom. What would the group need to do to keep it healthy? (Possible answers: make sure it has sunlight, give it water.)
- Say that if your group wanted to keep the plant healthy as healthy as possible, you could commit AS a group to give it what it needs. You could work together to figure out when and how much to water. You could figure out how much sun the plant needs and find the best spot to put it in.
- Ask the group what would happen if you had the plant living in your classroom and DIDN'T do what was needed to keep it healthy. What would happen if you didn't give it sunlight or water? (Possible answers: it would get droopy; its leaves would fall off, it would die.)
- Confirm that the plant would probably not be able to keep growing if it didn't get what it needed. Tell participants that our communities are a little bit like gardens of plants—just like this one plant needs support in order to keep growing, each person in the community needs support too.
- Remind participants that when we're talking about growth at

church, we're not usually not talking about getting physically bigger, but about growing in our spirits to become kinder, more generous, more thoughtful, etc.

- Tell participants that members of UU communities promise to treat each other in ways that help everyone in the community grow in their spirits. Just like you might work together to make sure the plant was as healthy as possible, communities work together to make sure that everyone gets what they need to grow in their spirits.
- Say that when communities promise to treat each other in ways that help each other grow, those promises are called a covenant. Sometimes communities will use the word covenant to mean "promise": "we covenant to treat each other with kindness".
- Brainstorm together some things the group could do to help each other become kinder, more generous, more thoughtful, etc. Write (or have an adult volunteer write) their suggestions on pieces of painter's tape.
- When you've brainstormed several suggestions (speaking kindly, sharing, etc.) have participants put the pieces of tape on the blocks you've used to build the Jenga tower.
- Say that the tower is like a community and the pieces of blue tape are the covenant: the promises the community makes to treat its members a certain way. Tell the group that today you're going to play a game called Covenant.

Activity: Jenga Covenant Game

- Ask the group if anyone has ever played the game Jenga before. Tell participants that Covenant is similar to Jenga but a little bit different. Explain the following rules: just like in Jenga, participants will

remove blocks from the tower one at a time. As they remove the block, the the block, the group can call out the covenant promise they're removing. Unlike in Jenga, they won't put the blocks back on top of the tower, but put them off to the side.

- Play the game for as many rounds as it takes for the tower to fall down.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Ask the group what happened when they removed the covenant promises from the stack. Was the tower able to remain stable?
- What happens if communities don't keep their covenant promises?
- How could our class help each keep the promises we brainstormed today?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

EPIC Spiritual Growth Session 5: More or Less Reflection

Session Theme: Communities use the practice of reflection to help themselves grow and make changes if needed.

Session Goal: To help participants begin to practice reflection together.

Session activity: More or Less scavenger hunt and discussion

Resources needed:

- A hand mirror big enough to allow participants to see behind them
- Post-its marked with words or symbols that you'd like participants to discuss wanting more or less of in your class: field-trips, music, art, makerspace projects, etc., stuck around the room for participants to find (at least one post-it per participant. I usually start with 10.)
- A chime or bell to signal the start and end of the of More or Less scavenger hunt
- A dry erase board or newsprint pad to take notes on

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

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And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Show participants the hand mirror and ask what it might be used for (possible answers: to see yourself; to comb your hair or brush your teeth)
- Explain that mirrors reflect what's in front of them. Demonstrate (or have a child volunteer demonstrate) how a mirror does this.
- Give all participants who want a chance to see what's behind them in the mirror have a chance to do so.
- Say that because mirrors reflect what's in front of them, one way for a person to use a mirror is to see what's behind them. Demonstrate that by looking into the mirror, you (or a child volunteer) can see some of the things your class has done together lately: the paper flowers you made, the Jenga covenant you built together, etc. Explain that in a way, this mirror is helping the group look back at the past.

- Say that looking back on the past is one way that communities grow together. This process is called reflection because it works kind of like a mirror. Communities don't use a real mirror for this kind of reflection, but they can think and wonder together about the past and talk about what worked and what didn't and what they want to do more or less of.
- Explain that today, you're going to be reflecting together about what you want more or less of in your class. This reflection is important because it helps the grownups know what worked and what didn't and lets kids share their ideas about church.

Activity: Exploring More or Less scavenger hunt and discussion

- Tell participants that you're going to have a little scavenger hunt together. Show them a sample post-it with a word or symbol on it and explain that post-its like this are hidden all over the room.
- Tell participants that when you give the signal, everyone is going to run around the space and find a post-it and then bring it back to the circle. When everyone is back in the circle, you'll talk about what you've found.
- Give the signal and have participants hunt for post-it's around the room.
- When everyone has found a post-it and has returned to the circle, explain that you're going to play More or Less. To play More or Less, a person shares what's on their post-it. People who want more of the thing on the post-it can jump up and roar "MOOOOOORE!" in a loud voice. People who want less of that thing can curl up and say "less" in a tiny voice. (if needed for accessibility reasons, this activity can be done with voices alone and without body motions.)
- Say that people who want more or less of a particular thing will get

the chance to talk to the group about why they want it more or less. Tell the group that no final decisions will be made about these things today; we're just practicing together the skill of reflection together.

- Ask who wants to share what's on their post-it. (Children may need help reading here.) Go around the circle and play More or Less with each post-it, taking notes on what participants say on your dry erase board.
- After you've discussed all the post-its, thank participants for their thoughts and say you'll do your own reflecting based on their ideas.
- **Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)**
- How did it feel to share your ideas and get to reflect together?
- Was it fun to play More or Less? Would you like to do it again?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

EPIC Community Care Session 1: Friendship Freeze!

Session Theme: When we come into community, we bring our joys and concerns with us. Our communities (church, school, family, etc.) support us in our feelings and give us the opportunity to support others as well. This support is called community care.

Session goal: To help kids understand, in a concrete and play-based way, what it means to support others in community

Session activity: Friendship Freeze game

Resources needed:

- Chalice for chalice lighting
- Set of objects that could easily be balanced on a head or hand (wooden blocks, small beanbags, rubber ducks, etc), one object per participant
- Rules for Friendship Freeze game (found on Youtube [here](#))

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

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For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Remind participants that every week, kids and grownups in the congregation get the opportunity to share joys and concerns together, like we just did right now.
- Say that when people bring joys and concerns to church, it's like they're carrying an object with them that's invisible to other people.
- Show participants the object you'll be using to play the friendship freeze game (beanbag, duck, etc.)
- Show that you can balance the object in your hand or on your head. Say that our feelings are like this object. In the same way that we know this object is real because we can feel it, we know our feelings or joy or concern are real because we feel them in our bodies, too
- "Accidentally" drop the object on the floor. If no one picks up the object and hands it back to you, ask for help picking up the object and balancing it on your hand again
- Say that sometimes our feelings of joy or concern might be so big we could need help with them. In the same way that someone just

helped by handing the object back when it fell down, we can help each other with our feelings by giving and receiving support: we can comfort people who are feeling sad and celebrate with people who are feeling happy. When everyone in a group agrees to help and support others in their feelings of happiness and sadness, this is called community care.

