

WHAT WE CHOOSE: ETHICS FOR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

A Tapestry of Faith Program for Adults



BY AMBER BELAND AND MANISH MISHRA-MARZETTI; DEVELOPMENTAL EDITOR, GAIL FORSYTH-VAIL

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PREFACE

We are regularly faced with moral choices, big and small. How should we respond to a tricky family or relationship situation? What is the right thing to do when faced with a dilemma at work? What is the most ethical course for a community, state, or nation to follow, and how much am I prepared to invest in advocating for that course? How does morality or ethics enter my food and eating choices? How should morality or ethics enter my consumer decisions? How do we treat others? What must I do to follow the values of my Unitarian Universalist faith tradition?

Unitarian Universalism is a faith of deeds, not creeds. We believe our choices and actions matter. We believe the measure of our religion is the way we live our faith in our day-to-day lives. But how do we decide what course of action to follow when a situation is complex and the moral course is unclear? Where do we turn for guidance that will help us fulfill our own wish to live a moral life? This program invites participants to focus attention on the moral and ethical questions that arise or have arisen in their lives, including challenges not yet perceived or acknowledged, and explore the ethical frameworks that can help in sorting through a dilemma.

This program, like all Tapestry of Faith programs, is based on stories, including stories from participants' personal lives, stories of people, congregations, and organizations at moments of decision, and complex real life scenarios. It offers discussion, reflection, experiential learning, community building, and suggestions for justice-making activities that bring Unitarian Universalist religious ethics to bear in the community and the wider world. May it be a useful tool for Unitarian Universalists who wish to live their values and their faith more fully.

Gail Forsyth-Vail, Developmental Editor

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THE PROGRAM

A people and their religion must be judged by social standards based on social ethics. No other standard would have any meaning if religion is held to be a necessary good for the well-being of the people. — B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), Indian jurist, philosopher, writer, orator, and civil rights activist who fought against the Hindu caste system

Unitarian Universalism is grounded in the understanding that our actions speak louder than our words or beliefs. Faithful living for us includes discerning the course of action that best reflects our beliefs and values and then acting or choosing accordingly. As inheritors of a faith tradition that honors a wide variety of sources of religious understanding and authority, our big questions are: How do we discern the moral course of action in a particular circumstance? To what source(s) of authority do we turn for help—personal experience, community wisdom, conscience, religious texts, the words and deeds of prophetic people, reason, science, God? If we are intentional in developing a personal ethical framework to live by, then the behavioral choices we make and the actions we do or do not take can reflect our most deeply held values.

Development, clarification, refinement, and expansion of our ethical thinking often occur in the midst of crisis or in response to an event or relationship that calls our world view into question. However, this program offers an intentional process of engagement with others in examining ethical concepts, dilemmas, and questions to help participants clarify and expand their ethical understanding independent of a personal crisis. Participants examine how they have arrived at ethical positions that they hold dear. They explore new perspectives, identify areas for further questions and exploration, and perhaps more fully embrace ethical positions they reach through careful discernment. This program will deepen and expand participants' knowledge and skills for a process of ethical reflection that is central to living our Unitarian Universalist faith.

This program uses the words ethics and morality. While often used interchangeably, the two words point to different ways of describing the choices we make. Morality has to do with adherence to behavioral codes that come from religion or philosophy. Ethics describes the obligations we have to one another and to the natural world and the behaviors dictated by those obligations. Morality refers to rules of right conduct while ethics refers to a system of moral principles.

GOALS

- Introduce different philosophical frameworks for ethics

- Engage participants to work with ethical dilemmas as presented in scenarios and stories
- Guide participants to examine their own ethical and moral frameworks and clarify and expand them after reflecting on different perspectives
- Deeply ground participants in their faith through exploration of Unitarian Universalist values and ethical ideas
- Build participants' capacity to live more fully as Unitarian Universalists by enhancing their understanding and skills for applying ethical frameworks to their lives.

LEADERS

A team of two or more adults, either lay leaders or religious professionals, should facilitate these workshops. While consistent leadership offers many advantages, the same facilitators need not lead every workshop.

Knowledge of ethics frameworks is helpful, but not required to effectively lead this program. Seek leaders who are:

- Knowledgeable about Unitarian Universalism
- Committed to the Unitarian Universalist Principles, the congregation, and the faith development components of this program
- Willing and able to thoroughly prepare for each workshop
- Effective at speaking, teaching, and facilitating group process
- Flexible, and willing to modify workshop plans to support the full inclusion of all participants
- Able to listen deeply and to encourage participation of all individuals
- Able to demonstrate respect for individuals, regardless of age, race/ethnicity, social class, gender identity, and sexual orientation
- Able to honor the life experiences each participant will bring to the program.

PARTICIPANTS

This program is intended for adults. The workshops are equally suitable for first-time visitors and long-time Unitarian Universalists.

Workshops can accommodate any number of participants. Workshops of fewer than six can do small group activities in the full group, or skip some small group activities. If the group has more than 25, you will need at least three facilitators.

INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

People with obvious and not-so-obvious disabilities may need accommodation in order to participate fully. In addition to accommodating the accessibility needs of participants who request them, you are urged to follow these basic Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters:

- Prepare a few large-print copies of all handouts.
- Write clearly and use large letters on newsprint. Use black or brown markers for maximum visibility (red and green are difficult for some to see).
- Make a handout of information you plan to post on newsprint, to give to any who request it.
- Face the group when you are speaking and urge others to do the same. Be aware of facial hair or hand gestures that may prevent or interfere with lip reading.
- In a large space or with a large group of people, use a microphone for presentations and for questions and answers. If a particular activity will likely make it difficult for speakers to face those who are listening (e.g., a fishbowl, forced choice, or role-play activity), obtain a microphone you can pass from speaker to speaker.
- In a brainstorm activity, repeat clearly any word or phrase generated by the group in addition to writing it on newsprint.
- When the group will listen to material read aloud, be ready to provide printed copies to any hearing-impaired participants so they can read along.
- During small group work, maximize space between groups to minimize noise interference.
- Offer a variety of seating options—for example, straight chairs, soft chairs, chairs with arms, and chairs without arms—so participants can find seating that best suits their needs.
- Keep aisles and doorways clear at all times during a workshop so people with mobility impairments or immediate needs can exit the room easily. When re-arranging furniture for small groups or other purposes, ensure clear pathways between groups. Enlist participants' vigilance in removing bags, books, coffee cups, and other obstacles from pathways.
- Use the phrase "Rise in body or spirit" rather than "Please stand."
- Use language that puts the person first, rather than the disability—for example, "a person who uses a wheelchair," rather than "a wheelchair-

user"; "a child with dyslexia," rather than "a dyslexic child; "people with disabilities" rather than "the disabled."

- Do not ask individuals to read aloud. Request volunteers or read the material yourself. When possible, ask for volunteers before the workshop and give each volunteer a copy of the material they will read.
- Ask participants in advance about any food allergies. Add to your group covenant an agreement to avoid bringing problem foods, or to always offer an alternate snack.
- Ask participants in advance about any allergies to scents or perfumes. If participants have allergies or sensitivities, invite members of the group to refrain from wearing perfumes and add this agreement to your covenant.

The Unitarian Universalist Association website and staff can offer guidance for including people with specific disabilities; consult the [Accessibility page](http://www.uua.org/accessibility/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/accessibility/index.shtml) on the UUA website.

Participants bring a wide range of learning styles and preferences. With this in mind, the workshops offer a variety of activities. Review each workshop's Alternate Activities. Plan each workshop to best suit the group.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

This program comprises ten 90-minute workshops. Although ideally the workshops will be presented as a full series, each workshop can stand alone or be combined with others for a shorter series. Consider beginning your series with Workshop 1, The Locus of Moral Authority, and ending with Workshop 10, Locus of Moral Authority Revisited. These workshops highlight the program's central questions.

This program introduces the philosophical framework of eight different schools of ethical thought as a way to engage participants in exploring and expanding their understanding of ethics and morality. The workshops promote participation right from the start with engaging hypothetical scenarios that lead into exploring each ethical framework. Activities, reflection questions, and stories expand on the themes and invite participants to reflect on their lives and behavioral choices. Faith in Action suggestions, take-home activities and reflections, and lists of additional resources provide practical ways to extend learning into participants' lives and the life of the congregation.

All workshops follow this structure:

Quote. The Quote offers a significant thought to draw attention to the philosophical framework of ethics explored in the workshop.

Introduction. The Introduction summarizes the workshop themes and content and offers guidance for implementing the workshop.

Goals. Goals are the basic aims of the workshop. As you plan a workshop, apply your knowledge of your group, the time and space you have available, and your personal strengths as a leader to determine the most important and achievable goals for the workshop. Choose the activities that will best serve those goals.

Learning Objectives. Learning Objectives describe specific participant outcomes that the workshop activities are designed to facilitate. They describe what participants may learn and how they may change as a result of the experience of the workshop.

Workshop-at-a-Glance. This useful table lists the core workshop activities in order and provides an estimated time for completing each activity. It also presents the workshop's Faith in Action activity and Alternate Activities. The sequence of core activities is designed to address different learning styles and balance individual, small group, and whole group exploration.

Workshop-at-a-Glance is not a road map you must follow. Rather, use it as a menu for planning the workshop. Many variables inform the actual completion time for an activity. For instance, consider the time you will need to form small groups or relocate participants to another area of the meeting room.

Spiritual Preparation. Each workshop suggests readings, reflections, and/or other preparation to help facilitators grow spiritually and prepare to facilitate with confidence and depth. You may invite participants, in a workshop Closing, to engage in the facilitators' spiritual practice for the following workshop so that they, too, will arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WORKSHOP PLAN

The workshop elements are:

Welcoming and Entering. This section offers steps for welcoming participants as they arrive.

Opening. Each workshop begins with a short opening ritual, including a welcome, chalice-lighting, and reading or song. Shape the opening ritual to suit your group and the culture and practices of your congregation.

Activities. Each activity presents the materials and preparation you will need, a description of the activity, and detailed directions for implementing the activity. Accessibility guidance is provided, in an Including All Participants section, for activities that have unusual physical circumstances or for which a reminder about inclusion may benefit leaders. Please consult the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the Integrating All Participants section of this Introduction for suggestions to meet some common accessibility needs.

Faith in Action. Each workshop suggests an activity for the group to do outside the workshop meeting time. This is an opportunity for participants to apply workshop themes to action that can transform ourselves, our congregations, and our world.

Facilitators can download the Faith in Action section and combine it with the Taking It Home section as a handout. If you wish, the handout can include the Spiritual Preparation for the next scheduled workshop. (Note: You can customize Faith in Action, Taking It Home or any other component of a Tapestry of Faith program. Download it to your computer and edit it with your word processing program.)

Closing. Each workshop offers a closing ritual that signals the end of the group's time together. Like the Opening, the Closing grounds the shared learning experience in ritual. Shape this ritual to fit the group and the culture and practices of your congregation.

Leader Reflection and Planning. Find time as co-facilitators to discuss these questions as soon as possible after each workshop to strengthen your skills and your understanding of the group.

Taking It Home. This section offers tasks to undertake and questions to contemplate between workshops to prompt conversations with others and further explore participants' personal thoughts.

Alternate Activities. Workshops offer Alternate Activities to substitute for a core activity or add to the workshop. An Alternate Activity may need more time than a parallel core activity or require Internet access. It may use a different approach to presenting core material or extend learning in a direction not offered in a core activity.

Review Alternate Activities along with the core activities when planning a workshop. Select the activities you feel will work best for you and the group. Keep in mind the benefits of a well-paced workshop that includes different kinds of activities.

Resources. The workshops include three types of resources you will need to lead the activities:

- Stories — Narratives from the Sources of our Unitarian Universalist tradition you will read or tell the group, or have volunteers help you present
- Handouts — Sheets to print and copy for participants to use in the workshop and/or take home
- Leader Resources — Background information or activity directions you will need during the workshop.

Find Out More. Workshops end with suggestions for further reading and exploration.

LEADER GUIDELINES

Leaders should be attentive to the different life experiences and knowledge participants bring to a group, particularly if the group spans a wide age range.

There may be some people who are reluctant to share their life experiences or articulate how they understand their personal ethics; invite them to share as they are comfortable and perhaps allow some time for them to speak in smaller groups so they can interact and deepen their experience.

Facilitate group process that invites participants to respectfully share the floor. Honor all individual contributions and questions.

BEFORE YOU START

Study the material. This curriculum draws from different ethical schools to lead participants into discussion. Take time to review the overall curriculum, its content, and its methodology.

Determine the calendar schedule for workshops. Once you have determined which workshops you will offer, choose dates and times for all the workshops. Enter the information on the congregation's calendar.

Choose a meeting space. Find a comfortable room in which you will be able to post newsprint, or set up a projector to display digital slides. Make sure the space is accessible for participants who use wheelchairs or other assistance devices. Reserve the space and any equipment you may need for all the workshop dates and times you have chosen.

Arrange for childcare. Make arrangements with qualified childcare providers and reserve a room for childcare.

Promote the workshops. Use newsletters, websites, printed and verbal announcements, adult religious education brochures, and special invitations to publicize the workshops. Personally invite potential participants at worship, new member orientations, and religious education programs and meetings. You may also choose to promote the workshops more broadly with a listing in your local newspaper or on your local community access television channel. If participants pre-register, you may wish to send reminder letters, postcards, or emails with the date, time, and place of the first meeting.

FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

Faith Development Office
Ministries and Faith Development
Unitarian Universalist Association
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210-1409
religiouseducation@uua.org

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

Did you work with (a) co-facilitator(s)?

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?

In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?

Did you enrich the program with any resources that you would recommend to others?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

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religiouseducation@uua.org

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?

In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?

WORKSHOP 1: THE LOCUS OF MORAL AUTHORITY

INTRODUCTION

Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth. — Albert Einstein

We are regularly faced with the need to choose a course of action in response to a given situation. We must weigh a variety of factors, including competing interests, expediency, and moral or ethical values. This workshop explores the moral and ethical considerations we weigh in our decision-making. We will ask: What ethical framework guides us when we make our choices? From where have we derived it? To whom or what does our ethical framework hold us accountable? Is our framework clear enough to guide us through a complex decision or choice?

Some of our ethical beliefs and values come from philosophical, ethical, and cultural traditions, while others may be grounded in a long theological tradition. Some derive from our life experiences, combined with what we have been taught by our family, community, or culture. "Religious" ethics are ethical frameworks that derive from theological understandings and offer a way to live in the world and make behavioral choices that are consonant with particular religious beliefs, traditions, and sources of authority. Some religions draw on sacred texts as the sources of moral authority. Some religious traditions draw on the authority of a religious figure or understandings transmitted from one generation to the next. Different religious traditions have different ways of valuing individual conscience and community wisdom and traditions.

Because Unitarian Universalists have many different theologies and draw spiritual inspiration from a broad range of sources, what is the basis for Unitarian Universalist religious ethics? Many Unitarian Universalists would point to our Principles as a statement of values we uphold and to our Sources as some of our sources of moral authority. But do our Principles and Sources give clear, comprehensive guidance for ethical decision making? How do we work with a religious tradition that has multiple sources of moral authority, including the individual conscience and experience, wisdom from the world's religions, the teachings of science, and the Western Jewish and Christian philosophical and religious traditions? How do we bring the wisdom of so many disparate sources of authority to bear on moral and ethical choices in our day-to-day lives? How do we discern a moral path?

This workshop invites participants to reflect on the moral and ethical decision-making process they apply to complex choices. Participants discover and name both

Unitarian Universalist values shared with others and guiding personal values which have been developed through life experience, received wisdom from family or community, and personal reflection and study. The workshop asks: To what authority or authorities do you turn for guidance when faced with a moral dilemma or decision?

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce the program
- Introduce participants to one another and invite them build a covenant for the program
- Build trust and promote sharing among participants
- Introduce the notion of moral authority and encourage participants to explore the framework which guides their moral and ethical decision making.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Covenant together about expectations for participation in the program
- Share their expectations and hopes for the program
- Consider the notion of moral authority
- Identify where they locate moral authority to guide their ethical and moral decision making.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Program Overview and Expectations	10
Activity 2: Opening Scenario	20
Activity 3: What Guides Me?	25
Activity 4: Emerson's Locus of Moral Authority	30
Activity 5: Group Covenant	20
Faith in Action: Covenants in Congregational Life	

Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Exploring Ethical Statements	25
Alternate Activity 2: Values Mapping	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Recall an important moral or ethical decision you have made, and use the following focus questions to help you think about your decision-making process:

- What was the dilemma and what decision did you make?

- What framework or ethical precepts guided your decision making?
- What was/were the source(s) of those precepts? Was it your conscience? Family, community, or cultural values? The wisdom of a moral or religious thinker? Literature? Scripture? Reason, or a scientific understanding? Some combination of sources?
- Why did you decide to grant that source the authority you ultimately gave it?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, Schedule for Ethics Workshops
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil, and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Customize Handout 1, Schedule for Ethics Workshops, and copy for all participants.
- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.

Description of Activity

Welcome all participants, offer them a folder, and ask them to create a name tag.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share Reading 531 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "The Oversoul" by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Introduce yourself. Invite participants to briefly introduce themselves with a name and a sentence or two about their connection to the congregation and community.

ACTIVITY 1: PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Schedule for Ethics Workshops](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download Handout 1, Schedule for Ethics Workshops. Customize the handout for your

program. Copy for all participants, plus a few extra.

- Briefly review all the workshops you plan to present in your series so you can answer general questions about each.
- Write these questions on newsprint, and post:
 - Why did you decide to take part in this ethics program?
 - What would you like to learn, experience, or take home with you?

Description of Activity

Distribute the workshop schedule. Call attention to the workshop titles and topics. Invite questions and comments.

Indicate the questions you have posted on newsprint and invite participants to respond, each in turn. Tell them they have the right to pass if they do not wish to share. Take notes about participant expectations to help plan effectively for later workshops.

ACTIVITY 2: OPENING SCENARIO (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read the scenario so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Introduce this activity using these or similar words:

Each workshop in this series will open with an ethical dilemma for which there is not a single, correct response. The idea is not to debate what is the best response in the situation, but rather to consider some of the issues we will explore in that particular workshop.

Share this scenario:

You are driving a car when you come to a four-way intersection. Your light is red. There are no other vehicles or people anywhere nearby. What do you do? Why?

Invite participants to turn to a partner and share their response to the dilemma. Urge participants to focus more on the reasoning behind their response than the response itself. Allow ten minutes for pairs to talk, and then re-gather the group. Ask: "What ethical precepts, reasons, or frameworks were named in your partner conversations?" List these precepts on the newsprint you have posted.

ACTIVITY 3: WHAT GUIDES ME? (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Writing and drawing materials, such as pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write this prompt on newsprint:
 - Share a story from religious texts, personal experience, scientific understanding, contemporary culture, your family or community history and teachings, or another source that helps frame your ethical decision making.
- Set writing and drawing materials where participants can reach them.

Description of Activity

Distribute journals or notebooks. Explain that participants will have time to write or draw in their journals as part of each workshop. Encourage them to journal between workshops as well.

Point out the prompt you have posted. Invite participants to take a few minutes to find their story and write or draw in their journal before sharing it with others in a small group. Allow ten minutes for reflection and writing.

Invite participants to create groups of three and to share their stories with one another. Allow ten minutes for small group conversation, and then re-gather the large group. Ask:

- To what stories do we turn for guidance with moral issues?
- How does religion or spirituality inform those stories?

Including All Participants

Some participants may have a hard time hearing in a room with many groups speaking at once. Invite groups to move apart or provide areas for groups to meet outside the main room.

ACTIVITY 4: EMERSON'S LOCUS OF MORAL AUTHORITY (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Emerson's Moral Dilemma](#)" (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [About Emerson](#) (included in this document)

- Leader Resource 2, [The Divinity School Address — Excerpts](#) (included in this document)

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Print Leader Resource 1 and prepare to present its contents to the group.
- Invite two participants to prepare to read aloud the two paragraphs in Leader Resource 2. Give them Leader Resource 2 well in advance.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What are strengths of Emerson's argument that ultimate moral authority rests with each individual's conscience?
 - What are drawbacks or weaknesses in locating moral authority primarily with the individual conscience?
 - Do you agree or disagree with Emerson? Where do you think moral authority lies?

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

In the mid-19th century, Ralph Waldo Emerson radically shaped the American liberal religious landscape. Many were convinced by his writings, which stated that spiritual and moral authority ought to rest not with clergy and scripture but rather in the conscience of the individual.

Share the story, "Emerson's Moral Dilemma." Then, invite participants to pose questions or offer insights about Emerson's dilemma.

Share the material in Leader Resource 1. Say:

Several years after leaving Second Church, Emerson was invited to preach before the graduating class at Harvard Divinity School. He used the occasion to challenge his former ministerial colleagues and to explain his own religious and moral philosophy.

Have pre-assigned readers present the two sections of the Divinity School Address given by Ralph Waldo Emerson on July 15, 1838. Pause after each section and invite questions, comments, and observations.

Note that there are at least three possible sources of moral authority—the individual, the community, and God. Ask: "Where does Emerson place the locus of ethical authority?" Lead a discussion using the posted questions.

ACTIVITY 5: GROUP COVENANT (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 2, [Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Your congregation's covenant

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 2, Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources for all participants.
- If your congregation has a covenant or a bond of union, copy it for all participants or write the text on newsprint.
- Identify a place to keep the newsprint covenant the group will generate, so you can post it at all future workshops.

Description of Activity

Say that "covenant" is foundational to our tradition: We are united by our promises to one another, rather than by a shared creed.

Distribute Handout 2. Point out that while our Principles and Sources are a covenant intended to guide congregations that are part of the Unitarian Universalist Association, many Unitarian Universalists have adopted this covenant to guide their own lives and to help them with moral and ethical choices.

If your congregation has a covenant, distribute or post it now.

Post blank newsprint. Invite participants to brainstorm guidelines for how to treat one another in the group. Suggest the guidelines be in the spirit of the congregational covenant, although they will likely be more specific. Write suggestions on newsprint.

After three minutes of brainstorming, ask if there are any additions people wish to make. Ask if any items on the list need further discussion. Once all have agreed to the items on the list, ask each person to signal assent to the covenant by nodding or raising a hand.

Point out that in Jewish and mainstream Christian traditions, adherents covenant with God, or in the presence of God. The ethical authority foundational to the covenant is God. Ask: "Where does the ethical authority that is foundational to our covenant rest? Why?"

Save the covenant newsprint to post at future workshops.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Customize Taking It Home and copy for all participants. You may wish to include this workshop's Faith in Action activity, this workshop's Find Out More section, and/or the Spiritual Preparation section of the workshop that is next in your series.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to share, in a word or phrase, something they will take from the workshop.

Distribute Taking It Home.

Share Reading 661 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "The Heart Knoweth" by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: COVENANTS IN CONGREGATIONAL LIFE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Sample Unitarian Universalist congregational or small-group covenants, and descriptions of how each came to be written
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- If you have a congregational covenant, research the covenant's creation. Ask your minister or a member who was involved. Ask groups within the congregation, such as youth groups and small group ministry groups, if they have covenants they are willing to share with participants in this program. Ask for the covenant and a brief description of how it was written. Copy the covenants and descriptions for participants. If you are unable to find written covenants within your congregation, find examples on the websites of other Unitarian Universalist congregations.
- Read examples of covenants in *Singing the Living Tradition* (Readings 471-478).
- Invite appropriate congregational leaders to meet with your group to talk about creating or renewing a congregational covenant.

Description of Activity

Distribute sample covenants with descriptions of their creation. You may wish to read some aloud, or have volunteers read aloud.

Ask:

- Who made these covenants and how did they create them?
- Did the congregation as a whole vote to accept and abide by these covenants? If they are group covenants, did all in the group have a say on the covenant?
- Do we know who had final say on what was included in the covenant?
- How do we create communal authority?
- How might we take the things we have learned about covenant into the work we do in the congregation?

If you do not have a congregational covenant or if it has been a long period of time since the creation of your covenant, invite congregational leaders to talk with you about a process for creating or recreating such a covenant. Who should have a voice? Where does the authority lay to create and accept such a covenant?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?
- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?
- Where was it easy for you to work together? Where was it difficult? What changes might you make for future workshops?
- Are there questions left over from this workshop that might be addressed in future workshops? If so, how will we address them?

Review and assign tasks for the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth. — Albert Einstein

Share with family members or friends the story you wrote about in Activity 3, What Guides Me? Include children and youth as appropriate. Invite others to share stories that help them frame their ethical and moral decision making.

As you go about your daily life, notice when you hear or read statements that rest on moral or ethical precepts. When you encounter such statements, ask yourself:

- Where is the authority behind these statements?
- How do you feel about the ethical authority this institution or individual has claimed or assigned?
- What do you perceive as having given that individual or institution the right to claim or assign moral authority?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: EXPLORING ETHICAL STATEMENTS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [Ethical Statements](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 3, Ethical Statements for all participants.
- Write on newsprint, and post (or, prepare for digital projection, and test computer equipment):
 - Which statement best describes your ethical framework and why?
 - Are there any statements with which you do not agree or guidelines you cannot imagine following in your life? Why?

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 3 and invite participants to take a few minutes to read it.

Then, have participants form groups of three. Ask the groups to take roughly three minutes per member to respond, in turn, to the posted questions.

After ten minutes, bring participants back into the full group and have them share insights from the small group conversations. Then ask:

- What are other statements or guidelines you connect to and use in your personal life?
- Are there other ethical statements used in communities or organizations you work in, belong to, or interact with? How do those statements influence your day-to-day life?

Tell the group the statements in Handout 3 represent different ethical frameworks, each of which a workshop in this program explores.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: VALUES MAPPING (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Construction paper
- Writing implements in various colors, including pens, pencils, crayons, and/or markers

Preparation for Activity

- Read the Description of Activity; then, make your own values map as an example.
- Arrange work tables for drawing and set materials where all can reach them.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity using these or similar words:

This activity provides a visual and spatial opportunity to examine how our personal beliefs and values are derived from, or rest on, other, more general, core beliefs and values. This kind of visual mapping helps us understand the logic that guides our ethical decision making.

Invite participants to take a sheet of construction paper and list, in the center of the paper one, two, or three values or beliefs that are core for them. For example, a core value might be the inherent worth and dignity of every human being. Invite them to draw a bubble around each core value.

Continue with these instructions:

Think of ethical and moral positions you hold that are derived from those core values, and write these near the core values from which they are derived. So, for example, if a core value for you is the inherent worth and dignity of every person, then you may derive from that the moral position that you will not condone or participate in bullying. Draw bubbles around these moral positions as well, and, draw connections between bubbles, as appropriate.

Invite the group to continue until they have listed all the values and moral stances which are important to them, and connected them to one another. Tell them they will have about ten minutes for this exercise.

Then, invite participants to share their value maps to the degree they are comfortable. Encourage them to indicate the core values they identified and the moral stances and actions that emerged from them.

Lead the group to reflect on these questions:

- What surprises came out of this activity?
- Did intersections between different bubbles emerge easily?
- Were there some areas that were harder to work with than others? Why?

STORY: EMERSON'S MORAL DILEMMA

Ralph Waldo Emerson was a leading 19th-century philosopher, father of the Transcendentalist movement. Before he became a philosophical and literary luminary, he was a Unitarian minister and served the Second Church in Boston between 1829 and 1832. In pursuing ministry, Ralph Waldo followed in the footsteps of his father, William Emerson, a Unitarian minister who served Boston's First Church.

In 1831 and 1832, the younger Emerson became embroiled in a controversy at Second Church. As a Unitarian Christian minister, Emerson was expected to regularly conduct a communion service. Emerson did not find the act of communion personally meaningful. Because he was interested in a depth of authentic personal experience with the sacred that did not have room for ritual for the sake of ritual, Emerson told his congregation he would no longer offer the sacrament of communion.

His decision created uproar. For many Christian Unitarians, communion was a central sacrament. Although the congregation was fond of Emerson, his declaration seemed unreasonable to them. Church leaders tried to negotiate with Emerson, hoping he would change his mind. They offered a compromise: Since the parishioners found the act of communion meaningful, they asked if Emerson could perhaps offer communion to the attendees of the church but not partake of the sacrament himself, in light of his philosophical objections. Emerson did not agree to this compromise and the negotiations were not successful.

Emerson recognized this disagreement with the congregation of Second Church as an insurmountable difference between his philosophical and spiritual understanding and the congregation's, and he voluntarily resigned his pulpit. While he never disavowed Unitarianism, or his status as a minister, he never again used his title "Reverend" nor served a congregation. Instead, he chose to express himself through lecturing and writing.

Emerson believed we cultivate our own character and through this cultivation become agents of good or evil in the world. Further, cultivation of character is grounded in an unmediated experience of the sacred, one that occurs by looking inward. Finding that spark of divinity within us, it is possible to have a direct, transcendent experience of the holy. Emerson's belief became the cornerstone of the Transcendentalist movement, and Emerson's greatest spiritual contribution to Unitarian Universalism.

HANDOUT 1: SCHEDULE FOR ETHICS WORKSHOPS

Workshop Title

Day, Date, Time

Workshop 1: The Locus of Moral Authority

Workshop 2: Unchanging Truths

Workshop 3: The Collective Good

Workshop 4: Cultivating a Virtuous Character

Workshop 5: Natural, Legal, and Human Rights

Workshop 6: The Story of Our Lives

Workshop 7: Relational Ethics

Workshop 8: Understanding Ethics from the Margins

Workshop 9: An Ethic of Risk

Workshop 10: Locus of Moral Authority Revisited

[insert regular meeting location]

[insert facilitator name(s) and contact information]

HANDOUT 2: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES

There are seven Principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalism draws wisdom from many Sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

HANDOUT 3: ETHICAL STATEMENTS

- There are moral sources and/or authorities that inform or guide my ethical behavior.
- I have firm moral convictions.
- Each person is entitled to their view of what is right and wrong.
- Truth exists and our understanding of it becomes clearer over time.
- We must always do the maximum good for the maximum number of people.
- Being the best person I can be helps keep me morally grounded.
- I believe that there are rights to which everyone is entitled by virtue of being human.
- My morality is informed by my experiences in the world.
- It is through meaningful relationship with one another that we can determine what is best and most true.
- Ethical beliefs are irrelevant if they are not accompanied by action.
- Moral decisions must be grounded in compassion.
- People cannot be ethical by themselves; ethical behavior is enacted in a community context.
- It takes courage to live out our Unitarian Universalist values.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: ABOUT EMERSON

Ralph Waldo Emerson advocated direct experience of religious sentiment, unmediated by clergy, or by tradition or ritual. In describing himself as a "Transcendentalist," Emerson lifted up his belief that it was possible for people to have a direct, transcendent experience of reality, a personal experience of God (what he called the Over Soul), by turning inward. He believed that the sacred which exists without and all around us also exists within, and that by turning inward and getting in deeper touch with our truest nature, we can experience and be informed by that light inside us.

Emerson had some disdain for the preaching style of his time. His view was that ministers should share from the pulpit an authentic and personal reflection of themselves and their lives, rather than preach from a detached, intellectual perspective. He urged ministers to share their experience "passed through the fire of thought" and deep reflection.

Emerson's decisions and statements help us to understand his locus of moral authority. For example, he relied on personal experience as the source of moral authority when he went against his parishioners' wishes in refusing to offer communion. In advocating for an unmediated, personal experience of religion and writing that the essential nature of the human experience is the cultivation of character, Emerson affirmed that moral authority is located within the self. Emerson's ideas still resonate with many Unitarian Universalists today.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: THE DIVINITY SCHOOL ADDRESS — EXCERPTS

[Remarks by Ralph Waldo Emerson, delivered before the graduating class of Harvard's Divinity School](#) on July 15, 1838.

The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul. These laws execute themselves. They are out of time, out of space, and not subject to circumstance. Thus, in the soul of man there is a justice whose retributions are instant and entire. He who does a good deed, is instantly ennobled. He who does a mean deed, is by the action itself contracted. He who puts off impurity, thereby puts on purity. If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God do enter into that man with justice. If a man dissemble, deceive, he deceives himself, and goes out of acquaintance with his own being. A man in the view of absolute goodness, adores, with total humility. Every step so downward, is a step upward. The man who renounces himself, comes to himself.

See how this rapid intrinsic energy worketh everywhere, righting wrongs, correcting appearances, and bringing up facts to a harmony with thoughts. Its operation in life, though slow to the senses, is, at last, as sure as in the soul. By it, a man is made the Providence to himself, dispensing good to his goodness, and evil to his sin. Character is always known. Thefts never enrich; alms never impoverish; murder will speak out of stone walls. The least admixture of a lie,—for example, the taint of vanity, the least attempt to make a good impression, a favorable appearance, — will instantly vitiate the effect. But speak the truth, and all nature and all spirits help you with unexpected furtherance. Speak the truth, and all things alive or brute are vouchers, and the very roots of the grass underground there, do seem to stir and move to bear you witness.