- Optional extension questions for groups with a higher tolerance for discussion: has someone ever helped you with a big feeling or joy or concern? What did they say or do that was helpful? What could you say or do for others that might be helpful in supporting them?
- Tell participants that today we'll be playing a game that helps show how every person in a community can help others and provide community care. The game is called Friendship Freeze!

Activity: Friendship Freeze game

- Explain the rules of Friendship Freeze (found at the Youtube link above or elsewhere online)
- Hand out the objects that will be balanced on participants heads (or hands.)
- Play game together for as many rounds as participants choose, helping others keep their objects balanced
- To make the game more challenging in later rounds, try balancing objects while also moving backwards, hopping on one foot, etc. Brainstorm together different ways to make the game more challenging

Reflection / Sharing (optional):

- How did it feel to try to keep your object balanced? Was it easy or challenging?
- How did it feel to have someone there to help? How did it feel to be helpful?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Community Care Session 2: Makerspace Mailboxes

Session Theme: We can receive and offer community care.

Session Goal: To help participants give and receive care around joys and concerns.

Session activity: Makerspace mailboxes

Resources needed:

- A postcard or notecard similar to the one your congregation's caring team uses, if your congregation has a caring team.
- Makerspace materials (Small cardboard boxes and other recyclables, various forms of tape and glue, other loose parts.)

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Show participants the postcard or notecard. Pass it around the circle.
- Ask participants what they notice about the card or what it could be used for. Wonder if anyone in the room has ever received a card like this and allow participants to share their experiences. How did it feel to get it?
- Tell participants that cards like this are often sent to people who have a special joy or concern: it could be a get well card if the person is feeling sick, or it could be a card of congratulations if the person has accomplished something important to them. In UU churches like ours, these cards are often sent by caring teams.
- Explain that a caring team is a group of people in the community that help people know that their joys and concerns are important. When someone shares a joy or concern in church, people on the caring team will write and mail them a card to that person to show them that the community cares for them and wants to help.
- Tell participants that one way to show community care for each other in our class is to act as a caring team for one another, sending mail to acknowledge the joys and concerns we share each week. To make it easier to send notes of support, we can have our own mailboxes here in the room, marked with our names.

Makerspace Activity: Mailboxes

- Tell participants that they can build their mailbox from any of the available materials.
- Brainstorm briefly together about what a mailbox might need (examples: a slot for the mail to go in and a bottom so the mail doesn't fall out.)
- Participants may need help getting started or may need assistance with some of the more complicated aspects of a design. Volunteers can be available to help.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- **Have kids share their mailbox with the group if they wish**
- **What was their vision or idea?**
- **What supplies did they use to complete the project?**

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

EPIC Community Care Session 3: Visit from Caring Team Member

Session Theme: Communities work together to care for each other.

Session Goal: To help participants understand how their congregation helps care for its members.

Session activity: Interview with caring team member and postcard making.

Resources needed:

- A member of your congregation's caring team (if you have a caring team)
- Blank postcards or notecards, or paper to make them
- Art supplies for decorating postcards or notecards
- A chalice and candle for opening circle

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to

sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- If a member of your congregation's caring team is visiting your class, introduce that person and say that they're a member of the caring team. If not, move on to the next point.
- Wonder aloud to the group what something called a caring team might do.
- Explain that many UU churches have committees, which are groups of people who work together to help the community with certain things. The worship committee helps to put together the Sunday service. The social justice committee makes sure the community is helping to make things fair and accessible to everyone.
- Say that the caring team is a committee whose job it is to honor people's joys and concerns.
- If a member of your congregation's caring team is visiting your class, ask that person to describe for the group some of the things their committee does to honor joys and concerns. (Ask them beforehand if they can lift up the fact that one of the things caring teams do is send cards to people.)

Activity: Making Postcards

- Tell participants that today they're going to get the chance to make some of the cards that the caring team sends out to people to honor their joys and concerns.
- Brainstorm briefly together about what illustrations or words a caring card might have on the front.
- Have participants make cards with available art supplies, and

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have kids share their cards with the group if they wish.
- What was their vision or idea for the card?
- How are they hoping that the recipient of the card will feel when they get it?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

EPIC Community Care Session 4: Caring Corner

Session Theme: Honoring joys and concerns isn't just something the adults on the caring team do. Our class can also be a caring team and hold space for our friends' joys and concerns.

Session Goal: To help participants literally hold space for joys and concerns in the classroom.

Session activity: Make a Caring Corner in the classroom and finish makerspace mailboxes.

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- A newsprint pad or dry erase board to write down participants' ideas
- A space in the classroom for your caring corner
- Supplies to make heart stones (tutorial and supply list found [here](#))
- Makerspace materials (Small cardboard boxes and other recyclables, various forms of tape and glue, other loose parts)
- Blank postcards and notecards

Notes:

When I first ran this session in the congregation where I developed EPIC, the caring corner we made together had a special joys and concerns altar that contained candles of joy and concern, heart stones to give and receive, cards on which to write notes to honor others' joys and concerns, and the makerspace mailboxes that participants had made in an earlier

session. Your group may want to include these things or have different ideas of what a caring corner might involve!

At the time I was originally developing these sessions, I had enough participants attending weekly that several of them decided to form a kids' caring team whose responsibility it was to honor the joys and concerns of other participants and to regularly replenish the altar with heart stones and note cards. If you believe your group would have an interest in forming their own caring team, I encourage you to suggest it. It's a great way to extend the practice done in these sessions and to help participants gain a sense of leadership.

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate):

- Tell participants that sometimes when we talk about joys and concerns, we'll use the words "holding space." Wonder aloud if anybody has any ideas about what those words mean.
- Confirm or say that when we talk about holding space for joys and concerns, it's a way to say that we've cleared some room in our hearts and minds to be able to care about what's going on for another person. It doesn't usually mean that we're making physical space.
- Wonder out loud to the group what it would be like to have a physical space where joys and concerns could be honored. You could put your makerspace mailboxes there, as well as cards so that participants could write or draw notes honoring the joys and concerns of others.
- Ask the group what other things they think might be good to have in a caring corner that's set aside specifically to honor joys and concerns. Write down their suggestions.
- Say that some churches have special stones to honor joys and concerns that can be given back and forth as a way for something to tell another person that they're thinking of them and are happy to hold space for what they're feeling. Tell participants that today they're going to have the opportunity to get to make some of those stones for the classroom caring corner.

Activity: Heart rocks

- Show participants the supplies you have available for the heart rocks and explain how to make them.
- Tell participants that they can also finish their makerspace mailbox if they didn't get a chance to finish it before (or start making one if they

- weren't able to attend that session.)
- Say that participants can also use makerspace materials to make something that they think would be good to have in the caring corner
- (a rack or box for postcards? A sign marking the area?)
- Participants can also help an adult volunteer assemble the caring corner.
- Participants may need help getting started or may need assistance with some of the more complicated aspects of a design. Volunteers can answer any questions participants may have or provide help.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows):

- Have kids share their creations with the group if these choose
- What was their vision or idea? What supplies did they use to complete the project?
- What do they hope their creation will add to the caring corner?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

EPIC Community Care Session 5: Bubble Blessing Freeze Dance Party

Session Theme: Some joys and concerns are too new or big to share out loud, but we can feel them in our bodies and get support for them within our community.