See again the perfection of the Law as it applies itself to the affections, and becomes the law of society. As we are, so we associate. The good, by affinity, seek the good; the vile, by affinity, the vile. Thus of their own volition, souls proceed into heaven, into hell.

FIND OUT MORE

Andrews, Barry M. [*A Dream Too Wild: Emerson Meditations for Every Day of the Year*](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 2003)

Andrews, Barry M. [*Emerson As Spiritual Guide: A Companion to Emerson's Essays for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion*](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 2003)

Miller, P. *The Transcendentalists: An Anthology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950)

Richardson, R. *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996)

[Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) in the *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*.

WORKSHOP 2: UNCHANGING TRUTHS

INTRODUCTION

Two things awe me most, the starry sky above me and the moral law within me. — Immanuel Kant

For centuries a debate has raged among philosophers and religious thinkers on the nature of morality. Is there such a thing as absolute and unchanging moral truth? Many philosophers and theologians have asserted that such truth does exist, although they make differing claims about its source. Some assert that absolute and unchanging moral truth is established by God and can be found in particular religious texts or in rituals and practices of their faith tradition. Some affirm the existence of absolute, unchanging moral truth that can be identified without appeal to religious traditions or texts.

Western philosophers postulated the existence of moral laws which are similar to the physical laws that govern the natural world. Because scientific discoveries at the time supported the notion that the natural world was an ordered place, governed by laws and rules, philosophers imagined there must also be moral laws guiding how humans are supposed to conduct their lives. Many of these philosophers reasoned that just as we discover new scientific laws over time, so also will humans discover new moral laws. They believed that as human understanding of truth evolves and new insights are gained, the moral laws by which we live evolve and become clearer, moving humans ever closer toward an understanding of ultimate moral truth.

The school of thought espousing the idea that there is absolute, eternal, unchanging moral truth is known as deontological ethics. The most prominent advocate of this approach is the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant further developed deontological ethics, asserting the existence of a moral rule he termed the "categorical imperative," the idea that the only morally acceptable actions are those that can be universalized. In other words, if it is morally acceptable for one person to do a particular action, it has to be morally acceptable for anyone to do the same. According to Kant, moral truth exists and it applies equally to everyone.

This workshop invites Unitarian Universalists to examine questions about the existence and nature of truth, and to explore whether and how moral thinking is shaped—either reactively or proactively—by notions that there is ultimate unchanging moral truth to guide actions. Is there absolute moral truth that Unitarian Universalists affirm is valid for all people at all times and under all circumstances? What presumptions are implied in

asserting such moral truth(s)? Are the ethical statements represented in our Unitarian Universalist Principles grounded in our notion of absolute moral truth(s)? From what authority do assertions of absolute moral truth(s) derive?

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters found in the program Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce the concept of truth that grounds Kantian/deontological ethics
- Explore Unitarian Universalist ethics using the lens of Kantian ethics
- Guide participants to name any unchanging moral truth(s) to which they adhere
- Provide opportunities for participants to test the benefits and limits of Kantian ethics as a personal ethical/moral framework
- Strengthen connections among participants.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about Kantian/deontological ethics
- Examine whether unchanging moral truth(s) exist which pertain to all people, at all times, and in all circumstances
- Identify unchanging or absolute ethical precepts in the seven Unitarian Universalist Principles and other commonly held Unitarian Universalist values
- Expand understanding of how ethical ideas and systems influence decisions and actions in their lives
- Consider the benefits and limits of a system of ethics grounded in Unitarian Universalist Principles.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	2
Activity 1: Opening Scenario	10
Activity 2: Learning from Disagreements	25

Activity 3: Personal Ethical Exploration	15
Activity 4: Kant's Moral Law	15
Activity 5: Unitarian Universalist Moral Law	20
Faith in Action: Moral Truth in Action — Ethical Eating	
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Unitarian Universalist Principles as Moral Laws	30
Alternate Activity 2: Thinking Further about Rules-Based Morality	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time for journaling, reflection, prayer, and/or meditation, using these focus questions:

- Consider a situation in your life when your ethical/moral understandings or precepts differed from those of other people. What were the circumstances? What did you decide to do?
- When you consider your own ethics, are there positions you hold that you identify as specifically Unitarian Universalist or influenced by Unitarian Universalism?
- Are there unchanging truths to which you subscribe? If so what are they? How do they help you to live a moral life?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil, and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.
- Post group covenant, created in Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Welcome all participants and draw their attention to the workshop agenda.

OPENING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share Reading 460 from *Singing the Living Tradition*, by Sarah Alden Ripley.

ACTIVITY 1: OPENING SCENARIO (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Share this question:

If you steal one paper clip, is it okay for everyone else on the planet to also steal a paper clip—leading within the space of one day to six billion stolen paper clips?

Invite participants to speak when they are ready, assuring them that there is no one correct way to answer these questions. Invite them to focus more on the reasoning behind their response than the response itself.

ACTIVITY 2: LEARNING FROM DISAGREEMENTS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Variety of writing and drawing materials, such as pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Recall a time in your life when your ethical/moral understandings or precepts differed from those of other people in a group to which you belonged. What were the circumstances? What ethical principle(s) lay behind your point of view? Did you understand what ethical principle(s) lay behind the others' point of view? What did you decide to do?
 - Recall a time when you did not agree with the ethical or moral precepts of a loved one or an authority figure in your life. What were the circumstances? What ethical principle(s) lay behind your point of view? Did you understand what ethical principle(s) lay behind the other person's point of view? What did you decide to do?

Description of Activity

Point out the two prompts you have posted and invite participants to choose one or the other and find their story. Invite them to write or draw in their journal before sharing with others in a small group. Allow ten minutes for reflection and writing.

Then, invite participants to create groups of three and to share their stories with one another. Allow ten minutes for small group conversation, and then re-gather the large group. Ask: "What did you discover about your own moral or ethical precepts as you wrote and told your story?"

Including All Participants

This activity introduces journaling, which continues through the subsequent workshops. Provide a journaling alternative for visually impaired participants and/or participants with other impediments to journaling in a notebook. You might invite a participant to dictate thoughts in confidence to a co-facilitator.

Some participants may have a hard time hearing in a room with many groups speaking at once. Invite groups

to move apart or provide areas for groups to meet outside the main room.

Create a large-print handout that includes the discussion questions to assist those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 3: PERSONAL ETHICAL EXPLORATION (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Drawing paper
- Crayons, markers, and/or color pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare the meeting room so that participants have adequate table space for drawing, alone and in pairs.
- Set out materials where all can reach them.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

Select a partner you don't know very well, and sit next to that person. Using pictures, words, or symbols, create a visual representation of your personal ethics. You will have five minutes to work on your own, before sharing your work with your partner. After five minutes, share your creations with one another and observe places where you overlap and places where you differ. If you wish, you may add to or alter your work after sharing with your partner.

Circulate while participants work. After five minutes, invite participants to share their work with their partner. After five minutes of sharing, invite participants to turn their attention to the large group. Explore these questions:

- Are there symbols, pictures, shapes, or words that are held in common across the group?
- Can any of these be named as coming from a particular religious experience or source?
- Do you consider any of the symbols, pictures, or words you used symbols of Unitarian Universalist ethics?

Including All Participants

Invite participants to verbally share their symbols and metaphors to aid those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 4: KANT'S MORAL LAW (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[From Scientific Law to Kant's Moral Law](#)" (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it to the group.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Does the Categorical Imperative, Kant's rule for determining whether something is morally permissible, apply in the way you make moral decisions?
 - Think of a concrete moral question you have faced in your life, and the conclusion you reached. Did you use Kant's rule or something similar in choosing your behavior? If not, would you have arrived at the same result if you had applied Kant's rule?

Description of Activity

Say:

The story we will share introduces the thinking of Immanuel Kant, a famous 18th-century philosopher. As you listen, reflect back on the paper clip conversation.

Read the story aloud. Invite participants to consider the posted questions in silent reflection for two or three minutes. Then, invite participants to share questions, observations, or insights from their reflection on the story.

Note that the story includes biographical information about Kant. Ask: "Do you think Kant's social position (white, male, Protestant, Northern European, university-educated) is pertinent when assessing the ethical framework he espoused? If so, how? If not, why not?"

ACTIVITY 5: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MORAL LAW (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Description of Activity

Invite participants to brainstorm a list of Unitarian Universalist moral/ethical statements. Explain that brainstorming means you will write all ideas suggested on newsprint, without discussing or evaluating them. After five minutes of brainstorming, stop and invite participants to examine the list. Guide a discussion using these questions:

- Are any of these statements what Kant might call moral laws, standards to which we should adhere at all times and in every situation?
- Do you think some of our Unitarian Universalist shared values as expressed in our Principles could be described as moral laws that are fixed

and unchanging? If so, which ones? If not, why not?

- If there are Unitarian Universalist moral laws that are fixed and unchanging, where is the locus of moral authority for those laws—the self, the community, God, or somewhere else? Does naming the source of authority help us judge the universal applicability of moral laws?
- Does the idea that there are Unitarian Universalist moral laws conflict in any way with Emerson's notions, as examined in Workshop 1, regarding the source of moral authority?
- When happens when one moral law is in conflict with another?

Allow ten minutes for this discussion, and then pose this final question:

- Given all that we explored today, do you believe there are absolute moral truths that are fixed and apply to all people in similar situations? Are there absolute moral truths that are fixed and apply to all people no matter their situation? If there are such truths, who determines what they are?

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Customize Taking It Home and copy for all participants. You may wish to include this workshop's Faith in Action activity, this workshop's Find Out More section, and/or the Spiritual Preparation section of the workshop that is next in your series.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to share a word or phrase indicating something that they are taking away from the workshop. Distribute Taking it Home. Share Reading 686 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, by Mark Belletini, as you extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: MORAL TRUTHS IN ACTION — ETHICAL EATING

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [UUA Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read Handout 1, UUA Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating. The Statement of Conscience suggests some congregational actions. Find out about these or similar actions that have already begun in your congregation.
- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Distribute copies of the 2011 UUA Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating. Invite participants to review the statement, particularly paragraphs 1, 3, and 7 marked on the handout, and name the ethical truths or principles that underlie the statement.

Ask:

- Are these truths absolute, unchanging, and pertinent to everyone in similar circumstances?
- Are they pertinent to everyone, everywhere, under any circumstances?
- On what authority do these assertions rest?

Explore some of the language that highlights people's differing circumstances, especially in paragraphs 7 and 8. How do these points affect the assertions of moral truth in the earlier points?

Explore the list of possible congregational actions and find out what actions your congregation has undertaken that support ethical eating. Participate in such initiatives, or work with your social justice committee, your parish minister, your religious educator, or other appropriate people to begin work in this area. Share the statement of conscience with others in your congregation.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?
- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?
- Where was it easy for you to work together? Where was it difficult? What changes might you make for future workshops?
- Are there questions left over from this workshop that might be addressed in future workshops? If so, how will we address them?

Save the covenant you created on newsprint to post at each workshop. Review and assign tasks for the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

Two things awe me most, the starry sky above me and the moral law within me. — Immanuel Kant

Before the next workshop, pay attention to statements made by family, friends, acquaintances, or public figures that express a universal, unchanging moral truth(s), from their point of view. Consider these questions:

- Who is saying this?
- What are the circumstances?
- What are they claiming as a source for this truth?
- On what source of authority does their truth claim rely—the self, the community, God, or some other source?

Notice if you make any ethical statements that could be considered Kantian. Under what circumstances? What do you believe is the source of authority for the truth you claim?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES AS MORAL LAWS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write each of the seven Unitarian Universalist Principles on a different piece of newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

The group reframes the Unitarian Universalist Principles in Kantian terms.

Read each Principle aloud or ask a volunteer to read. Then invite participants to reword each Principle as an unchanging truth. For each Principle, ask:

- Does rewriting the Principle to express an unchanging moral truth make a difference? How?
- Can you envision a set of circumstances when this expressed moral truth would not guide you to an appropriate response? When and why?

When you have finished reframing all seven, lead a general discussion, using these questions:

- Are there certain Principles that are harder to follow as unchanging truth than others?

- If you believe the seven Principles represent unchanging truth, are there changes you must make in your own behavior in order to live by these Principles?
- Can you steal the paper clip if you are following the Unitarian Universalist Principles? Is there another commonly held ethical or moral Unitarian Universalist value that guides us not to steal the paper clip?
- What can you do in the world to further follow these ethical guidelines?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THINKING FURTHER ABOUT A RULES-BASED MORALITY (20 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Use this activity as an extension of Activity 4, Kant's Moral Law.

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

Believing that moral rules need to be universally applicable, Kant arrived at some interesting conclusions about the nature of humanity. Kant believed that human life was inherently worthy of dignity and respect. As such, he felt it was immoral to use any human being as a means to an end. If such behavior were universalized, he argued, it would result in the dehumanization of our entire species; we would all interact with one another for the sole purpose of achieving our own ends. We would not look at one another as persons, but as instruments of gratification. Kant wrote, for example, that prostitution was immoral because a human being was used as a commodity or "thing" rather than recognized as a person. Another example of using a person as a means to an end is befriending someone not because you like them, but because that person has status and power and can be of use to you. Kant had strong moral objections to this and any behavior in which a person was objectified, used, and not treated with respect and dignity.

Invite participants to consider ways in which they are in relationship with others exclusively as a means to an end. Examples include store clerks, gas station attendants, doctors, and other people we depend on for certain services. Invite participants to brainstorm as many examples as possible.

Lead a discussion using the following questions as guides:

- Is it morally acceptable if some of our relationships serve solely as a means to some end?

- If so, what distinguishes morally acceptable relationships from other such relationships that might not be morally acceptable?

STORY: FROM SCIENTIFIC LAW TO KANT'S MORAL LAW

Immanuel Kant, a key figure in the field of philosophy, was born in what is now Germany. He grew up in a Lutheran household, part of a family that particularly emphasized piety and vigorous religious devotion. At the age of 16, he enrolled at the University of Königsberg, and went on to spend his entire career as a member of the faculty there. His best-known and most important published work is *The Critique of Pure Reason*, first published in 1781.

Kant was a theist, and his religious beliefs provided an underpinning for his understanding of the world. As scientists of his time discovered and described natural laws, Kant came to believe that similar moral laws existed and would become clearer over time. Underlying his theory was a belief in a divine hand that provided order to what we otherwise might term chaos or randomness. He believed that our evolving understanding of scientific and moral laws moved us gradually closer to God.

In 1755, at the age of 31, he published *Theory of the Heavens*, a book that built on Isaac Newton's description of the basic physical laws that govern our solar system and our lives. Kant hypothesized that stars were created out of the material of nebulae, that stars spiraled around the center of galaxies, and that the galaxies spiraled around the center of the universe. Although we now know that much of what Kant hypothesized was correct, his observations about the universe went largely unnoticed during his time, in part because the publisher of his book went bankrupt.

Kant's observation and description of the cosmological order that determined the formation and movements of stars was, to him, proof that the universe was governed by laws. Following this train of logic, Kant concluded there must also be moral laws that govern human behavior. Following a process similar to what had led to the discovery of physical laws, human understanding of moral laws would be initially imperfect and would evolve over time, moving humanity toward clearer and more complete understanding. He argued that—following the pattern set by physical, scientific laws—moral laws must be true in all situations.

As a test for determining whether a particular action is in harmony with the laws of morality, Kant developed his famous concept of the Categorical Imperative, the idea that an action is morally acceptable if it can be universalized, or done by *everyone* who finds themselves in a similar situation. For example, Kant's theory tests the moral acceptability of stealing, even something as small as a paper clip from your workplace, by asking what would happen if everyone stole from their workplace. When the end result of a universalized action does not seem right to us, then the individual act must be unacceptable.

Kant's work is closely associated with deontological ethics, a rules-based ethics which emphasizes the end result. In this ethical schema, the final outcome matters more than the countervailing circumstances or the means by which we arrive at a result. Proponents of deontological ethics hold that the moral laws or moral principles one develops are always and in every circumstance correct, and one must adhere to them, even when it is difficult to do so.

Kant's work made him an important and influential figure in his lifetime, and his influence continues today.

HANDOUT 1: UUA STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE ON ETHICAL EATING

This statement was adopted by the 2011 General Assembly after a four-year study and action process.

Note: Paragraph numbering has been added to the original document for ease of use.