Session Goal: To help participants give and receive care around joys and concerns.

Session activity: Freeze Dance Game and Bubble Blessing

Resources needed:

- Sing the Sanctuary music playlist (on Spotify [here](#)) or other music that's a mix of fast and slow, happy and sad.
- Enough mini bubble wands (like [these](#)) for each participant.

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- However your group shares joys and concerns (with candles, pebbles, etc.) share one more for all the joys and concerns the group has brought but has chosen not to share.
- Lift up the candle or pebble you used to acknowledge these joys and concerns and wonder out loud to the group if anyone knows why you do this. Take responses.
- Say or confirm that you acknowledge the joys and concerns that aren't shared because you know that they're just as important as the ones that are shared and can be blessed just as much.
- Explain that whether or not we share them out loud, we can feel our joys and concerns in our bodies. These joys and concerns can feel all different ways.
- Brainstorm with participants how different feelings might feel inside. (e.g., sad feelings might feel heavy in our bodies, and exciting ones might feel fizzy or bubbly.)
- Tell participants that today the group is going to honor all the joys and concerns that we carry in our bodies without saying them out loud.

Activity: Freeze Dance Game and Bubble Blessing

- Tell participants that you're going to play Freeze Dance. Ask who has played it before.
- Explain briefly that to play Freeze Dance, you dance to music and then freeze your body in place when the music stops.
- Say that in this version of Freeze Dance, you're going to play music that might sound like a feeling: happy or sad, excited or angry. Tell participants that when they're dancing, they can move their bodies in ways that demonstrate the way the music makes them feel. When the music stops, they can freeze their body in that feeling position.
- Explain that when the music stops, you're going to ask participants to shout out the emotion they think the song most feels like (e.g., "Happy!" or "Angry!")
- Play as many rounds of Freeze Dance as the group chooses.
- When you're done playing Freeze Dance, hand out bubble wands to participants.
- Explain that you're going to bless your classroom space and all the joys and concerns that you feel here together.
- Draw attention to the classroom caring space (if you made one) and ask participants to bless it specifically to honor the work that was done to make it and the joys and concerns that are shared there.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- What Freeze Dance songs did participants think had the biggest feelings? Which songs did they like the most?
- How did it feel to get to bless the room? Should you use bubbles more in your classroom space?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Hospitality Session 1: “Welcome Detectives” Scavenger Hunt

Session Theme: Communities practice welcome together by helping members and visitors feel safe, comfortable, and included.

Session Goal: To help participants see evidence of the community practicing welcome together

Session activity: “Welcome Detective” scavenger hunt

Notes:

In this session, participants will be going on a scavenger hunt to find symbols of welcome in your community. The main resource you’ll need is a space that contains a lot of these signs. In the congregation where I first designed and ran EPIC, our church social hall worked well. You could also do it in your religious education space.

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- A photo of a welcome mat
- A space where participants can do the scavenger hunt
- “Welcome Detective” scavenger hunt sheets (found at the end of the session)
- Writing utensils and clipboards so participants can mark off the scavenger hunt as they go

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Show participants the photo of a welcome mat and ask participants what it might be used for. (Possible answers: to wipe your feet before you come into the house; to tell people they're welcome in your house.)
- Confirm or say that one use of a welcome mat is to tell people

that they're welcome to come in. Ask the group where they've seen welcome mats before. Have they ever seen one here at church?

- Say that churches might not always have welcome mats, but they will have OTHER ways that show people they're welcome to come in. Say that when we're talking about welcoming others, what we're really talking about is helping people feel safe and comfortable and included. Another way to say this is to say that we provide hospitality.
- Say that today your class is going to look around the church for some ways that your community might provide hospitality to help all different kinds of people feel safe and comfortable and included.
- Hand out scavenger hunt sheets and bring participants to the place you'll be exploring together.

Activity: "Welcome Detective" scavenger hunt

- Ask participants to look around the room and check off the things they find in the room. (If you have enough participants, you can break up the group into teams and have them supervised by a volunteer.) Volunteers can help with reading if necessary.
- As the group is searching for signs of hospitality, notice some of them aloud. (For example, you can notice a Pride flag and wonder who the flag might be helping to feel welcome.)
- Continue searching until as many items as possible have been crossed off the scavenger hunt list.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- What kinds of things did participants see that help people feel welcome, safe, and included?

- Did they see some things that weren't on the scavenger hunt list?
- Were there things that weren't on the list? What do they think about that?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Hospitality Session 1

Welcome Detective Scavenger Hunt

Find...

- Something that would help new kids feel welcome
- Something that would help people know this is a Unitarian Universalist church
- Something that makes our church accessible to people with disabilities
- Something that would help people with food allergies know it's safe to eat here
- Something that would help someone with two moms or two dads know that they're welcome
- Something that would help a person of color know they're welcome here
- Something that would help people if they were new and didn't know where to go
- Something that shows people we're a community that cares for each other
- Something that would help a person understand what our church values or thinks is important
- Something that welcomes all genders

EPIC Hospitality Session 2: Meet a Greeter

Session Theme: One of the ways that communities provide hospitality is by having people volunteer to welcome people.

Session Goal: To help participants understand what it means to be a greeter and offer hospitality.

Session activity: Interview with a greeter and amoeba tag.

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- A name tag or pin marked “greeter” or “usher” (if used in your congregation)
- One of your congregation’s frequent greeters or ushers
- A space big enough to play tag in
- Directions for amoeba tag (found [here](#))

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation’s traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- If one of your congregation's greeters or ushers is visiting your class, introduce that person. If not, move on to the next point.
- Show the greeter pin if you have one and wonder aloud to the group what someone called a greeter might do. What does it mean to greet someone? (possible answers: greeters say hello to people; greeters help people feel welcome.)
- Explain that many UU churches have people who volunteer to show hospitality to people when they come into the building.
- Remind the group that hospitality is when we help other people feel welcome, safe, and comfortable, and included
- If one of your congregation's greeters is visiting your class, ask that person to describe how they help show hospitality in that role. Allow the group to ask any questions they might have as well.

Activity: Amoeba Tag

- Tell participants that today they're going to get to practice showing hospitality in a fun way.
- Ask who has played tag before. Remind the group that when we play tag, the person who's "it" has a job: to catch others by touching them gently and getting them "out".
- Say that in church, we don't want to exclude anybody or have them be "out". We want everyone to be in, and there's a game for that: amoeba or blob tag.
- Explain the rules of amoeba tag (found above.)
- Play amoeba tag for as long as your session will allow.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- How did it feel to meet a greeter (if one visited today)?
- Do you think it would be fun to be a greeter sometimes?
- How does playing amoeba tag feel different from playing regular tag?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

EPIC Hospitality Session 3: Welcome Bags

Session Theme: Kids can offer hospitality!

Session Goal: To help participants deepen their understanding of hospitality by providing some for visitors.

Session activity: Decorate a welcome bag for kids who are new to church.

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- Newsprint or dry erase board for writing down ideas from the group
- Paper or cloth bags for kids to decorate
- Miscellaneous art supplies and fabric markers for decorating bags

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to

sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Wonder aloud to the group whether anyone has had a time when they felt really welcome and included in a new space—a new school or a new church. What helped them feel that way? Allow time for discussion.
- Remind the group that hospitality is when we help other people feel welcome, safe, comfortable, and included, and that lots of things can help with that. Name some things that have been lifted up by the group as examples of hospitality.
- Tell the group that sometimes we have kids with us in church that are visiting the community for the first time. Wonder what your class could do to help those kids feel welcome. Take suggestions from the group.
- Suggest that one thing you could do as a class is refurbish the fidget or activity bags your church already has (or, if your church doesn't have bags already, make new ones.) Say that bags like this can be a symbol for new kids that the church is excited for them to be there.

Activity: Hospitality bags

- Show participants the bags and art supplies you have available.

- Wonder out loud what kinds of things they could write or draw on the bags that would help other kids feel welcome. Take suggestions from the group.
- Have participants decorate the bags, assisting or answering questions as necessary.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have participants share their bags with the group if they choose.
- What was their vision?
- What kinds of things do participants think could go inside the bags?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Hospitality Session 4: Hospitality Team

Session Theme: Kids can work together to provide hospitality in our community.

Session Goal: To help participants deepen their understanding of hospitality by practicing it together.

Session activity: Role-play or draw hospitality scenarios OR do a multigenerational service with participants acting as ushers and greeters (described in the notes section below.)

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- Hospitality scenarios listed at the end of this session
- Enough volunteers to work with each pair or group of participants (If breaking up participants into groups to do roleplay scenarios)
- Comic book paper like **this** (if having participants draw versions of the hospitality scenarios)
- Markers, colored pencils, or other art supplies for drawing comics

Notes:

In the congregation where I developed EPIC, this session was actually a multigenerational service where participants practiced hospitality by acting as greeters and ushers, welcoming people into the sanctuary before worship and making sure that younger children and their caregivers had access to resources. If possible, I encourage you to do a service that will allow for this type of practice.

If doing this session as written, you can modify it to meet whatever the needs of your group are. Some groups really like roleplay and others prefer to engage by writing or drawing. Feel free to do whatever works best for your participants!

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Wonder aloud to the group whether anyone has ever had a time when they noticed another person feeling left out, sick, or sad and wanted to help but didn't know how. Ask the group for stories or examples of a

time when this happened to them.

- Explain that it's common for people to feel uncomfortable or unsure when it's time to offer hospitality. We might feel shy about it, or wonder if we're going to do or say the right thing. Even grownups feel that way sometimes!
- Remind participants that when we're talking about hospitality, we're talking about helping other people feel welcome, safe, comfortable, and included.
- Say that one way to feel more comfortable providing hospitality is to practice. In the same way that we might practice soccer drills to get ready for a game or play piano scales to prepare for a recital, we can practice being welcoming to others by making a plan for what we'll do if we ever notice someone in need of hospitality.
- Say that today, participants are going to get a chance to practice showing hospitality together by brainstorming what they would do to be welcoming in a few different situations.
- Ask the group if they'd rather do the roleplay situations through acting or pretending or if they'd rather draw them instead. Move forward as the group chooses or allow both options if you have enough volunteers to do both.

Activity: Hospitality Roleplay Scenarios

- Explain to participants that you have a few different situations for them to roleplay and talk about (or draw if they choose.)
- If participants are pairing up to roleplay, assign them an adult volunteer to support the pair in their conversation. Give the adult volunteer the list of hospitality scenarios and have them do them one at a time with their pair. (For accessibility, scenarios can be read

aloud if necessary.)

- If participants will be drawing comic versions of the hospitality scenarios, hand out comic paper and art supplies. Have a volunteer support these participants as necessary (by reading the prompts out loud, helping them brainstorm solutions, etc.)
- Engage with the scenarios for as much time as makes sense for your group.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have participants share how they handled particular scenarios. Was it easy or challenging to figure out what to do?
- Could any of the things participants drew or practiced together be added to what we do in class so that you could be providing hospitality all the time? How could those things be added?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Hospitality Session 4 Hospitality Scenarios

- Scenario: A new kid has come to church for the first time. How can you welcome them? Take turns being the new kid and the welcomer. Talk about how it might feel to be new and what kinds of things might feel welcoming.

- Scenario: A new adult volunteer is helping out in your classroom for the first time and needs help understanding what you do in RE and where you keep supplies. Take turns being the new volunteer and the helper. Talk about how you might explain what RE is like for a person who's never done it before and/or brainstorm how you might organize supplies so that they're easy for new people to find.

- Scenario: A member of your class isn't feeling well today. What can you do to help? Take turns being the sick class member and the helper and brainstorm a plan that could be put in place in case anyone in class ever needs this kind of help.

- Scenario: One of the toddlers in your church nursery has lost sight of their caregiver during coffee hour and is feeling scared and lost. What can you do to help them? Take turns being the toddler and the helper and talk about what you could do. Have you ever been lost? How did it feel?

- Scenario: A member of your class is coming to church right from soccer practice and class has already started when they come in. What can you do to make sure they feel included? Take turns being the person who arrives late and the person who includes them. What actions do you take to be welcoming?

EPIC Hospitality Session 5: What Does Welcome Feel Like?

Session Theme: When we know how it feels to be welcome, we can help others feel welcome too.

Session Goal: To help participants reflect on what it feels like to feel welcome.

Session activity: Collaborate to make a welcome collage for your classroom.

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- Newsprint or dry erase board for writing down ideas from the group
- A roll of paper long and wide enough to cover a table, spread on table
- Painters tape to divide the paper into a working area for each participant (optional)
- Magazines that could be used for collage
- Scissors and glue sticks for collaging
- Miscellaneous art supplies

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Wonder aloud to participants how it feels in our bodies to feel welcome and included. Take suggestions from the group.
- Say that remembering how it feels to be welcome can help us be welcoming to others and can motivate us to provide hospitality to others. We want to make other people feel the way that we feel!
- Tell participants that one way to remember a feeling is to keep a symbol of that feeling in a place nearby so that it's easy to see or touch.
- Say that today participants are going to get the chance to work together to make a big collage for your classroom that will remind the class what it feels like to welcome and be welcomed.
- Tell the group that a collage is a piece of art made from different

- pictures and designs.

Activity: Welcome group collage

- Show participants the magazines and art supplies you have available for the collage and the table they'll be working at.
- Tell participants that they can use the magazines to find and cut out images that show what it feels to be welcomed. They can also draw their own pictures or write words on their portion of the collage.
- Have participants collaborate on the collage, helping or answering questions as necessary.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have participants share their portion of the collage the group if they choose.
- What was their vision? What images did they find that reminded them of what it feels to welcome and be welcomed?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Justice-Making Session 1: Community Superheroes

Session Theme: Justice starts right in our neighborhood.

Session Goal: To help participants consider what justice issues they think are important.

Session activity: Make a community superhero!