1. Aware of our interdependence, we acknowledge that eating ethically requires us to be mindful of the miracle of life we share with all beings. With gratitude for the food we have received, we strive to choose foods that minimize harm and are protective of the environment, consumers, farmers, and all those involved in food production and distribution.
2. Environmental justice includes the equitable distribution of both environmental burdens and benefits for populations of residents and workers. Marginalized people have often been able to find housing or work only in areas exposed to environmental pollutants, with consequent negative health and quality of life effects.
3. As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to address our relationship with food. Our Principles call for recognition of and respect for the other. As we search freely and responsibly for truth, meaning, and spiritual wholeness, we will make a variety of individual choices about food. Ethical eating is the application of our Principles to our food choices. What and how we eat has broad implications for our planet and society. Our values, Principles, and integrity call us to seek compassion, health, and sustainability in the production of food we raise or purchase.
4. Food production involving growing, processing, packaging, transporting, and distributing food has become a vast worldwide industry. The mass production of food often maximizes production while minimizing price. This mass production has greatly increased food supply, but has resulted in the overuse of fertilizers and pesticides with crops and the mistreatment of animals and workers in food production. Both this overuse and the large waste streams from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) result in pollution of water, land, and air.
5. Access to an adequate supply of healthy food and clean water is a basic human need and right. Many people do not have adequate food, while others have a surplus. In many locations, poor distribution of food is a major contributor to hunger and malnutrition. The effects of climate change, weather conditions, and armed conflicts can also expose many people to starvation. Paradoxically, an abundance of food does not guarantee access to healthy food.
6. We acknowledge that aggressive action needs to be taken that will ensure an adequate food supply for the

world population; reduce the use of energy, water, fertilizer, pesticides, and hormones in food production; mitigate climate change; and end the inhumane treatment of animals. These steps call for an evolution of our eating habits to include more locally grown, minimally processed whole foods. We acknowledge that this evolution must respect diversity in cultures, nutritional requirements, and religious practices.

7. Minimally processed plant-based diets are healthier diets. Some of us believe that it is ethical only to eat plants while others of us believe that it is ethical to eat both plants and animals. We do not call here for a single dietary approach. We encourage a knowledgeable choice of food based on understanding the demands of feeding a growing world population, the health effects of particular foods, and the consequences of production, worker treatment, and transportation methods. We commit to applying this knowledge to both personal and public actions, recognizing that many of us might embark on a dramatic change in eating choices and some might pay more for food that is ethically produced. For congregations, helping congregants gain this understanding and supporting their choices will require a long-term collective process of engagement, education, discernment, and advocacy. Unitarian Universalists aspire to radical hospitality and developing the beloved community. Therefore, we affirm that the natural world exists not for the sole benefit of one nation, one race, one gender, one religion, or even one species, but for all. Working in the defense of mutual interests, Unitarian Universalists acknowledge and accept the challenge of enlarging our circle of moral concern to include all living creatures.

8. As individuals and as congregations, we recognize the need to examine the impact of our food choices and our practices and make changes that will lighten the burden we place on the world. We also recognize that many food decisions will require us to make trade-offs between competing priorities. These priorities include: taste, selection, price, human health, environmental protection, sustainability, adequate food supply, humane treatment of animals used for food, and fair treatment of farm and food workers.

9. Environmental concerns include the use of fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and hormones and high volumes of animal wastes produced by CAFOs, all of which can contaminate soil, air, and water. Contributors to global warming include the overreliance on fossil fuels for food production; the methane produced by animals, including but not limited to cattle, sheep, and pigs; and the long-distance transport of food. Expanding agriculture and animal farming often removes natural habitats and reduces natural biodiversity. An additional environmental concern is the deterioration of the oceans and their life forms due to overfishing and pollution.

10. Human Health concerns include producers' use of growth promoters, pesticides, and antibiotics that can affect child development, antibiotic resistance, and other health conditions. Advertising and marketing can encourage overeating, poor food choices, a focus on body image that can contribute to eating disorders, and the use of infant formula in preference to breast feeding.

11. Concerns about the **Humane Treatment of Animals** include intensive confinement and abuse in CAFOs, and inhumane conditions during production, transport, and slaughter.

12. Concerns about the **Fair Treatment of Food and Farm Workers** include low pay, poor and unsafe working conditions, exploitation of undocumented workers, and enslavement of others.

13. Policy concerns include agricultural subsidies that reward the production of certain crops and animal products that are less healthful and environmentally friendly than unsubsidized ones, and that penalize small to moderate-sized farming operations. Agricultural subsidies of exported crops have driven small farmers in developing countries off their land. The consequences of agricultural subsidies and mono-cropping include increased gender disparity where women have been the traditional agricultural producers. We recognize replicating corporate agricultural modes in our aid to developing countries is not in the best interest of humanity. We support the development of farming models that safeguard the environment, produce safe foods, provide economic benefits to all economic levels, and create environmentally and economically sustainable models.

14. Classism, racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression are deeply connected to economic justice, which is a prime determinant of access to food. Some of us will not be able to pay more for ethical food. Others of us will. Yet all of us can have a role in improving the ethics of food. We affirm that the fight for environmental and economic justice is inherently a fight against all forms of oppression. As a result, ethical eating requires different ways of thinking about these issues that reflect their interconnected nature, and we understand that this work will require creativity, patience, and resolve.

CALLS TO ACTION

Individual Actions

Recognizing that individual circumstances vary, we aspire to buy, raise, and consume food for ourselves and our families that:

- increases our proportionate consumption of plant-based foods, which increases the global access to calories, provides health benefits, and prevents injuring animals;
- minimizes the pain and suffering of animals by purchasing meat or seafood produced under

humane conditions, for those who choose to eat meat or seafood;

- minimizes the negative environmental effects of raising animals or plants by purchasing organically produced food, and seafood certified as responsibly farmed or harvested;
- minimizes transportation-related carbon dioxide emissions by obtaining foods locally produced through home or community gardens, farmers' markets, or community supported agriculture (CSA);
- provides farm workers with living wages and safe working environments;
- contributes to social harmony by encouraging communal eating;
- promotes health, consuming food in quantities that do not lead to obesity; and

We advocate for the benefit of animals, plants, food workers, the environment and humanity by:

- purchasing fair trade-certified products as available.
- asking food sellers and producers to label where their products come from to determine distance of transport and whether the products were irradiated or contain Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs);
- pressing food sellers to require that their suppliers certify the humane treatment of animals;
- supporting legislation that requires the labeling of products that are irradiated or contain Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), distribution of adequate ethical food supplies, effective safety inspection of food production, and realignment of agricultural subsidies to support growing more produce and the viability of small farmers; and
- protecting and encouraging organic food production and its producers.

Congregational Actions

As congregations, we aspire to:

- provide and sell more plant-based, organic, locally produced, and fair trade foods at congregational events;
- promote economic accessibility to safe, ethically produced food by organizing members to work for food justice through activities such as: urging grocery chains to locate stores in low-income neighborhoods, supporting local food co-ops, helping people obtain food stamps, advocating for increased funding to alleviate hunger, and

assisting local meals on wheels and food-bank programs;

- support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, and other relevant UU organizations in their efforts to ensure that everyone has adequate nutritious food, produced sustainably;
- provide educational programs for all ages that address the issues of environmental justice, world hunger, gardening, food preparation, and nutrition;

- become Green Sanctuary accredited and include ethical eating in programs;
- advocate for healthful food for school and other institutional meals; and
- engage in direct action in solidarity with workers and labor advocacy groups to support agricultural and food workers.

With gratitude and reverence for all life, we savor food mindful of all that has contributed to it. We commit ourselves to a more equitable sharing of the earth's bounty.

FIND OUT MORE

For more about Kant's Nebular Hypothesis, visit physicist [Dr. Russell McNeil's essay](http://russellmcneil.blogspot.com/2007/09/immanuel-kant-1724-1804.html) (at russellmcneil.blogspot.com/2007/09/immanuel-kant-1724-1804.html) on Kant.

These publications offer brief, easy-to-understand summaries of Kantian ethics:

Grassian, V. *Moral Reasoning: Ethical Theory and Some Contemporary Moral Problems* (Saddle River, NJ.: Prentice Hall, 1992; Chapter 10)

Kuehn, M. *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

Pojman, L. *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*. (Beverly, MA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1999; Chapter 7)

Sommers, C. *Right and Wrong: Basic Readings in Ethics* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1986; Chapter 1)

WORKSHOP 3: THE COLLECTIVE GOOD

INTRODUCTION

All action is for the sake of some end; and rules of action, it seems natural to suppose, must take their whole character and color from the end to which they are subservient. — John Stuart Mill, 19th-century British philosopher and civil servant

Many of us make our ethical decisions by trying to act in accordance with moral rules, such as "it is always wrong to kill another person" or "lying to someone is unacceptable." We follow these rules to the best of our ability, recognizing there are times when we fall short. This approach to ethics relies on the premise that there are moral truths underlying the ethical rules by which we live, and that it is our individual responsibility to be guided by and uphold these moral truths. For some, the seven Unitarian Universalist Principles are a set of moral rules that form the foundation of a rules-based approach to ethical living.

There are times when a rules-based morality does not adequately address the ethical dilemmas we face. For John Stuart Mill, an influential 19th-century British philosopher, whether or not moral rules are followed is not the important issue. What is important is the result or outcome of an ethical decision. Mills was a proponent of the school of ethical thought often referred to as utilitarianism or teleological ethics. This ethical system asks: What is the utility (the usefulness) of any particular decision we might make? What will be the outcome if we take (or do not take) a particular action? The goal in utilitarian ethics is to strive to attain the best possible outcome for the maximum number of people. Where a rules-based ethical system focuses on the individual's adherence to truth, a utilitarian ethical system focuses on communal welfare. In this system, individual needs matter less than the needs of the community and moral decisions are often driven by specific circumstances.

This workshop will introduce utilitarian ethics and examine some of the complexities inherent in a utilitarian ethical framework. We will consider: How do we determine what is morally "right" in a particular circumstance? How do we evaluate our options to determine which actions will truly benefit the largest number of people? Who "counts" in such a schema? How do we define "benefit"? Along with exploring reasons for adopting a utilitarian stance, we will consider a critique of such a stance, asking: If one takes the utilitarian/teleological form of ethical reasoning to its logical conclusion, could not any behavior be justified simply by staking claim to the greater good?

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters found in the program Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce utilitarian/teleological ethics, a moral framework concerned with outcomes rather than motivation, and with community rather than the individual
- Explore the fifth Unitarian Universalist Principle using the lens of utilitarianism/teleological ethics
- Guide participants to explore circumstances where a utilitarian ethical framework is or could be applied to moral decision making
- Examine the idea that in a democracy advocacy for particular decisions—or courses of action and reasons for decisions taken—are often framed in part by utilitarian arguments
- Consider ways in which values such as justice and inclusion are contained in Mill's notion of "greater good."

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about utilitarian/teleological ethics
- Identify times and circumstances when their behavioral choices are based on this framework of ethical decision making
- Explore the idea that morality should be based on the greatest good for the greatest number of people and identify the strengths and weaknesses of this approach
- Be able to identify values implicit in determining the "greater good" in a given situation and identify voices and perspectives represented by those values.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	2
Activity 1: Opening Scenario	10
Activity 2: Utilitarian Ethics	25
Activity 3: The Lesser of Two Evils	25

Activity 4: Democracy, Authority, and Utilitarian Ethics	25
Faith in Action: Transgender Inclusion	
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Social Justice Outreach — The Needs of the Few	30
Alternate Activity 2: Looking at Outcomes — Ethical Eating	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time for journaling, reflection, prayer, and/or meditation, using these focus questions:

- Think of a time when you had to make a moral/ethical decision and the options before you looked equally bad. Given that there was no ideal way forward, how did you decide what to do? How did you weigh the options for your decision? How did emotions inform your decision making?
- How did you feel after making the decision? Was the outcome what you had expected?
- Would you still make the same decision?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil, and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.
- Post group covenant, created in Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Welcome all participants and draw their attention to the agenda.

OPENING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.
- Practice reading the excerpt (below) from "The Basis of Morals," so you feel comfortable presenting it to the group.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share this passage from "The Basis of Morals," by John W. Chadwick, published in *The Unitarian Review and Religious Magazine*, VII, no. 1 (January 1877):

Thank heaven that as humanity goes forward, the standards of action are being brought more and more into conformity with the ultimate basis of morals, the highest social good. If half the energy that has been wasted in conformity to artificial standards had been spent in really trying to discover and do the things that make the security of life and property and domestic peace, how many furlongs further into chaos would be the standard of humanity planted this day! If instead of asking what is the requirement of the Bible, or the Church, or ancient precedent or immemorial custom, men had simply sought to know what things are most useful to humanity at large, and what of things hurtful might first be removed, how many of the now waste places would be glad! But the day so long desired is

surely coming. And when it is well here, then not only shall the earth appear the home of justice, but the will of God shall be done among us as it has never been

ACTIVITY 1: OPENING SCENARIO (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Share this scenario:

You are on a television game show. You are offered a choice of two doors to open. You are told that if you open door Number 1, you will receive a million dollars. If you open door Number 2, everyone in your neighborhood, except you and your family members, will receive a million dollars and will be legally prohibited from giving you any of their new-found wealth. What do you do and why?

Invite participants to speak when they are ready, assuring them that there is no correct way to answer these questions. Invite them to focus more on the reasoning behind their response than the response itself. How did they decide which option to choose? How did they decide what was "right?"

ACTIVITY 2: UTILITARIAN ETHICS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Excerpt from John Stuart Mill's](#) (included in this document) [Utilitarianism](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [About John Stuart Mill](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Review Handout 1, Excerpt from John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism* and copy for all participants. Optional: Invite a volunteer to prepare in advance to read the excerpt aloud, and give them Handout 1 in advance.
- Print Leader Resource 1, About John Stuart Mill, and familiarize yourself with it so you will feel comfortable presenting it to the group.

Description of Activity

Share Part I of Leader Resource 1, About John Stuart Mill.

Then, distribute Handout 1, Excerpt from John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism*. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud.

Invite comments and questions about the reading. After five minutes, present Part II of Leader Resource 1, About John Stuart Mill.

Introduce a discussion using these or similar words:

A utilitarian ethical framework invites us to think about the outcomes our actions will potentially create. Who will be affected by the expected outcome—and how? Which course of action would result in the greatest happiness or greatest good for the greatest number of people? Utilitarianism invites us to evaluate morality using a communal ethic based on the greater good, not just what may be good for us personally.

In writings explaining this ethical framework, John Stuart Mill argued that it is necessary to include those who are disenfranchised or in a minority position in the rights and privileges enjoyed by the majority, because protecting the rights and privileges of all is an essential requirement of both liberty and justice, which he perceived to be "good."

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- Does the outcome of a moral decision and action matter more than what got us there? Why, or why not?
- Where is the locus of moral authority in this ethical system? The self, the community, God, or some other source?
- Are there areas of our lives where we use utilitarian thinking? Where in your life are you most concerned with doing what is right not just for yourself but for others? Why have you placed the needs of others before your own in those instances?
- Our fifth Unitarian Universalist Principle affirms and promotes "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large." In which ways is the use of a democratic principle, in our congregations and in our country, an example of how we pursue the greatest good for the greatest number? In which ways is it not?
- To what extent does democracy—as we understand and practice it, both in our congregations and in our society—reflect Mill's idea that protecting the rights of those who are disenfranchised or in a minority is necessary for liberty and justice, and is, therefore, "good"?
- How does protecting the rights of all benefit all people?

ACTIVITY 3: THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - When have you had to make a choice between unappealing or downright undesirable options (i.e., what we sometimes call choosing the lesser of two evils)?
 - What was the situation?
 - What values were in conflict?
 - Did you apply utilitarian moral reasoning to your decision-making process?
 - Did your emotional reaction influence your eventual response/decision?

Description of Activity

Read aloud the posted questions for reflection. Invite participants to write or draw in their journals as a response which they will share with others after about five minutes.

Invite participants to create groups of three to share their stories. Allow ten minutes for small group conversation, and then re-gather the large group. Ask:

- In your groups, what did you discover about your decision-making process when confronted with a lesser of two evils situation?
- Did your group find examples of times when altruism or generosity (caring about the needs/interests of the many) trumped self-interest or self-preservation?
- What values did you uphold in your decision-making process? How did you determine which was the greater good?

Including All Participants

Some participants may have a hard time hearing in a room with many groups speaking at once. Invite small groups to move apart or provide areas for groups to meet outside the main room.

Create a large-print handout that includes the discussion questions to assist those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 4: DEMOCRACY, AUTHORITY, AND UTILITARIAN ETHICS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Susan Stanton's Story](#)" (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Print the story "Susan Stanton's Story," and prepare to read it aloud (or ask a volunteer to

read it, and provide a copy of the story in advance).