Resources needed:

- A copy of the book *They're Heroes Too: A Celebration of Community* by Pat Brisson and Anait Semirdzhyan (video version [here](#))
- Paper or cardboard person shapes (like [these](#))
- Markers and other art supplies for making superheroes
- A chalice for opening circle

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Read the story (or watch the video of) *They're Heroes Too: A Celebration of Community*.
- Ask participants what they noticed or liked about the book. Take responses.
- Say that one thing you noticed about the book was the illustration of the people with signs. Wonder aloud what participants think was happening in that illustration.
- Confirm or say that the people in the illustration have gathered to support their community in caring for the earth. They want JUSTICE for the earth and all the people who live here.
- Say that when we talk about justice, we're talking about working to make the world a fair and loving place for all the creatures who live here. Justice can start with small actions in our own neighborhood, with noticing that things AREN'T fair or equal or loving and working to fix those things.
- Tell participants that the people in the books are heroes because they are doing the small actions that can lead to justice for everyone. And they (participants) can be heroes, too!

Activity: Community Superheroes

- Tell participants that today they're going to have the chance to make their own community superhero.
- Wonder out loud what kinds of superheroes they could make. What loving actions for justice could their superheroes engage in? What would their superhero's name be? Brainstorm together.
- Show participants the cardboard people and other supplies and invite them to make their superhero.
- Have participants make their superheroes.
- Participants may need help getting started or may need assistance with some of the more complicated aspects of a design. Volunteers can make themselves available to help and to chat with participants about what they're making.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have participants share their superheroes with the group if they choose.
- What was their vision? What supplies did they use?
- What kinds of things do participants think could go inside the bags?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

EPIC Justice-Making Session 2: Social Justice Simon Says

Session Theme: There are many ways to engage in justice-making!

Session Goal: To help participants deepen their understanding of social justice movements and terms through play.

Session activity: Social Justice Simon Says

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- Script for Social Justice Simon Says (found at the end of this session)

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Wonder aloud to the group if anyone has ever heard the words "social justice" before. Does anyone have ideas about what they may mean? Take responses.
- Remind the group we talk about social justice, we're talking about working to make the world a fair and loving place for all the creatures who live here.
- Say that there are lots of social justice movements, or groups of people who are working to make change so that things are fair and equal for everyone. Wonder aloud if anybody can think of one kind of
- Suggest that one thing you could do as a class is refurbish the fidget or activity bags your church already has (or, if your church doesn't have bags already, make new ones.) Say that bags like this can be a symbol for new kids that the church is excited for them to be there.

Activity: Social Justice Simon Says

- Say that today you're going to play a game that will help the group learn a little bit more about social justice.
- Wonder aloud if anyone has ever played Simon Says.
- Say that this game is like Simon Says, but it's a little different. (If participants seem excited about playing traditional Simon Says, tell them the group can play it after they play this version.)

- In this version of Simon Says, Simon (played first by you, the facilitator) will ask the group to do certain things, but no one will be “out.” Instead, you’ll pause so that you can learn together about what the movement means.
- To extend the activity, when you’re done playing Simon Says participants can try to do the whole sequence of justice movements together, moving faster and faster each time.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- How did it feel to play this kind of Simon Says?
- What was one thing participants learned or thought was interesting?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

EPIC Justice-Making Session 2

Social Justice Simon Says

This version of Simon Says helps familiarize participants with social justice terms in a concrete, movement-based way. As in traditional Simon Says, Simon gives the group actions to perform. Unlike in traditional Simon Says, no one is “out” if they don’t perform a particular motion. Instead, after they perform each motion, participants learn a little bit about what social justice concept the motion is related to.

Feel free to add your own motions and explanations to this list or to modify any motions for accessibility!

1. Simon says, “Spread your arms wide!”

Say: when we’re talking about social justice, we’re talking about fairness not just for one group, but for everyone.

2. Simon says, “Jump in the air!”

Say: The belief that the planet should have clean air (and water!) is called climate or environmental justice. Lots of people are working together to make sure that our planet stays clean and safe for everyone.

3. Simon says, “Move two spaces forward.”

Say: One of the ways that people work together for justice is by going to marches or rallies. Marches are like parades that happen in support of a certain issue. People move forward together singing or chanting to help members of the community understand why the issue they care about is important. Has anyone here ever marched for justice?

4. Simon says, “Spin around in a circle.”

Say: When people are working for justice, what they’re trying to do is make change. We might think of this as changing people’s minds around when it comes to a certain issue.

5. Simon says, "Raise your hand."

Say: Believing that everyone has a right to go to school and learn is called education justice.

6. Simon says, "Wave a flag!"

Say: Many justice movements use symbols like flags to call attention to issues they care about. Can anyone think of a social justice movement that uses a flag?

7. Simon says, "Reach down to the ground."

Say: Sometimes people will use the words "grassroots movement" when they're talking about social justice. A grassroots movement is one that starts in tiny ways with regular people. It can grow slowly like grass grows, but it can also make a lot of change!

8. Simon says, "Sit down."

Say: Many social justice movements have used sit-ins to call attention to social justice issues they care about. A sit-in is a peaceful protest where people sit and wait for long periods of time to call attention to a social justice issue they care about, like ending discrimination.

9. Simon says, put your hands over your heart.

Say: The belief that all people should have the right to find a safe place to live is called immigration justice.

10. Simon says, put your hands over your heart.

Say: sometimes people get involved in justice work because they feel angry that not everyone is getting what they need. That anger can motivate them to help make changes so the world is more just for everyone!

EPIC Justice Making Session 3: Builders of Justice

Session Theme: Kids can help others understand what justice-making is!

Session Goal: To help participants deepen their understanding of justice-making by building physical representations of social justice vocabulary terms.

Session activity: Lego builds for justice

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- Legos (including a flat base plate like [this](#) for every participant or group)
- Index cards with social justice vocabulary on them (from the list included at the end of this session OR brainstormed by you)

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Ask the group to imagine that an alien named Zog has come to visit your RE classroom. Zog has come to Earth to learn how the creatures who live here take care of each other, and they're asking your class to help explain how that happens.
- Ask the group: if you were going to help Zog understand how we care and make justice for each other, what would be the most important things for them to know? Take responses from the group.
- Say that Zog hasn't been on Earth for very long and is still learning how to communicate. They speak enough English to be able to ask questions, but not enough to understand your explanations.
- Ask the group how they could make things accessible for Zog and explain things in ways they can understand. Brainstorm some options together. (Possibilities: show Zog photos of people caring for each other; draw pictures; use sign language or other gestures.)
- Show the group the bin of legos you have available for them and wonder aloud if participants could help Zog understand their explanations by creating builds that show the things they want to

explain.

Activity: Lego Builds for Justice

- Tell participants that they can either work alone or in pairs or groups.
- Show participants the cards with justice terms and definitions on them, and ask each participant or group of participants to choose one at random.
- If participants need help reading the cards, help them do that.
- Tell participants to build a scene with the legos that could help Zog understand what each justice term means.
- Have participants build scenes, assisting or answering questions as necessary.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have participants share their builds with the group if they choose.
- What was their vision? What do they hope their builds help Zog understand about justice?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

explain.

Activity: Lego Builds for Justice

- Tell participants that they can either work alone or in pairs or groups.
- Show participants the cards with justice terms and definitions on them, and ask each participant or group of participants to choose one at random.
- If participants need help reading the cards, help them do that.
- Tell participants to build a scene with the legos that could help Zog understand what each justice term means.
- Have participants build scenes, assisting or answering questions as necessary.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have participants share their builds with the group if they choose.
- What was their vision? What do they hope their builds help Zog understand about justice?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

explain.

Activity: Lego Builds for Justice

- Tell participants that they can either work alone or in pairs or groups.
- Show participants the cards with justice terms and definitions on them, and ask each participant or group of participants to choose one at random.
- If participants need help reading the cards, help them do that.
- Tell participants to build a scene with the legos that could help Zog understand what each justice term means.
- Have participants build scenes, assisting or answering questions as necessary.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have participants share their builds with the group if they choose.
- What was their vision? What do they hope their builds help Zog understand about justice?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

Epic Justice-Making Session 3

Social Justice Terms and Definitions

Fairness: Treating everyone in a way that is right and just, giving everyone what they need to be successful.

Equality: Making sure everyone has the same opportunities and rights.

Respect: Treating others with kindness and consideration, valuing their feelings and opinions.

Inclusion: Making sure everyone feels welcome and part of the group, no matter who they are.

Diversity: Having people who are different from each other in a group. This could include different skin colors, genders, ages, or abilities.

Rights: Things everyone should have or be able to do, like going to school and being safe.

Justice: Making sure things are fair and right for everyone.

Empathy: Understanding and caring about how someone else feels.

Ally: A person who helps and supports someone else, especially someone who is being treated unfairly.

Activism: Taking action to make things fairer and better for everyone.
Community: A group of people who live or work together and help each other.

Kindness: Being friendly, generous, and considerate to others.

EPIC Justice Making Session 4: Makerspace Water Filters

Session Theme: We all have moral imagination, which can help us make justice

Session Goal: To help participants understand how creative solutions to problems that affect the creatures of the world can help to make justice for all.

Session activity: Makerspace water filtration prototypes

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- Makerspace materials (Small cardboard boxes and other recyclables like bottles and straws; various forms of tape and glue, other loose parts)
- Miscellaneous art supplies

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to

sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Ask the group what it means to imagine something. Take responses.
- Confirm or say that when we imagine things, we think of new ideas, dream up stories, or picture things in our mind that aren't real yet.
- Say that in the same way we can dream up stories, we can also dream up ways to help other people. We do this with a special kind of imagination called moral imagination.
- Say that our moral imagination helps us understand what it's like to be someone else and think of ways to make the world better for them.
- Explain that making the world better for people is called justice-making. As Unitarian Universalists, we care a lot about justice-making and believe anyone can do it, even kids!
- Say that justice-making starts with moral imagination—with dreaming up ways that we could help solve problems that make life harder for people than it needs to be, like not having clean water to drink.
- Say that we can imagine what it might be like not to have clean water to drink, and we can imagine how that might feel, so we might be

- inspired to help solve the problem of unclean drinking water by trying to design a tool like a filter that could help make water cleaner.
- Say that in order to come up with a water filter that might actually work, we'd probably need to play around with a lot of different ideas and try a lot of things to see what might work. We might make a simple "first try" version of the filter to see if our ideas are on the right track.
- Say that this is our makerspace challenge today: to build a "first try" version of a tool that could make water cleaner.

Activity: Makerspace Water Filter Prototypes

- Show participants the makerspace materials that are available to them.
- Brainstorm together how the materials could be used to design a tool that could make water cleaner. Reinforce for participants that these are "first try" versions of the tool and they don't need to be perfect—they're just a way to play around with ideas that might work.
- Have participants work on their water filters.
- Participants may need help getting started or may need assistance with some of the more complicated aspects of a design. Volunteers can make themselves available to help and to chat with participants about what they're making.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have participants share creations with the group if they choose.
- What was their vision? What supplies did they use?

How did their moral imagination help them think up ideas?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Justice Making Session 5: Signs of Justice

Session Theme: What kids care about matters!

Session Goal: To help participants reflect on the social justice issues they care about.

Session activity: Make a poster lifting up a social justice issue you care about, either big or small.

Resources needed:

- A chalice for opening circle
- 2 - 5 symbols from social justice movements a Pride flags, a climate justice bumper sticker, a Black Lives Matter pin, etc.)
- Pieces of poster board for poster making
- Markers and other art supplies for making posters

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to

sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Tell participants that you have a group of objects and you need a little help figuring out what they might mean.
- Show the group each object in turn and wonder aloud what they might be trying to help other people understand. Take suggestions from the group and ask why a person might wear the symbol, have it on their car, etc.
- Clarify each object's meaning for the group (e.g., "I think you're right—this is a Black Lives Matter pin. People might wear it to show that they're working to make the world a more fair and just place for Black people.)
- Remind participants that when we talk about justice, we're talking about working to make the world a fair and loving place for all the creatures who live here.
- Tell the group that wearing social justice symbols is a way to help tell other people what justice issues you care about and the work you want to do to make the world a little better.

- Say that different people care about different issues, and that kids might care about different issues than grownups do.
- Say that grownups really want to know what kids care about: what they think is unfair, what they want to change, how they think the world could be made better. Grownups want to help kids with the things they care about so that together we can make a meaningful difference in the world.

Activity: Social Justice Posters

- Explain to participants that today they're going to get a chance to show grownups what they care about.
- Show participants the poster board and art supplies you have available.
- Wonder out loud what kinds of issues they could make posters about. Brainstorm some options together.
- Have participants make posters, answering questions or assisting when needed.

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have participants share their posters with the group if they choose.
- What was their vision? What do they hope their posters communicate to others?

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Worship Session 1: Treasure Hunt Service

Session theme: Worship is something we co-create together as a community. We can all take part!

Session goal: To help kids engage in worship with the full community

Session activity: Treasure Hunt multigen service

Resources needed:

- Containers in which to hide parts of the worship service (plastic Easter eggs or craft store treasure boxes like **these** work well):
- Slips of paper with service elements written on them (to go inside the containers)
- Fidget toys and stickers to go inside the treasure boxes that do not contain service elements (optional but fun, especially for a holiday service)
- Simplified worship elements (with fewer words, etc.) to allow for younger participants to participate more easily
- Optional materials to help children and others engage with worship: coloring pages, chenille stems / pipe cleaners, etc.

Notes: Although I provide a sample order of service below, The treasure hunt method doesn't require its own order of service and can be used as part of any multigenerational, child-friendly worship service.

In a treasure hunt service, pieces of the service (the chalice lighting, a reading, etc.) are hidden around the worship space for participants to find. Worship leaders can increase or decrease the number of hidden elements as they plan

the service in order to meet the needs of participants, but I recommend hiding a minimum of between 5-7 boxes.

Close to the beginning of the service, participants are asked to hunt for containers in which pieces of the service are hidden. As the service moves along, worship leaders will pause at those places in the worship script marked *Hidden* to ask who found that piece of the service. The person or group who found the container will do that part of the service, either from their seats using a hand mic or from the front of the room.