- Write on newsprint, but do not post:
 - Were utilitarian ethics, as explained by John Stuart Mill, at play in this situation? Why or why not?
 - The Commission argued that their decision was based on what they perceived as the greatest good for the greatest number of people? How did they decide what was "good"? What values or points of view did they uphold?
 - Would Mill have agreed with the Commission's decision? What actions would he consider "good" based on his understanding that liberty and justice are good?
 - Is "the greatest comfort for the greatest number of people" the same as "the greatest good for the greatest number of people?" What is the difference?

Description of Activity

Read aloud the story, "Susan Stanton's Story". Post newsprint questions and invite the group to discuss them.

After 15 minutes, turn the conversation to your own faith community. Remind participants that the fifth Unitarian Universalist Principle states that we hold as a value "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large." Ask:

- What intersections or similarities are there between utilitarian ethics and our fifth Unitarian Universalist Principle? Are there ways in which the two are in conflict?
- When is what a group or individual *wants* the same as what is in its best interest? Is there ever a difference between what a group wants and what is in its best interest? Who decides what is in a person's or group's best interest? Where is the locus of moral authority for making those distinctions and decisions? The self, the community, God, or some other source?
- Is "being comfortable" a "good?" When is comfort less good than other values? What values might represent a greater good than comfort?
- Can you envision situations where what the majority believes to be "the greater good" is ethically wrong? How do we confront that dilemma, individually and in our congregation? Is it possible to do so while still respecting democratic process?

Including All Participants

Create a large-print handout that includes the discussion questions to assist those who are visually impaired.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Customize Taking It Home and copy for all participants. You may wish to include this workshop's Faith in Action activity, this workshop's Find Out More section, and/or the Spiritual Preparation section of the workshop that is next in your series.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to share a word or phrase indicating something that they are taking away from the workshop. Distribute Taking It Home. Share Reading 699, "Philippians 4," from *Singing the Living Tradition*, as you extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: TRANSGENDER INCLUSION

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Transgender 101](#)

Preparation for Activity

- Find the [Transgender 101](#) page of resources on the Unitarian Universalist Association website. Print the page and copy for all participants. (Also, send participants the electronic link.)
- Find out if your congregation has already adopted policies and procedures that are inclusive and supportive of transgender individuals.
- Find out which organizations in your region are involved in transgender advocacy and education.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to use the UUA's Transgender 101 resources to learn about transgender identity. Distribute the handouts you have prepared, and lead the group to examine the section "10 Ways to be More Understanding and Welcoming of Transgender People." Discuss which actions your congregation already does well and which actions suggest areas where your congregation could grow. Decide which actions your group will initiate in your congregation. Decide how to

bring these proposed actions to the attention of your congregation.

Consider asking for volunteers to:

- Organize educational programs and events for your congregation about transgender identity, potentially using the suggested resources
- Contact local transgender education and advocacy groups and learn about their priorities, initiatives, and programs and ask how your congregation might help with their work
- Recruit and organize people from your congregation to support and help.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?
- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?
- Where was it easy for you to work together? Where was it difficult? What changes might you make for future workshops?
- Are there questions left over from this workshop that might be addressed in future workshops? If so, how will we address them?

Save the covenant newsprint to post at the next workshop. Review and assign tasks for the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

All action is for the sake of some end; and rules of action, it seems natural to suppose, must take their whole character and color from the end to which they are subservient. — John Stuart Mill, 19th-century British philosopher and civil servant

Between workshops, pay attention to policy decisions, agreements, or actions debated in your community, state, nation, or in the larger world. Consider these questions:

- What are the moral and ethical statements put forward to support particular policies, agreements, or actions?
- How often do such statements weigh the comfort of the majority as the greater good? What argument could be made for another measure of the greater good, for instance, the greatest good for the greatest number?

- In what ways does the process of adopting or changing laws, policies, or agreements reflect utilitarian thinking?

Notice times when you make a decision based on the premise that your decision will create an outcome that offers the greatest good for the greatest number of people. In those moments, ask yourself who is defining "good," and for whom. Who gets to say what is "good?" Who counts?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE OUTREACH — THE NEEDS OF THE FEW? (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [About John Stuart Mill](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Become familiar with your congregation's social justice efforts, particularly those aimed at supporting or assisting those in marginalized groups.
- Print Leader Resource 1, About John Stuart Mill. Read Part II so you are comfortable sharing it with the group.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

In this workshop we have noted that there are times when we make ethical decisions by choosing to do the most good to the greatest extent possible for the greatest number of people. A critique of this ethical framework is that it does not pay adequate attention to the needs of those who are not in the majority. The critique posits that there are times when the ethical choice is to do what is good for the few, because not doing so would lead to abuse or discrimination, or to some other form of "tyranny of the majority." A second critique is that often cultural dominance is equated with majority status. In other words, the group(s) that are the most visible and hold the most powerful positions in a community are assumed to be in the majority, whether or not they truly are.

Invite participants to identify people or groups in your community that, in some sense, are not part of the majority. Lead a discussion, using these questions:

- Are the named groups truly "minority" groups, in the sense that they are marginalized or their needs minimized? Or are they simply outside of the culturally dominant group? Is this an important question? Why or why not?

- How might a utilitarian ethical framework call for advocacy or support of groups or people who are a minority? What values are upheld by such advocacy and support? How do you see those values as part of the greater good?
- How are the groups or people you named negatively affected by being a minority? How might the language of a utilitarian ethical framework justify negative outcomes for these groups or people? Would Mill agree with the use of his ethical framework as justification for actions that lead to negative outcomes for those with a minority status?
- Is your congregation working in some way with any of the people or groups you named? If so, how so? [Share what you have learned about your congregation's efforts.] What is the ethical basis for your work with these people or groups? What values and "good" are you upholding?

Read aloud Part II of Leader Resource 1, About John Stuart Mill. Invite participants to move into groups of four to consider how a utilitarian ethical framework can support the social justice work of your congregation on behalf of people and groups who belong to a minority. Give each group newsprint and markers, and invite them to create a visual representation of the "good" outcomes that come from the congregation's social justice work. Ask: "How does this work create the greatest good to the greatest extent possible for the greatest number of people? Who decides and by what authority?" Give groups 15 minutes to work. Then invite each small group to share their visual representations with the large group. If possible, arrange to share the drawings with

others in your faith community as a way of affirming your congregation's social justice work.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: LOOKING AT OUTCOMES — ETHICAL EATING (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Workshop 2, Handout 1, [UUA Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Workshop 2, Handout 1, UUA Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating for all participants.

Description of Activity

Distribute the handout. Invite participants to read the statement, particularly paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8, and note the utilitarian ethical arguments that underlie the statement. If you investigated this statement as part of the workshop on Kantian ethics, explore how both frameworks are represented in this statement. Ask:

On what authority do the utilitarian assertions rest?

- Which of these arguments is compelling to you as a person striving to live a moral life?
- What actions are you called to by the arguments advanced in this statement of conscience?

STORY: SUSAN STANTON'S STORY

Transgender individuals face much discrimination in the United States, in part because their struggles and their journeys are not well understood. In the spring of 2007, a public battle arose in Largo, Florida, around the struggle of one transgender person.

Susan Stanton, then known as Steve, had been working as City Manager for the city of Largo for more than fourteen years and was a recent recipient of a sizable merit pay increase. Someone leaked to the local paper the fact that Stanton was in the midst of a gender transition from male to female. *The Saint Petersburg Times* published the story and "outed" Stanton against her wishes. Stanton's wife was already aware of her circumstances, but her 13-year-old son was not. Stanton rushed home the afternoon before the story broke in order to share her struggle first-hand with her son, whom she feared would be harassed at school following the public disclosure.

Once the news was published, there was an immediate outcry from local residents demanding that Stanton be fired. City Commission (city council) members were inundated with phone calls and emails from residents denouncing Stanton, describing her as "disgusting." One local Baptist minister went so far as to publicly claim that Jesus would want Stanton fired.

Stanton wanted to continue in her position as City Manager, a job which she enjoyed and at which she was successful. Local Unitarian Universalist ministers and lay people rallied in support of Stanton, arguing that job retention should be based on merit, and not on aspects of identity. There were, however, no legal protections in Largo that prohibited discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression. Within days of the initial newspaper article, Largo's City Commission held a highly emotional emergency hearing. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Commission voted to terminate Stanton's employment with the city. Several City Commissioners cited as justification for their votes their belief that the public had "lost confidence" in Stanton and, under those circumstances, Stanton could not be retained. In making this important decision, the Commission stood with the majority of residents, and argued that their actions led to a "good" outcome for the maximum possible number of people.

HANDOUT 1: EXCERPT FROM JOHN STUART MILL'S *UTILITARIANISM*

From Chapter 2 of John Stewart Mill's *Utilitarianism* (London: Longmans, Green, Ryder, and Dyer, 1871).

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure. To give a clear view of the moral standard set up by the theory, much more requires to be said; in particular, what things it includes in the ideas of pain and pleasure; and to what extent this is left an open question. But these supplementary explanations do not affect the theory of life on which this theory of morality is grounded—namely, that pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; ...

According to the Greatest Happiness Principle, the ultimate end, for the sake of which all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people), is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality. ... This, being, according to the utilitarian opinion, the end of human action, is necessarily also the standard of morality; which may accordingly be defined, the rules and precepts for human conduct, ... [which, if observed, would lead to the Greatest Happiness], to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation.

HANDOUT 2: UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON CONFRONTING GENDER IDENTITY DISCRIMINATION

Confronting Gender Identity Discrimination

2007 Responsive Resolution

Whereas the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations noted, in his June 21st report to the General Assembly, the work of our West Florida congregations on the issue of employment discrimination against transgender individuals, and

Whereas there has been no prior statement by the General Assembly specifically addressing our Association's views on transgender identity,

Be it resolved that the 2007 General Assembly affirms its commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of every human being, including transgender individuals.

We further resolve to express this spiritual value through our employment practices, educational efforts, congregational life, and public witness, and

Encourage member congregations and societies to explore with their communities the important differences between sexual orientation and transgender identity.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: ABOUT JOHN STUART MILL

Part I

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was a 19th-century British politician and political philosopher. Born and raised in London, Mill had a brilliant mind: He learned Greek starting at the age of three, and Latin and algebra when he was eight. He went on to serve the University of St. Andrews as Rector, and held various elected public positions. As a liberal political theorist he was deeply concerned about the role of government in promoting human welfare.

In his book, *Utilitarianism*, Mill introduced the idea that morally sound actions lead to outcomes that offer the greatest possible happiness to the greatest possible number of people. His idea can be rephrased this way: What is morally sound is that which produces the greatest good to the greatest extent possible.

Part II

Mill's utilitarianism was criticized at the time as potentially promoting a tyranny of the majority. Mill disputed this assertion, stating that "the greatest good for the greatest number" could only be correctly discerned in a climate where human liberty and rational judgment were valued. Mill was ahead of his time in many ways, speaking out forcefully against slavery, against censorship, and against the social construction of gender roles that oppressed women, basing those positions on a utilitarian ethical framework.

Mill's strong support for the rights of the oppressed highlights his position that to truly determine "the greatest good for the greatest number" in any given situation it is necessary to include those who are disenfranchised or in a minority position in the rights and privileges enjoyed by the majority. For him, such inclusion was an essential requirement of both liberty and justice, which he viewed as "good."

Mill was deeply influenced by the earlier work of English legal scholar Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), who was a Unitarian, but Mill was not affiliated with any religion. After John Stuart Mill's death, there was discussion of his religion in the *Unitarian Review and Religious Magazine*, which stated, "Mr. Mill [son of John Stuart Mill] testifies that his father died without the smallest wavering in his convictions on the subject of religion, died, that is to say, believing as to God and a life hereafter, that no grounds exist for any belief whatsoever; and holding in hatred ... not this or that religion, but religion itself as a hindrance to the world's comfort and improvement." (Charles Lowe, "The Religious View of John Stuart Mill," *Unitarian Review and Religious Magazine*, Vol. 1 (1874).)

FIND OUT MORE

A good resource for exploring John Stuart Mill is *Utilitarianism*, 4th ed., (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1871).

An accessible book on utilitarian ethics is Louis P. Pojman's *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2005).

Find CNN coverage of [Susan Stanton's story](#), including materials and interviews the family shared publicly.

WORKSHOP 4: CULTIVATING A VIRTUOUS CHARACTER

INTRODUCTION

The moral virtues are produced in us neither by nature nor against nature. Nature, indeed, prepares in us the ground for their reception, but their complete formation is the product of habit.
— Aristotle

The philosophies of Kant and of Mill examined in Workshops 2 and 3 provide two different frameworks for ethically sound decisions. Virtue ethics, the focus of this workshop, provides a third framework. Frequently traced back to Aristotle's influential work, *Nicomachean Ethics*, this approach to morality holds that cultivating and practicing virtues leads to virtuous character and ethical living. Our own virtuous behavior can, in turn, inform our community and shape the world around us. Virtue ethics holds that the individual cultivation of virtue is the foundation for societal transformation.

Virtue ethics, while often associated closely with Greek philosophy, is the approach taken by other important spiritual and ethical leaders. Jesus of Nazareth cultivated a virtuous life and exhorted his followers to live an examined life characterized by virtue. Mahatma Gandhi made this ethical framework the centerpiece of his world view. In modern times, the Dalai Lama is an example of a spiritual leader who strives to live a life of virtue. Unitarian Universalists need look no further than our own seven Principles to discover a call to virtuous living and the cultivation of character.

This workshop examines virtue ethics as a framework for our moral choices and actions. What does it mean to make cultivation of character the primary focus of our morality? In what ways is this approach sensible? In what ways might it present challenges? Participants explore what it means to live a life of virtue? What are important virtues to cultivate in our daily living? By what authority do we determine which virtues ought to be cultivated? How should we respond when we personally fall short of virtues we hold dear?

Activity 1, Opening Scenario, has two options. Read and consider them both and decide in advance which one you will use. Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters found in the program Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce virtue ethics

- Offer opportunities for participants to consider how adoption of this ethical framework would impact their actions and choices
- Strengthen connections among participants.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about virtue ethics and discover its strengths and challenges as an ethical framework
- Identify situations in which they already use this framework for ethical decision making
- Examine the lives of people considered virtuous
- Learn how virtue ethics has historically provided an ethical framework for civil disobedience/social protest, and explore whether this framework is needed to support social protest today.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	2
Activity 1: Opening Scenario	15
Activity 2: Reflection and Conversation	20
Activity 3: A Question of Virtue	15
Activity 4: A Life of Virtue — Mahatma Gandhi	20
Activity 5: The Middle Path	15
Faith in Action: Civil Disobedience and Virtue	
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: The Music of Justice Making	30
Alternate Activity 2: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time for journaling, reflection, prayer, and/or meditation, using these focus questions:

- What people—famous or not—do you think have lived a virtuous life? What actions and qualities can you point to that make their lives virtuous?

- What virtues are most important to you?
- What guides you when you decide your action is virtuous?
- Are there times when acting virtuously causes personal risk? Do you have experience with such risk-taking, perhaps in a social justice

stance? How do you view this kind of sacrifice? Is it worth it? Does being virtuous require risk-taking? Are there times when we must risk all for change and justice?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil, and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.
- Post group covenant, created in Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Welcome participants and direct their attention to the agenda.

OPENING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share Reading 562, A Lifelong Sharing, by Mother Theresa, from *Singing the Living Tradition*.

ACTIVITY 1: OPENING SCENARIO (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- This activity offers a choice of two scenarios. Consider carefully whether the first scenario can be safely discussed in the group. While being inclusive of sex offenders is an active issue that an increasing number of congregations must address, if you feel the topic is emotionally difficult territory for you or for participants, use the second scenario.

Description of Activity

Share one of these scenarios:

Scenario 1

A person discloses to your congregation's leadership that they are a convicted sex

offender, stating that they seek to establish open and honest relationships as they pursue spiritual and other forms of rehabilitation. In your opinion, should this individual participate in congregational life and/or become a member of your congregation? Why or why not?

Scenario 2

Your congregation recently awarded a Board member an annual award for exemplary "Moral/Ethical Leadership" within the congregation. Subsequently, it is discovered that this individual withdrew money from the congregation's bank accounts without authorization and used it to respond to an emergency plea for funds from a local shelter the congregation has a history of supporting financially. Some now say this person's award should be revoked and criminal charges filed. Others say this individual's actions demonstrate exactly why they were given the award in the first place. What is your reaction and what decision should the congregation make?

Invite participants to share and explain their reactions and responses. Ask: "What virtues (or deep-seated values) were at play?"