Sample Treasure Hunt Order of Service

Concept developed by J.L. Shattuck and Rev. Monica-Jacobson-Tennessee

Music for Gathering

Welcome and introduction to the treasure hunt service

Introduction script: Today is a special service that we call a Treasure Hunt Sunday. On Treasure Hunt Sundays, everyone here gets the opportunity to create worship together. Hidden all around the room are containers like these <lift up sample container> that have pieces of the service inside. If you find a box that has a slip of paper inside, you'll have the chance to do the piece of the service that's written on the piece of paper. You can either do so alone or with a group

Treasure hunt time (with music)

Opening words – *Hidden*

Chalice Lighting – *Hidden* (in two pieces: lighting the chalice is hidden separately from saying the chalice lighting words)

Hymn

Sample Treasure Hunt Order of Service (continued)

Time for All Ages (Wonder Box volunteer – Hidden)

Offering and Offertory (Ushers may be hidden if you choose)

Words of Thanks – Hidden

Joys and concerns

Hymn

Sharing of Silence

Reading – Hidden

Sermon

Hymn

Closing words – Hidden

Music for Departing

EPIC Worship Session 2: Makerspace Worship Accessories

Session theme: In the same way painters use paintbrushes as tools to make art, congregations will use certain tools or accessories to create worship together

Session goal: To help participants understand worship through the physical tools the community uses to engage in it, and to increase their familiarity with those tools.

Session activity: Makerspace Worship Accessories

Resources needed:

- Chalice for chalice lighting
- Set of objects used in worship (hymnal, order of service, etc.)
- Makerspace materials (Small cardboard boxes and other recyclables, various forms of tape and glue, other loose parts)

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Remind participants that there are times when kids and adults worship together. In some congregations, kids might be in the service every week; in others they may participate only sometimes.
- Ask the group to share their memories of objects they've seen used in worship (possible answers: candles, hymnals, orders of service, fidget toys).
- As the objects are named, take them out of the box of objects you've pre-gathered and pass them around. Talk briefly about what each object might be used for.
- Explain that in the same way painters use brushes to make art, church communities will use these objects to make worship together: to sing, to learn, etc.
- Tell participants that today, they're going to have their own chance to make their own worship accessories with the makerspace materials provided

Makerspace Activity: Worship accessories

- Brainstorm briefly together about things it might be possible to make
- Participants may need help getting started or may need assistance with some of the more complicated aspects of a design. Volunteers can make themselves available to help and to chat with participants about what they're making

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have kids share their worship accessories with the group if they wish
- What was their vision or idea?
- What supplies did they use to complete the project?
- How could this object be used in our class?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

Reflection / Sharing (optional if time allows)

- Have kids share their worship accessories with the group if they wish
- What was their vision or idea?
- What supplies did they use to complete the project?
- How could this object be used in our class?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love

EPIC Worship Session 3: Building Worship

Session theme: The elements of worship are like blocks that fit together to form a structure. We can all help build worship together!

Session goal: To help participants understand how the pieces of worship fit together to form a whole service.

Session activity: Building a worship service

Resources needed:

- Chalice for chalice lighting
- One set of plastic interlocking blocks (like Duplo or similar) marked with worship elements <see illustration on page 14> for each participant, prepared ahead of session
- Order of service for a recent worship service
- Extra adult volunteers who can thought-partner with / guide participants in building their service

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing)

motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Can be five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Remind participants that you've been learning about worship together.
- Ask participants to share their memories of things that they've noticed happening in worship (possible answers: we light the chalice; we listen to music; we hear a story; we put money in the offering plate)
- Show participants the order of service and notice together that many of the things they've noticed happening in worship are listed there. Explain that the order of service is made by the worship leaders of the service (often the minister and music director, but sometimes others). Wonder aloud how worship leaders decide what gets included in the order of service.
- Tell them that just like you can build a tower out of blocks, you can build a worship service out of these elements. Worship leaders are worship builders—just like you get to decide where different blocks go in a tower, worship leaders decide where worship elements go.
- Show participants the stack of blocks made from worship elements. Explain that services are usually made from certain blocks—there's

- almost always music, for example, and a time when we learn something new together (called a sermon.)
- Explain that some elements (like the welcome) tend to stay where they are to help people understand what will be happening. (You can move the welcome block to the bottom of the stack and talk about how silly it would be to welcome people at the END of a service!) Say that other blocks, like the music and the sermon, can be moved around any way the worship leaders choose.
- Tell participants that worship leaders also get to choose what the service is ABOUT: they get to choose the music and what the sermon (or learning time) will teach
- Tell participants that today THEY get to be the worship builders. Working alone or in pairs or groups, they can build a service out of from the group of worship blocks provided to them

Building Activity: Worship Stacks

- Ask participants to decide if they'd like to work with a partner or group
- Hand out sets of worship blocks to participants (one set per group working together)
- If you have enough volunteers, assign each group of participants a volunteer who can thought-partner with them about what their service might include. What order will their service go in? What music would they include? Would it be hymns or pop music? What would they like to teach the congregation?

Note: If you don't have enough volunteers, you can move from group to group to thought-partner with / guide them on these questions.

Sharing / Reflection questions (optional if time allows):

- Have kids share their worship stacks. What did they include or not include?
- What kinds of music would they want the congregation to hear?
- What would they like to teach the congregation about?

Would anyone / any group be interested in helping to run a class session about the topic they want to teach? (If yes, connect with participant(s) after class or during coffee hour. If no, you can choose one of the topics brainstormed during this reflection period and build a session around that.

I'll provide details for both options in the notes for the next session.

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love



Illustration: Blocks marked with Worship Elements

EPIC Worship Session 4: Taught By Me!

Session Theme: Adults aren't the only ones who can create times for learning —kids can too!

Session goal: To help participants understand that THEY (and not just ministers and religious educators) can be teachers

Session activity: Activity related to the participant-leader (or group's) topic of choice

Notes:

This session is much more flexible (and less scripted) than others because it's based on the desires and inclinations of the particular group of participants.

I have done this session in two ways: either in consultation with a participant-leader who has volunteered to help teach, or by choosing a topic the group has told me they're interested in and having the group help teach adult volunteers about the topic together using a question-and-answer format during opening circle.

If doing the session with a child participant-leader who's comfortable speaking in front of the class, I have met with them and their caregiver(s) briefly during coffee hour a week or two before the session they'd be teaching to talk to them about their topic and help them choose their activity. Unless the participant-leader is really eager to write their own brief presentation about the topic they'll be teaching, I explain that they can teach the class about their topic (owls, for example) by answering interview questions from me like "What's one thing you really like about owls?" and "What's an important thing for the class to know about owls?" I then ask them whether they want the class to do a game activity or an art activity related to the topic so that I can prepare the activity ahead of time. I invite participant-leaders to bring in any objects or resources related to

If doing the session based on a topic brainstormed by the group (Minecraft, for example), I use the same question-and-answer format described above and have the class teach me about it, popcorn-style, as a group. Then I transition them into an activity based on that topic.

Resources needed:

- Chalice for chalice lighting
- List of interview questions about the participant-leader or group's chosen topic (found at the end of the session)
- Instructions for a game or activity related to the topic
- Supplies for a game or activity related to the topic
- Optional: books, coloring sheets or other resources related to the topic

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation's traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let's start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it's always okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say "I pass".

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Remind participants that every week at church, there's a time for the community to learn something new together. For grownups, this time is usually called the sermon, and it's the part of the worship service where the minister (or another grownup) teaches.
- Tell participants that kids also have a learning time, and it's called (RE / Spiritual Exploration / whatever you call your Sunday morning classes.) Wonder what kinds of things participants have learned in church lately and allow participants to share.
- Say that while grownups usually do the teaching during the sermon and RE, teaching is also something kids can do.
- If the session is being led by a participant, introduce today's special guest and ask them to tell the group what they'll be teaching about.