ACTIVITY 2: REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Variety of writing and drawing materials, such as pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils
- Handout 1, [Virtues](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Think of two or three virtuous individuals, living or not. Describe what qualities and actions they embody that lead you to think of them as virtuous.
- Copy Handout 1, Virtues, for all participants.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

One school of ethics, known as virtue ethics, holds that our sense of morality should be informed and guided by the virtues we hold dear. For example, if we value honesty, then honesty should be a framework that we use to guide and shape our ethical/moral choices and actions. The virtues we practice give rise to our

character. In this sense virtuous living is a form of self-cultivation and development of character. This approach to ethics, while often associated closely with Greek philosophy, has also been followed by other important spiritual and ethical leaders. Jesus of Nazareth cultivated a virtuous life and exhorted his followers to live an examined life characterized by virtue. Mahatma Gandhi made this ethical framework the centerpiece of his world view. In modern times, the Dalai Lama is an example of a spiritual leader who strives to live a life of virtue. As Unitarian Universalists we need look no further than our own seven Principles to discover a call to virtuous living and the cultivation of character.

Say that this activity explores how we understand virtue. Distribute Handout 1 and explain that it contains a list of some of the virtues participants might value in themselves and in others. Allow a couple of minutes for participants to look over the list. Call attention to the newsprint reflection prompt you have posted and invite participants to take five minutes to write or draw in journals. Have participants move into groups of three and respond to these questions:

- Which virtues did you identify as important in the people you identified as virtuous? Does their virtuous example inform the way you make ethical decisions?
- Which virtues do you believe are most important to cultivate?

Allow ten minutes for small group conversation, and then re-gather the large group. Ask:

- What lenses and perspectives did you bring to the scenario in the opening conversation? What virtues were at play in your response?
- How does personal experience impact or change our understanding of what is virtuous?

ACTIVITY 3: A QUESTION OF VIRTUE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

What we view as virtuous is frequently driven by context. The virtuous action in one situation may be different from the virtuous action given another set of circumstances. With that in mind, imagine that a friend does something that makes you angry. One extreme response on your part might be to explode with rage. The other extreme might be to say nothing at all.

Invite participants to make a list of all the possible actions one could make in this situation (exploding with rage, refusing to speak, explaining what made you angry, and so on) and record the list on newsprint. Go through the list and decide together whether or not each action is virtuous. Acknowledge that there may be differences of opinion; what one person views as virtue another may think is not virtuous at all. While participants may want to discuss differences at length, encourage them to make a general decision or agree to disagree and not get too bogged down. After going through the list, invite each participant to identify which one response or action they consider the most virtuous in this situation and share their reasoning. Point out that often how we decide what is virtuous is embedded in our cultural context, and that what is most virtuous in a given situation is often decided by implicit community, family, or group consensus, but rarely discussed. Invite participants to reflect on how difficult or easy it was to agree on which actions were virtuous when asked to consider them one by one. Ask: "Was there any difference in the ease or difficulty when you had to choose the overall most virtuous action?"

ACTIVITY 4: A LIFE OF VIRTUE — MAHATMA GANDHI (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Mahatma Gandhi](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print and review the story "Mahatma Gandhi," and prepare to read it aloud or invite a participant to read it. If a participant will read, give them the story in advance.
- Write on newsprint, and set aside:
 - In the light of Gandhi's example, how do you decide if you are doing too much, too little, or just enough to support a particular ethical/moral cause that is important to you?
 - If to live a moral life is to cultivate our character through virtuous decisions and actions, is constant vigilance and commitment required? What limits or challenges curtail your ability to live a moral life according to the philosophy of virtue ethics?

Description of Activity

Introduce the story using these or similar words:

Virtue ethics invites us to think about the role cultivation of virtue plays in our ethical decision making, and, more broadly, how virtue cultivation guides and shapes our lives. To what degree do we invite virtues such as egalitarianism, fairness, compassion, and justice to guide our lives? How does the practice of

virtue shape our character? What does living a life of virtue ask of us? The life of Mahatma Gandhi provides one example of how a deeply respected spiritual leader responded to the call of virtue.

Read the story "Mahatma Gandhi" aloud. Then, invite brief questions and comments about the role of virtue in Gandhi's life. You might ask: "What wisdom and example does Gandhi's life offer for our own lives? What challenges?" Post the newsprint and invite participants to spend a couple of minutes in silence reflecting on the two questions before turning to a person nearby to share. Allow five minutes of paired sharing. Then, invite participants to turn attention to the large group and to share responses and insights from the partnered conversations. If there is time, take the conversation deeper with these additional questions:

- How do we know whether or not we are living a virtuous life? Is the definition of virtue entirely subjective? By what authority do we decide which virtues are most important to cultivate?
- Does the virtuous path require causes to exist for which we are willing to put ourselves at risk?

Including All Participants

Create a large-print handout with the discussion questions, to assist those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 5: THE MIDDLE PATH (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Can civil disobedience be undertaken as a mean between extremes, a middle path? If so, how do you recognize the middle path? If not, why not?
 - How is the practice of civil disobedience grounded in the notion of upholding virtues?
 - How is civil disobedience still relevant as a form of social protest and transformation?

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words: Aristotle defined virtue as "the mean between extremes." For him, seeking the middle path, the one between two extremes, cultivated an even temperament—and thus, a virtuous character—that would serve us well in all the seasons of life.

The notion of the middle path is not unique to Aristotle. Great progressive thinkers throughout time have espoused the middle path, or nonviolent resistance, as a core value for social

transformation. In ancient Palestine, for instance, Jesus advocated resistance to injustice by rejecting both the violence of those who would overthrow the Roman occupation and the passivity of those who would accept it. In the 19th century, Henry David Thoreau, influenced by Hindu and Buddhist texts, wrote his major political work, *Civil Disobedience*. Thoreau's philosophy influenced Gandhi in the development of his nonviolent resistance movement. Gandhi, in turn, influenced Martin Luther King. These activists viewed nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience, or noncooperation with injustice as the middle path between passive acceptance and violent insurrection. They all believed that following the path of nonviolent resistance was following the path of virtue.

Introduce the posted questions and lead a discussion about the connection between cultivating a virtuous character and engaging in acts of nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience, or noncooperation with injustice.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Customize *Taking It Home* and copy for all participants. You may wish to include this workshop's Faith in Action activity, this workshop's Find Out More section, and/or the Spiritual Preparation section of the workshop that is next in your series.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to share a word or phrase indicating something that they are taking away from the workshop. Distribute *Taking It Home*. Share Reading 577 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "It is Possible to Live in Peace" by Mohandas K. Gandhi, and extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND VIRTUE

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Handout 2, [Twenty-nine UUs Arrested in Phoenix Protest](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Handout 3, [It Takes a Village to Hold a Protest](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Talk with your minister, religious educator, congregational leadership, or social justice committee to learn about contemporary national or local issues where nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience, or noncooperation with injustice is a possible strategy.
- Invite someone from the congregation or an organization the congregation supports to share their experience in participating in nonviolent resistance.
- If no guest speaker is available, plan to lead a discussion based on Handout 2, Twenty-nine UUs Arrested in Phoenix Protests, and Handout 3, It Takes a Village to Hold a Protest. Read both handouts. Research ways individuals might participate in or support similar or follow-up actions. Copy both handouts for all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants examine ways congregational and/or Unitarian Universalist movement-wide nonviolent resistance actions are grounded in the practice of virtue ethics.

Invite a member of the congregation or an organization the congregation supports to share their experience of engaging in or supporting nonviolent resistance. Ask your guest how they prepared or cultivated themselves before engaging in the action. Find out how individuals can participate in or support similar or follow-up actions. What is required? What virtues would one need to cultivate?

Variation

If you do not have a guest speaker, distribute handouts 2 and 3 and invite participants to read them. Discuss how people who engaged in civil disobedience prepared themselves for the action and how those who supported the civil disobedience prepared themselves. Share what you have learned about follow-up or similar actions. Discuss how individuals can participate in or support such actions: What would be required? What virtues would need cultivation?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?
- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?
- Where was it easy for you to work together? Where was it difficult? What changes might you make for future workshops?

- Are there questions left over from this workshop that might be addressed in future workshops? If so, how will we address them?

Save the covenant newsprint to post at each workshop. Review and assign tasks for the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

The moral virtues are produced in us neither by nature nor against nature. Nature, indeed, prepares in us the ground for their reception, but their complete formation is the product of habit.
— Aristotle

Pay attention to how you make moral decisions and examine the ethical commitments you honor in your day-to-day life. As you do so, consider these questions:

- Is your decision making influenced to any degree by the imperative to choose "the middle path"? If so, how do you decide what the virtuous middle path is?
- Is your spiritual life guided by a commitment to self-cultivation and self-growth? If so, which virtues do you seek to cultivate? At this time in your life, why have you chosen these particular virtues?

Find a trusted conversation partner and share your reflections, challenging one another to more fully cultivate the virtues you each deem most important.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: THE MUSIC OF JUSTICE MAKING (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, for all participants
- Optional: Copies of *Singing the Journey*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook supplement, for all participants
- Optional: Recordings of peacemaking or protest music, and a music player. You might invite participants to bring recordings to share
- Optional: Keyboard or other instrument for accompaniment

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with these hymns and choose two or three to highlight: In *Singing the Living Tradition*, Hymn 168, "One More Step;" Hymn 169, "We Shall Overcome;" and Hymn 348, "Guide My Feet." In *Singing the Journey*, Hymn 1014, "Standing on the Side of Love;" Hymn 1018, "Come and Go with Me;" and Hymn 1030, "Siyahamba."

- Optional: Arrange for an accompanist or song leader.
- Optional: Set up equipment to play recorded music.

Description of Activity

Say:

Music and justice-making often go hand in hand. Have you been a part of protests, sit-ins, marches, or any other activity related to justice where music and singing had a part?

Invite participants to share names of songs that come to mind when recalling those events. Invite reflections, comments, and observations on the use of music in social justice resistance or witness activities. Ask: "How is music a tool for cultivating personal virtue?"

Invite participants to closely examine the lyrics of the hymns you have selected. Ask:

- Under what circumstances have you sung these hymns?
- What virtues do the lyrics promote?

Lead the group to sing the hymns. Afterward, ask:

- What feelings emerge as you sing the hymns?
- How can singing cultivate virtuous character?

If participants have brought recorded music to share, invite them to do so and reflect on the virtues promoted by the music.

If there is time, lead a discussion, asking:

- Why do so many of our social justice songs have roots in communities of color?
- What impact does this have on our use of these songs?
- How do roots in communities of color affect how we, as a multicultural group, interact with and connect to these songs?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Frances Ellen Watkins Harper](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare to read the story "Frances Ellen Watkins Harper" to the group, or ask a participant to read it and, if possible, give the participant the story ahead of time.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Where can we identify the cultivation of virtue in the life of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper? What caused her to take action and create change?
 - Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was a Unitarian. How was the cultivation of virtue congruent with her Unitarian faith?
 - In our faith today what messages do you receive about living a virtuous life? (Consider our Principles, hymns, sermons, or social justice movements.)
 - What virtues do you cultivate in your life? How?
 - On what roots do you draw to support your actions? Family? Faith community or tradition? Broader community? Other roots?

Description of Activity

Share the story, "Frances Ellen Watkins Harper." Lead a discussion guided by the posted questions.

STORY: FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER

By Polly Peterson, originally published in *Stirring the Nation's Heart: Eighteen Stories of Prophetic Unitarians and Universalists of the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, 2010).

In the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the year 1858, a young woman entered a streetcar and sat down. The conductor came to her and insisted she leave, but she stayed quietly in her seat. A passenger intervened, asking if the woman in question might be permitted to sit in a corner. She did not move. When she reached her destination, the woman got up and tried to pay the fare, but the conductor refused to take her money. She threw it down on the floor and left.

What was that all about?

It was all about racism. The white conductor was giving the woman on the streetcar, Frances Ellen Watkins, a hard time because she was African American, and Watkins was having none of it. She believed in equality. She believed in treating all people with dignity and respect. Her work obliged her to travel from place to place, and she was used to enduring prejudice and injustice. She had the courage not to let it stop her.

Frances Ellen Watkins was born in 1825 in Maryland, when slavery was still legal. Born to free parents, she was never a slave. But by the age of three, she was an orphan, living with relatives in Baltimore. Her sad situation had one fortunate outcome. Her uncle William Watkins ran a school called the Academy for Negro Youth, and Frances received an excellent classical education there. Such schools for blacks were very rare.

By the age of fourteen, Frances had to leave school and go to work. She became a domestic servant. But this unfortunate situation also offered an opportunity. The Quaker family she worked for owned a bookshop and also had books in the house. Whenever time allowed, they gave her free access to all those books. She was an avid reader and soon became known as a writer too. By the age of twenty, she had written enough poems and essays to publish a small book.

Life for free blacks in Maryland was difficult and became worse after the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. William Watkins was forced to close his school. He moved to Canada with some of the family, but Frances, at age twenty-five, moved to the free state of Ohio, where she took a job teaching sewing. Two years later, she moved to Pennsylvania, where she continued to teach. Her heart told her that educating black children was the most important work in the world, but she soon realized that managing fifty-three unruly pupils in rural Pennsylvania was not the right job for her.

While she considered what to do next, events in her home state gave her a new aspiration. Maryland passed a law saying that any free person of color who entered the state would be arrested and sold into slavery. Frances Watkins heard about a young man who unwittingly crossed into Maryland and was sold to a Georgia slaveholder. He escaped but was recaptured and sent back to Georgia, where he soon died. "Upon that grave," Watkins wrote to a friend, "I pledged myself to the Anti-Slavery cause."

Watkins moved to Philadelphia, where there was a substantial community of well-educated and successful blacks. Homeless and friendless, she found her way to William Still, a leader in the African American community. Still was chairman of the Vigilance Committee, organized to assist runaway slaves passing through Philadelphia. His home was the busiest station on the Underground Railroad—a place where people fleeing from slavery could rest and find assistance. Watkins met many fugitives there and heard their heartrending stories.

For Watkins, the antislavery cause opened a whole new career. Abolitionist papers began publishing her work, and, in 1854, she gave a public lecture on "The Education and the Elevation of the Colored Race." She gave several more lectures that same week, and soon she had a full-time job as a traveling lecturer for the State Anti-Slavery Society of Maine. She drew large audiences, and judging from newspaper accounts and reviews, she did not disappoint them. New Englanders had long disapproved of women who spoke in public, but opinions were beginning to change, and Frances Watkins was a novelty. Audiences, whether black or white, male or female, wanted to hear this eloquent woman of color who outshone nearly all other orators on the circuit. They were charmed by her musical voice, her well-reasoned arguments, and her poetic language. She published a book of poems in 1854, and thousands of people who attended her lectures bought her book after hearing her speak.

She donated most of the money she earned from her books to the antislavery cause. Whenever she could, she sent a few dollars to William Still for the Vigilance Committee and the fugitives. At one point, he must have admonished Watkins to keep more of her earnings for herself. She wrote back, "Let me explain a few matters to you. In the first place, I am able to give something. In the second place, I am willing to do so." In fact, she was more than willing and able. To her, helping humanity was a sacred calling, and she felt blessed to be able to do it. "Oh, is it not a privilege," she wrote to a friend, "if you are sisterless and lonely, to be a sister to the human race, and to place your heart where it may throb close to down-trodden humanity?"

Watkins supported a movement called Free Produce, which encouraged people to boycott all products tied to slave labor. "Oh, could slavery exist long if it did not sit on a commercial throne?" she wrote. "Our moral influence against slavery must be weakened, our testimony diluted if ... we are constantly demanding rice from the swamps, cotton from the plantations, and sugar from the deadly mills."

She hoped that blacks would establish a network of schools, newspapers, and churches dedicated to the betterment of themselves and each other. She believed that an important goal of antislavery work was to teach her people "how to build up a character for themselves—a character that will challenge respect in spite of opposition and prejudice; to develop their own souls, intellect and genius, and thus verify their credentials."

In 1860, Frances Ellen Watkins married Fenton Harper. When war broke out between the North and the South, she was living on a small farm in Ohio. But her husband died after less than four years of marriage, leaving Frances with a little daughter. She returned to the

lecture circuit and traveled throughout the North, supporting the war effort and encouraging the Union Army to allow black troops to join them in the fight.

The Civil War ended slavery in America, leaving blacks with great hopes but also enormous problems. Frances Harper continued to give speeches and lectures, working in the South now, as well as the North. She did all she could to defend, support, and educate the newly freed blacks.

Frances Harper advocated for equality and reforms for the rest of her life. The racist rhetoric of her day was ugly and white people who harmed or even murdered blacks usually went unpunished, yet she did not give in to anger or despair. Her words helped Americans across racial lines understand their common humanity and common yearnings. She believed she could contribute to the betterment of society by uplifting her listeners, and she hoped that her life might "gladden the earth." She shone a light on injustice so that others might see it more clearly—but she remained confident that some day, there would be liberty and justice for all.

STORY: MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi is among the many great leaders who placed virtuous living at the center of their lives. Gandhi was a spiritual leader and nationalist in the struggle for Indian independence from Britain. While widely considered a deeply spiritual, self-sacrificing, visionary leader, Gandhi was controversial in many quarters of Indian society, alternately accused of being too radical on the one hand, and too gradualist on the other.

Mohandas K. Gandhi, later known as Mahatma Gandhi, was born and raised in colonial India. As a young man, he studied law at University College London in England and used his time there to learn about English society and its ethical framework. He was active in social issues in law school, but his first position as an attorney, in Johannesburg, South Africa, gave him the opportunity to more fully advocate for social justice.

In South Africa, Gandhi encountered many forms of legal and socially accepted discrimination against people and communities of color. On one occasion, the judge of a court in which Gandhi was practicing law ordered him to remove his turban, a symbol of ethnic, religious, and national identity. Gandhi frequently encountered discrimination on public transportation, as non-whites were required to move to lesser classes of service to make room for whites. In 1906, the government of the Transvaal region specifically targeted residents of Indian origin with a law that "Asiatics" must register and carry identity cards. Gandhi's tolerance for insults and routine discrimination reached a breaking point. Incensed, he pioneered his *satyagraha* (truth force) opposition movement, advocating nonviolent noncompliance with unjust laws. He made global headlines in 1908 for publically burning his identity card in front of South African policemen. He was promptly arrested and jailed.

These pivotal experiences of social protest gave Gandhi a reputation as a leader and a footing to become a leader of the national independence movement upon his return to India in 1915. In India, he developed his *satyagraha* philosophy further, and, with his leadership, it became the cornerstone of the Indian struggle for independence. Gandhi famously opposed a British requirement that Indians purchase salt, which was heavily taxed to raise funds to support the continued existence of British Imperial rule in India. He led a march to India's coast where protesters collected sea salt rather than purchasing it, defying colonial law. He advocated undermining unjust British laws by protesting a requirement that all processed cotton in India be imported from Britain. Imported processed cotton was costly and the surcharges were meant to benefit businesses in England at the expense of the Empire's Indian subjects. Gandhi successfully led a homespun cotton movement, urging supporters to spin their own cotton, rather than purchase cloth made in Britain. For the rest of his life he wore the simple, white homespun cloth he made for himself.

For some, Gandhi was too radical. He spoke publicly and repeatedly about the need to abolish the Hindu caste system, a religiously sanctioned form of social control. He believed that the social stratifications of the caste system prevented people from appreciating the fullness of one another's humanity. Conservative Hindus rebelled at this notion, pointing out that the caste system is enshrined in Hindu scripture.

For others, Gandhi was not radical enough. As he fought for Indian independence, he repeatedly spoke of the need to go slowly and accept small victories along the way, to remain nonviolent while resisting oppressive structures. For those who believed that Indian independence was a political and civil right, Gandhi's willingness to settle for compromises was a great disappointment.

Gandhi's commitment to social reform was characterized by his willingness to risk his health and face death, if need be, in support of the values he held dear. For example, at several points during the struggle for Indian independence, Gandhi vowed to abstain from all food as a strategy to focus world attention on British colonial rule in India. He also fasted to protest violent action on the part of Indian independence supporters. Gandhi's hunger strikes had a strong spiritual component; his purpose in engaging in such strikes was to move people to work toward what he believed was the morally, ethically, and spiritually right outcome—a nonviolent British withdrawal from India.

Gandhi was a social and spiritual leader of great depth and foresight. He transformed daily, practical tasks and issues into potent symbols that helped organize nonviolent resistance to British rule and capture the hearts and minds of Indians and Britons alike. His example serves as a model of how a social protest movement grounded in the cultivation of personal virtue can capture the imagination of millions and change the world.

HANDOUT 1: VIRTUES

acceptance	assertiveness	attention	autonomy
awareness	balance	caring	caution
charity	citizenship	cleanliness	commitment
compassion	confidence	conscientiousness	consideration
contentment	cooperativeness	courage	creativity
curiosity	dependability	determination	diligence
discernment	empathy	encouragement	endurance
enthusiasm	equanimity	fairness	faithfulness
flexibility	foresight	forgiveness	fortitude
friendliness	generosity	gentleness	goodness
gratitude	helpfulness	honesty	honor
hopefulness	hospitality	humility	humor
impartiality	independence	individualism	integrity
intuition	justice	kindness	knowledge
loyalty	mercy	moderation	modesty
nonviolence	nurturing	openness	optimism
order	patience	peacefulness	perseverance
prudence	purposefulness	reason	resilience
respectfulness	responsibility	reverence	self-awareness
self-confidence	self-control	self-discipline	self-reliance
self-respect	sensitivity	service	sharing
sincerity	spirituality	strength	sympathy
tactfulness	temperance	tenacity	thankfulness
thoughtfulness	trustworthiness	truthfulness	understanding
unselfishness	vigilance	wisdom	

HANDOUT 2: TWENTY-NINE UUS ARRESTED IN PHOENIX PROTEST

Reported by Donald E. Skinner, and originally published in *UU World*, August 2, 2010.

Twenty-nine Unitarian Universalists, including eight ministers, were arrested in Phoenix, Ariz., for acts of civil disobedience protesting Arizona's strict anti-illegal immigration law.

Among those arrested were Unitarian Universalist Association President Peter Morales and the Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, minister of the UU Congregation of Phoenix. They were among 150 UUs, many from out of state, who came to Phoenix for actions in support of immigrant families on Thursday, July 29, the day Senate Bill 1070 went into effect. Opponents of SB1070 say it encourages racial profiling by police, although a federal judge issued an injunction July 28 that blocked several controversial provisions of the law.

UUs were among hundreds of people who swarmed into downtown streets, blocking traffic at midday in the vicinity of the Fourth Avenue Jail and the offices of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Arpaio, who calls himself "America's toughest sheriff," is a strong supporter of anti-immigrant legislation, launching workplace raids and authorizing the arrest and deportation of thousands of undocumented people.

Morales and Frederick-Gray were arrested as they blockaded the prisoner intake entrance at the jail with three other UUs and members of Puente, a Hispanic human rights group. One of those arrested at the jail entrance was Salvadore Reza, a Puente leader who came to the UUA General Assembly in Minneapolis in June to invite UUs to Phoenix to act in concert against SB1070. Most of the other UUs were arrested as they blocked a city street outside the sheriff's office several blocks away. Across the downtown area similar blockades were undertaken by other groups.

UUs were acting in support of local immigrant groups, including Puente, an affiliate of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network. In all, more than 80 people were arrested Thursday.

The demonstrations went forward as planned, even though a federal judge blocked key parts of the law from going into effect, because a higher court could reverse that decision. As written, SB1070 would have authorized local police to check the immigration status of people already stopped or detained if a "reasonable suspicion" existed that they were undocumented; the law also would have made it a crime for undocumented workers to solicit or perform work. Under the new ruling, both provisions have been removed, although much of the

law remains, including a part making it a misdemeanor to harbor or transport undocumented people.

Phoenix police and sheriff's deputies allowed the blockades to go on for one to two hours before arresting those who refused to move. Arrests began around noon on Thursday; prisoners were released overnight or Friday morning. Court appearances were set for some in mid-August. Most were charged with obstructing a public roadway and with failure to obey police, both misdemeanors.

Events started early on Thursday. Some UUs were at the State Capitol in Phoenix at 4:30 a.m. to march about a mile to Trinity Episcopal Cathedral for an interfaith worship service. UUs marched in support of a group of mostly Hispanic and Latino/a people who have held a daily vigil at the Capitol since SB1070 was approved in April. The vigil ended Thursday morning out of fear that some participants, who are undocumented, might be arrested.

The nearly two-hour service at the cathedral included Roman Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Muslim, Jewish, Unitarian Universalist, and nondenominational faith group representatives. A rainbow lit up the sky just before the service began, following a rainstorm that passed through overnight. A mariachi band participated in the service, as did a combined choir that included many UUs. During the service immigrant family members told stories of being separated from loved ones.

During the service, Frederick-Gray noted that her congregation includes families separated by deportations as well as the family of a police officer who was killed. She received strong applause when she said, "We must not be intimidated, and we must not be silent about where we stand. We must be clear that we stand on the side of love, that we stand on the side of family unity, that we stand for justice. We will not let more families be torn apart."

From the cathedral, UUs and others marched downtown, gathering in Cesar Chavez Plaza amid a complex of city and county government buildings, before beginning the blockade.

There were echoes of the 1960s civil rights movement in Phoenix. Tempie Taudte, from the UU Church of Tampa, Fla., says she was too busy graduating from college in the sixties to do anything. But at General Assembly this year she made a decision to come to Phoenix. "Now I have time, and I want to give back, in part because I didn't do anything then." On Wednesday she decided to risk arrest the following day. "It breaks my heart to know that families are being disrupted and parents taken away," she said. "I want the rest of the country to hear us. I'm also concerned that other states, including mine, will try to adopt something like this."

Taudte was indeed arrested Thursday when she sat down in the street and refused to move. After her release Friday afternoon she called her experience "life changing." She said she plans to go back to Florida and challenge her congregation to get even more active than it has been on immigration issues.

The Rev. Wendy von Zirpolo, minister of the UU Church of Marblehead, Mass., and president of UU Allies for Racial Equity, was arrested at the county jail with Morales and Frederick-Gray. The experience was "physically frightening," she said. "The experience validated much of what I understand about white privilege and racism." She said that while she experienced some roughness during the arrest and the jail experience was harsh, fellow inmates of color were treated far worse.

Held overnight in a cell with as many as 30 other women, von Zirpolo said the group bonded, even those people who had been arrested for other issues. "It was an unintended consequence of their strategy to disrupt our sleep by moving us around. Each time, we would share names and origins. We sang together, held those who needed to cry, demanded medical attention for our sisters in need, and most importantly, listened to each other's stories. We made community."

The Rev. Gregory Scott Ward, minister of the UU Church of the Monterey Peninsula in Carmel, Calif., said being in jail changed him. "I no longer think I'm different from other people. I was surprised by how quickly one's humanity can be diminished when wearing prison stripes and the pink socks and pink underwear they make you wear. And how that humanity is restored when you find out that people are waiting for you when you come out."

UUs who had not been arrested held a late evening candlelight vigil outside the jail Thursday night, bringing a guitar and flute and singing songs in Spanish and English. A few people remained all night, to be there when fellow UUs were released from jail.

Unitarian Universalists were the most visible religious group in Phoenix. Many wore the yellow T-shirts of the UUA's Standing on the Side of Love campaign. UUA Moderator Gini Courter said, "On the street we were clearly identifiable as religious people. We lived our faith in a very public way. People were coming up to us and thanking us for being there."

As a consequence, Morales was in constant demand for interviews. Dea Brayden, special assistant to the president, said Morales was interviewed 15 times by local, national, and international media. After he was released from jail, Morales participated in yet another press conference. When asked by a reporter if blocking streets is the best way to address human rights issues, he said, "We want to interfere with the incredible intimidation that is going on here. We as people of faith are called upon to take action to stop that. This is what happened in Selma. This is in the greatest tradition of

America. While we are law-abiding citizens there are times when the laws are so immoral they need to be changed. That's what responsible citizens do."

Courter said this week's efforts build on the long-term work of UU congregations in Arizona, as well as local human rights groups like Puente and the National Day Laborer Networking Organization, in confronting racism and immigration injustices. She said, "I have seen us take our calling very seriously here. Our ministers and lay people have taken some real risks. Our work here is a substantial move toward living our UU values in a democracy. And there is so much more for us to know and learn."

"What we need to do now is build capacity to do this work," Courter said. "We need congregations to take seriously the fact that their delegates at General Assembly this year chose immigration reform as the next Study/Action Issue. We need congregations offering Spanish and learning hymns of other cultures and building partnerships with groups in their communities. There is such a critical role for Unitarian Universalism in this human rights struggle."

The Rev. Kenneth Brown, district executive for the UUA's Pacific Southwest District, which includes Arizona, said, "I have been doing this work for 45 years, and this was one of the most meaningful events I've been involved with. What we hope happens now is that the people who came here take this issue home and work on it there. This is the civil rights issue of our era."

The main action happened Thursday, but that wasn't the end of things. On Friday, members of Puente, the Ruckus Society, the Catalyst Project, the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, and Let's Build a U.S. for All of Us, were arrested when they tried to prevent sheriff's deputies from conducting an immigration sweep. Salvador Reza was arrested again while watching events from across the street. For the second night in a row, Unitarian Universalists held a vigil outside the jail until Reza and others were released.

The UU Congregation of Phoenix and the Valley UU Church in Chandler, Ariz., served as headquarters for last week's events. Events were also held across the country, in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia, in support of the protests against SB1070.

Delegates to the UUA's 2010 General Assembly voted to hold a "justice General Assembly" focused on immigration and human rights in Phoenix in 2012; they also passed a resolution condemning SB1070 and similar legislation in other states.

Dan Furmansky, campaign director of Standing on the Side of Love, the UUA's campaign against identity-based oppression, said that UUs made a real difference in Phoenix this week. "Media outlets across the world have images of SB1070 protests with our message of bright yellow 'Love' emblazoned everywhere. Our partners striving for immigrant justice know that their

struggle is our struggle, and that we stand on the side of love with them for the long haul. Sheriff Joe Arpaio has met a new form of resistance that brought greater scrutiny to his actions. And those who were arrested showed that there are people of faith who feel morally compelled to put their bodies and their freedom on the line when injustice pronounces itself with an exclamation point and demands a response."

The Rev. David Miller, minister of the UU Fellowship of San Dieguito in Solana Beach, Calif., wrote in an e-mail after last week's events that he believed events in Phoenix marked a turning point for Unitarian Universalism. "It was phenomenal to be part of a well-coordinated effort of civil disobedience with Unitarian Universalists from every corner of this country."

He added, "I was personally thanked many times for being there—the desk clerk and maintenance person at

the hotel, someone on the mayor's staff who I met at Starbucks, people in the street. Finally, as I stood on the street corner watching those who had volunteered to get arrested stake their claim to the street, I heard a young African-American girl turn to her mother and say, 'What are they doing?' Her mother replied, 'Do you remember what I told you about Dr. Martin Luther King? That is what they are doing.' I broke into tears.

"Growing up just after the Vietnam era . . . I have never truly felt a part of a great struggle for human rights that has moved my soul. Now, with the struggle for marriage equality and for basic human rights in Arizona, I feel so honored and called to do whatever I can. The desire to do this work is one of the primary reasons I felt called to the ministry. I am filled with deep gratitude for being a part of this act of love, and I have so much hope for our future."

HANDOUT 3: IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO HOLD A PROTEST

Written by Kat Liu, and originally published in the blog *Inspired Faith, Effective Action*, August 12, 2010. Used with permission.

Let me start by saying that I am not a "protest" kind of person. My experience with numerous protests is that a lot of people assemble, shout angry slogans, maybe sing a few songs, and then go home, leaving piles of garbage in their wake. No matter how much I cared about an issue it always seemed to part of me like protests were something that we "attend" the way that one might attend a rock concert, and that they were geared more towards letting the participants feel good about having "done something" than actually effecting change. For that reason, I approached the Day of Non-Compliance (July 29th) in Phoenix with some personal apprehension. Since I knew that I was not planning on getting arrested, I wondered then what exactly it was that I would be doing. Was I flying two-thirds of the way across the country just to attend a protest? But I tried to approach the coming days with an open heart—letting the Spirit guide me. At six a.m. Thursday, we arrived at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral for an interfaith service. [A rainbow hung high in the sky, seeming to make its arc right over Trinity.](#) (at www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=324180&id=135542546464323&ref=fbx_album) Seeing it, my heart leapt with hope. I thought of the biblical story of God's promise to His [sic] people. I thought of the moral arc of the universe bending towards justice. After the service, we started marching toward downtown. So far, this was not unlike other rallies/protests/marches/vigils that I had attended. But it was during the march that I first noticed them—people carrying plastic trash bags collecting water bottles and other refuse from marchers, so that the streets remained clean. Cleaning up after ourselves? What a novel concept! How lacking in sense of privilege! I smiled at the young Latino man carrying the garbage bag and felt that he was playing a role as important as any cleric who spoke from the pulpit or any of the rally organizers.