If having the group teach, remind them that a lot of them were excited to teach the grownups in the room about <topic of their choice>. Say that you're going to ask them some questions about the topic so that you can all learn about it together.

- If the participant-leader has chosen to teach via the question and answer format, tell the group and participant-leader that you're going

to ask some questions about the topic so that we can all learn together

If having the group teach, say that you're going to ask them some questions about the topic so that you can learn about it. Say that you're going to do this popcorn style, which means that if they have information about the topic that they want to share, they can "pop" their hand up and you will call on them.

- Ask as many questions from the question list as the participant-leader and/or group can tolerate (probably somewhere between 2 and 5.)
- Tell participants that to help us learn even more about the topic, you're going to play a game or do an art / makerspace project related to the session topic.

Activity: Game or project related to the session topic

- Explain the rules of the game you'll be playing OR show participants the makerspace / art supplies that are available and explain the project.
- Play game together OR support participants in doing the art / makerspace project.

Reflection questions (optional):

- How did it feel to have a turn to teach?
- Would anybody else like a turn to teach or have any ideas about other topics the group could learn about together?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck
Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space
With open hearts
To do the work of love

Interview Questions for EPIC Worship Session 4

- What do you really like about <topic>?
- When did you first get really interested in <topic>?
- What's the most interesting thing you know about <topic>?
- What do you think makes <topic> fun to learn about?
- If we wanted to learn more about <topic>, what are some good places to do that?

EPIC Worship Session 5: Kids' Annual Meeting

Session Theme: Community members have a say in what happens in the community (including kids!)

Session goal: To help participants understand why and how UU communities have annual meeting

Session activity: Catch and Answer game AND snowball voting

Resources needed:

- Lunch or snacks if taking place during an after-church meeting
- Writing utensils for casting votes
- Supplies for Catch and Answer (game instructions found below in the activity section of the session):
- A space large enough for participants to throw or kick a ball
- A soccer ball marked with numbers 1-20 on the white patches (you can do this with tape if you don't want to write directly on the ball)
- Question cards marked 1-20 to match up with the numbers. Cards can ask questions like "What supplies do you think we need more of in our makerspace?", "What is a part of church you like a lot?"**, or "if you could add one thing to our classroom, what would it be?"

** I tend to avoid "favorite" questions (like "what is your favorite part of church?") because some kids feel too pressured by that word to be able to answer in the moment. Instead of asking "favorites" questions, I rephrase them to ask about things they enjoy instead, because there are many possibilities there.

- Supplies for snowball voting:
 - 2 to 3 questions yes-or-no related to your program for participants to vote on. These could be serious (“The church playground is getting kind of messy. Should we have a “playground cleanup day next year?”) or silly (“Would a talking chocolate chip cookie be a good mascot for our class?”)
 - Enough pieces of green paper (for a yes vote) and red paper (for a no vote) for participants to vote on each question
 - A container for participants to throw their snowball votes in

Opening Circle: Chalice Lighting / Check-in / Joys and Concerns / Wonder Time

Chalice Lighting

Use your congregation’s traditional chalice lighting OR use these words by J.L. Shattuck:

We light this chalice

For the spark of truth we carry (hands cupped at chest as though carrying a flame)

For the love we bring to share (extend hands out from chest in sharing motion)

And for the sacred space we create here together (hold hands out to sides as though holding hands with others in the circle)

Check-in / Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Use these words to introduce the ritual:

Let’s start our sharing circle by saying our names and sharing any joys and concerns we might have brought with us. Remember that it’s always

okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say “I pass”.

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Remind participants that every year, your congregation has an annual meeting—if a meeting is annual, it means it happens every year. If the meeting is today or this session is taking place during the meeting, remind participants of that as well.
- Ask if anyone knows what happens at annual meeting (possible answers: people vote, people make decisions, etc.)
- Explain that the annual meeting is a chance for the community to decide things like what to keep doing or what to stop doing, what kinds of things we could change to make our community better for everyone, or how to spend money or use other resources.
- Tell participants that today we’re going to have our own annual meeting just like the one that’s happening upstairs / in the church social hall / etc. They’re going to be able to share their own ideas about church and vote on what to do in the future.

Game Activities: Catch and Answer game and/or Snowball Voting

Instructions for Catch and Answer:

- Have participants stand or sit in a circle (whichever works best for accessibility needs)
- Tell participants that you’re going to play a game that will help us share our thoughts and feelings about what we did together this year.

okay to say your name and not share, or to simply say “I pass”.

Wonder Time (Five minutes or less, based on the amount of discussion the group can tolerate)

- Remind participants that every year, your congregation has an annual meeting—if a meeting is annual, it means it happens every year. If the meeting is today or this session is taking place during the meeting, remind participants of that as well.
- Ask if anyone knows what happens at annual meeting (possible answers: people vote, people make decisions, etc.)
- Explain that the annual meeting is a chance for the community to decide things like what to keep doing or what to stop doing, what kinds of things we could change to make our community better for everyone, or how to spend money or use other resources.
- Tell participants that today we’re going to have our own annual meeting just like the one that’s happening upstairs / in the church social hall / etc. They’re going to be able to share their own ideas about church and vote on what to do in the future.

Game Activities: Catch and Answer game and/or Snowball Voting

Instructions for Catch and Answer:

- Have participants stand or sit in a circle (whichever works best for accessibility needs)
- Tell participants that you’re going to play a game that will help us share our thoughts and feelings about what we did together this year.

- Explain how to play Catch and Answer: show participants the soccer ball and point out that the white patches on the ball have numbers on them. Say that each number matches a question about what we've done together and read a sample question if you choose. Tell participants that together you're going to gently toss or kick the ball around the circle. When participants get the ball, they can pick the number they see first or (or choose a number that hasn't been chosen yet) and have the opportunity to answer that question. Explain that you'll go around enough times for everyone to answer a question.

Instructions for snowball voting:

- Tell participants that they're going to get to vote on some questions related to the program. Say that these votes will help the adults who lead the program decide what to do or not do in the future.
- Explain that we're going to vote in a fun way, using snowballs (crumpled up pieces of paper.)
- Show participants a piece of green paper and a piece of red paper and explain that the green paper will be a yes vote and the red paper will be a no vote.
- Hand out enough sets of ballots (i.e., pieces of red and green paper) that participants can vote on each question. Ask them to crumple up their sheets of paper into "snowballs".
- Read each ballot question one at a time. Invite discussion on each question if you choose.
- After participants have had the chance to discuss the question, ask them to throw their green (yes) or red (no) vote into the voting container.

Have a volunteer (child or adult) count the yes vs. no votes. See who won!

Reflection questions (optional, if time):

- How did it feel to get to vote?
- Do we think we should continue having kids' annual meeting every year?

Closing words / song – Use the same closing words every week

Encourage the group to say this together.

Closing words by J.L. Shattuck

Optional tune by J.L. Shattuck (linked [here](#))

We leave this space

With open hearts

To do the work of love