When we got to Cesar Chavez Plaza, I saw that Puente (a local Phoenix movement with whom we're partnering) had set up a staging area where bottles of water cooled in kiddie wading pools full of ice. Two cots were available for those who fell ill. Handmade signs were available for those who wanted to carry them. Those of us who were not going to get arrested made sure that others had plenty of water to drink, grabbing bottles from the kiddie pools and handing them out to everyone, including the police officers who must have been roasting under their riot gear. Someone from the staging area called for volunteers to run sitting pads over to the demonstrators at the intersection in front of the Wells

Fargo Building (Arpaio's office). I was handed a pile of bath towels that had been cut in half and then sewn to an insulating backing, to protect people's behinds and legs from the baking asphalt. Wow, I thought, they had prepared for everything. Little did I know.

Much later, after watching [the last of our people get loaded into the police paddy wagon](#) (at www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=324211&id=135542546464323&ref=fbx_album), I started heading towards the Fourth Avenue jail where other demonstrators—including Peter Morales, Susan Frederick-Gray, and Puente's Salvador Reza—had blocked the jail entrance. On my way, I stopped by the staging area to see if I could carry some bottles of water over. I was told that there was plenty of water at the jail already but I could carry over two spray bottles for cooling people down. I walked the two blocks with the spray bottles alone—a curious sense of solitude given the frenetic energy all around me, including [the beating blades of a police helicopter overhead](#) (at www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=324205&id=135542546464323&ref=fbx_album). Once at the jail site, I looked for red faces to whom to offer a cooling spray of water. (By the time the 4th Ave. protesters were arrested some time later; I was pretty red-faced myself.) Roaming the crowds, I also saw volunteer medics coming to the aid of those for whom water was no longer enough.

Those of us who had not been arrested straggled back to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix (UUCP) during the mid- to late-afternoon. We ate some food. We cooled off as best we could. We attended to those of us who had succumbed to heat exhaustion. But now what next? Do we just wait at the church? Go back to our hotel or homestays? That didn't seem right. The answer came from Puente, who had had the foresight to apply for a permit to hold an all-night vigil at the jail. It turns out that whenever one of their own is in jail, they hold vigil so that no one is released out to an empty street—every member who was arrested comes out to cheers and hugs. So, with nightfall, we boarded our vans and headed over to the jail. Puente people had already been there since 4 p.m. [We lit candles. We prayed. We sang.](#) (at www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=324216&id=135542546464323&ref=fbx_album&fbid=142743255744252) We tried to sing in Spanish. (Note to self: That is something we have to work on before we get to the vigil.) Word came that the 4th Ave. Arrestees would be arraigned at 11 p.m., which meant they would be released in the wee hours of the morning. A group of us stayed all night to greet them as they got out.

Friday dawned, tentative. Those who had been arrested in front of the Wells Fargo Building would be arraigned at 10 a.m., which meant they would be out by early afternoon. Members of UUCP bought food and fed us breakfast/lunch. Some of us volunteered to go over to

the offices of Puente and the lawyers who were helping us to see if there was a way to pitch in. Others headed to the jail to be there when people got out. By mid-afternoon, all of our people had been released, and we started packing up the base of operations at UUCP to head over to Valley UU in Chandler, AZ. The plan had called for a [potluck dinner](#) (at www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=346533&id=135542546464323), followed by a Taize worship service and debriefing. As far as we were concerned, we were done (for this round—we knew there would be others). At the potluck, we were told that the delicious cheese enchiladas and chicken tamales were made by Puente, in appreciation for our participation. Once again, I thought, they really understand community.

We had not even finished our worship service when the word came—more people had been arrested. That part was not too surprising as we knew that our partners intended to keep up the pressure by demonstrating in front of Arpaio's Tent City prison. But what sent a shock wave through all of us was word that Salvador Reza, who had already spent the previous night in jail, had been taken in by Sheriff Joe Arpaio's deputies even though he was across the street and nowhere near the site of the protest. I could call that moment a decision point—the kind of moment that determines what kind of people we were going to be by how we respond. I could call it that but in truth people responded so quickly that there was never any doubt. We packed up as quickly as we could. Audra opened up the boxes of yellow "Love" t-shirts, offering a free clean one to anyone going to the vigil. We loaded our vans and cars, and away we went ... to Tent City. I had wanted to see Arpaio's notorious prison but did not know it would be under such circumstances.

By the time I got to the vigil across the street from Tent City, it was in full swing. People lined the street—[an intermingling of Puente and Standing on the Side of Love signs](#) (at www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=346536&id=135542546464323&ref=fbx_album). A drummer stood at the center, with at least one person with a smaller drum accompanying him. UUs and Puente people took turns leading chants (so that no one got too tired). Some of us held signs that said "Honk if you oppose SB1070!" and a steady stream of cars flew by, many of them honking. We were especially gratified whenever a bus would honk. At least two different people walked up and down the length of the vigil, holding smoldering sage—blessing and protecting every one of us. As had happened the previous day, people handed out water continuously. About two hours or so into the vigil, women started handing out bean burritos and tortas with some kind of meat, and little ice-cold cups of lemonade. It was another thing that they had thought of. We on the

outside supported those inside the jail by keeping vigil, but the vigilers too were supported, ensured that standing outside holding signs and chanting did not mean going hungry or thirsty.

At one point a local leader played the drum while chanting a sacred song. Instinctively, we gathered round him in concentric circles—as if the drum were the center of our little solar system. It was a deeply spiritual moment, not only because of the drumming/chanting but because our people—UUs and Puente—were united as one. The only sour note was when, at the end, a handful of UUs started clapping. In Euro culture, that is a sign of appreciation, but it also tends to turn the ritual into a "performance." The leader admonished us "Don't clap! This is sacred." Oh well, we are two groups learning how to be together. There will be small mistakes. (Note to self: Instructions on not clapping should be part of our orientation for future groups of UUs.)

After 10:15 or so, after we had stayed long enough to be featured on the local Fox affiliate, we packed up our vans to move the vigil over to the 4th Ave. jail. Word had come that Sal had been moved there. Once again, people—both Puente folks and UUs—picked up every bit of trash that we had generated. When we were done, you would not have been able to tell that dozens of people had just been there. I climbed into the cool AC of the van. Such relief. I was so tired. I did not know how I would be able to stand for another set of hours, however long, once we got to the 4th Ave. location. But I knew I had to. With grim determination I got out of the van with my fellow passengers and we walked towards the jail. We heard music.

Puente folks who had arrived before us had set up a speaker and they were blasting salsa music. People were dancing on the sidewalk. My heart filled with joy. It was a lot easier to dance than it was to stand. These people knew how to throw a protest!—how to make it so that everyone felt involved and important, so that everyone was nourished physically and spiritually, so that the streets were cleaner for our being there, and so that everything was infused with both reverence and joy. We danced with crazy happiness, grateful for these last few days. When a few sheriffs opened the doors to take a look at us, we danced over to greet them and invite them to join us. (They retreated back into the building.) That gesture—loving and inviting into community, joyful even in the face of oppression—epitomized to me what our days in Phoenix were all about. I plan to go back to Phoenix and learn more from our partners, Puente (and others). But even if for some reason I don't, I will never forget the lessons learned in Phoenix. It turns out that I am a "protest" kind of person after all, when it's done right. And to do it right, it takes a village to hold a protest.

FIND OUT MORE

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WORKSHOP 5: NATURAL, LEGAL, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. — The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations, December 10, 1948

Various national and international agreements assert the existence of and proclaim ethical commitments to particular rights. Some are the [United States Constitution](#) and [Bill of Rights](#), the [Canadian Human Rights Act](#), the [African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights](#), the [American Convention on Human Rights](#), the [European Convention on Human Rights](#), and the [United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights](#). These agreements have not been crafted easily. Over time, there has been much debate about the nature of "rights," and the difference between "natural rights," with which we are naturally imbued because we are human; and "legal rights," which result from political and/or democratic processes. "Human rights" is yet a third category, comprising norms the international community has agreed to through treaty. Enforcement of agreements about human rights often depends on political and diplomatic processes. Diplomats, academics, and citizenry continue to ask: What is the source of human rights? What authority grants them? Are they inherent to being human, or are they political constructs, or both?

Unitarian Universalists take pride in a legacy of support for human rights, grounded in our first Principle, which affirms "the inherent worth and dignity of every person." This workshop asks: What are human rights? From where does our understanding of human rights come? Do human beings have certain rights which are inherent, and if so what makes them inherent? Can we base ethical decisions on upholding these inherent human rights? Participants reflect on what they consider the source of authority for these rights: secular philosophical ideas, religious and spiritual teachings, the democratic process, international agreements, or another source. Participants explore some challenges and applications of a rights-based morality as they consider instances where rights are in conflict.

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters found in the Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce rights-based ethics

- Examine the connection between Unitarian Universalist Principles and rights-based ethics
- Guide participants to consider how a rights-based ethical framework informs or might inform their actions and choices
- Strengthen connections among participants.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about rights-based ethics and differentiate between natural rights, legal rights, and human rights
- Identify situations in which they already engage in this form of ethical decision making
- Consider the source or authority upon which they base their affirmation and/or support of particular rights
- Explore situations where rights claims are in conflict and consider how to prioritize conflicting claims.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	2
Activity 1: Opening Scenario	10
Activity 2: What Are Rights?	35
Activity 3: The Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church Shooting	15
Activity 4: Are Rights Absolute?	15
Activity 5: Rights in Conflict	10
Faith in Action: The Congregation's Social Justice Priorities	
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Rights Issues in Our Time	30
Alternate Activity 2: Further Reflection on the Shooting in Knoxville	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time for journaling, reflection, prayer, and/or meditation, using these focus questions:

- Our Unitarian Universalist Principles call us to affirm and promote "the inherent worth and dignity of every person" and "the right of conscience." In which ways are these principles foundational to your ethical decision making? What other principles or rights are foundational to your ethical and moral decision making?
- What actions or positions do you take in your personal or public life that reflect a commitment to uphold certain rights?
- From what authority do the rights you uphold derive?
- If you have to choose one side or the other on an issue, and no gray area is allowed, are you stymied? In what ways do we use ambiguity to protect us from having to move on issues?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil, and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.
- Post group covenant, created in Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Welcome all participants and direct their attention to the agenda.

OPENING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share Reading 475 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "We, the Peoples of the United Nations."

ACTIVITY 1: OPENING SCENARIO (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Share this scenario:

You are on the Investment Committee of your congregation. The committee is faced with the choice of investing in a socially responsible stock fund with a modest rate of return or a standard commercial fund that will clearly yield a higher return. The socially responsible stock fund does not invest in companies that do business with countries who violate United Nations human rights agreements, while the standard fund does not have such a restriction.

Ask:

Would you vote in favor of investing in the fund with a higher return, stewarding the congregation's financial health, including its social justice outreach programs, or would you vote in favor of investing in the socially responsible fund, thereby supporting the social justice values of the congregation? On what ethical or moral grounds would you base your vote?

Lead a discussion.

ACTIVITY 2: WHAT ARE RIGHTS? (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Natural Rights, Legal Rights, and Human Rights](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights](#) (included in this document)
- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Writing implements, such as pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Print and prepare to present Leader Resource 1, Natural Rights, Legal Rights, and Human Rights.
- Copy Handout 1, United Nations Declaration of Human Rights for all participants. Prepare to call participants' attention to a few key rights or to note any you found surprising.
- Write on newsprint, and set aside:
 - If natural rights exist, what makes them "natural"? Is there something about being human that gives us inalienable or inherent rights? What is the source of these rights (community values, God, scripture, moral conscience, common sense, or something else)? How "weighty" is the source you have identified?
 - Are legal rights less significant than natural rights if they can be overturned by legitimate democratic processes?
 - Is there a hierarchy of rights, with some categories of rights more important than others? Might establishing such a hierarchy help to make rights-based ethical decisions when rights are in conflict?

Description of Activity

Explain that this activity introduces definitions and background concerning rights-based ethics. Invite participants to brainstorm a list of "rights" they have at one time or another considered when making daily decisions.

Ask:

- Has concern about rights affected your daily life, for example, decisions about purchases, finances, employment, voting, or volunteering?
- Which rights have you acted to support? (Examples might include the right to free speech, the right to reproductive choice/"right to life," the right to vote, the right to food and shelter, the right to fair wages, etc.)

Solicit responses and record on newsprint only the rights, not the supporting actions. Move the brainstorm along, allowing no more than five minutes for collecting and recording ideas. The goal is to create a working list, not an exhaustive one.

When you have a working list, invite participants to note commonalities and differences among the rights they have named. Introduce the concepts of natural rights, legal rights, and human rights, referring to Leader Resource 1. Return to the brainstorm list and invite participants to categorize each right named in the brainstorm: natural, legal, or human. For each right, ask: "Is this an inherent right (natural right)? Is it a right because of the laws of our country (legal right)? Is it a norm that the international community has agreed upon through treaty (human right)?" Some or all of the rights may belong in more than one category; the discussion is more important than reaching a consensus. Allow ten minutes for this part of the activity.

Now post the newsprint you have prepared. Invite participants to reflect in their journals on one or more of the questions. Allow ten minutes.

When you have five minutes left, invite a few volunteers to briefly share from their reflections. Then distribute Handout 1, The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Invite participants to scan the handout. Ask volunteers to comment on anything they find surprising, and share your own observations.

Including All Participants

Create a large-print handout that includes the discussion questions to assist participants who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 3: THE TENNESSEE VALLEY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH SHOOTING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church Shooting](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print the story "The Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church Shooting." Prepare to read it aloud.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What rights might be named to describe and respond to this situation?
- Read Alternate Activity 2, Further Reflection on the Shooting in Knoxville. If you have time, prepare to use it to extend this activity.

Description of Activity

Read the story "The Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church Shooting" aloud. Then, invite participants familiar with the events described to contribute additional information. Say:

Let's take a moment to acknowledge our feelings of horror at the violence that unfolded in Knoxville. Let us acknowledge our concern for the members of the Tennessee Valley congregation. In this workshop, we will consider ways in which rights-based ethics can help us frame issues that preceded and emerged from the tragedy.

Tell participants that although the Tennessee Valley congregation was steadfast in its refusal to comment on Adkisson's motivations or the source of his vitriol, news commentators, radio-show participants, bloggers, and others engaged in a frenzy of speculation, blame, and recommendations on how to respond. Much of the media frenzy was framed by discussions of particular rights. Ask the posted question and record a list of the rights participants name as pertinent to this situation. If the brainstorming stalls, you could name the right to life, right to safety, right to the free exercise of religion, right to free speech, and the right to bear arms. Allow five minutes for brainstorming. Then lead participants in discussion, using these questions as a guide:

- Which categories of rights were claimed (natural, legal, or human)?
- Which competing or conflicting "rights" claims were made, both before the shooting and in its aftermath?
- How do we weigh the competing claims to help us understand how to respond in the face of such tragedies? Which rights should be upheld

by public policies? Are those rights the same as or different from those we might uphold in personal or congregational practice?

If you have more time and wish to take the conversation deeper, include the questions in Alternate Activity 2.

ACTIVITY 4: ARE RIGHTS ABSOLUTE? (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Where I Stand Statements](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print and read Leader Resource 2, Where I Stand Statements.
- Create additional statements if there are other rights-based issues that are important in your community.
- Clear furniture from the space where this activity is to take place, preferably a different space from your usual meeting space so participants can return to their chairs for discussion. Decide which side of the room represents affirmation and which does not. Take into account those with mobility challenges, making sure that all can move freely in the space. Provide chairs at each end of the room for those who cannot comfortably stand.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

I am going to list some rights often discussed in the public arena and invite you to decide whether or not you affirm each one in turn. For each right, I invite you to move to one side of the room or the other, depending on whether you affirm that right [indicate the correct side of the room] or not [indicate the other side of the room]. For each one, you must choose one or the other; you cannot remain neutral. It may be difficult to choose—that is part of the point of this exercise.

One at a time, read the statements in Leader Resource 2, Where I Stand Statements. After each statement, give participants time to move, and then invite one or two volunteers from each position to explain their choices. After all statements are read, invite participants to sit. Ask:

- Did you ever have a hard time choosing which position to take?
- Did you find yourself wanting to choose a neutral or a conditional position?
- When you heard others' reasons for taking the positions they did, did their reasoning change your perspective?

- What conclusions, comments, or observations can you make about using a rights-based ethical framework?

ACTIVITY 5: RIGHTS IN CONFLICT (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Invite participants to reflect on the challenge of making day-to-day ethical decisions with a rights-based framework. Use these questions to guide the discussion:

- In the past, how have you made decisions about which rights to affirm and promote in the day-to-day activities of your life? Have you gained any insight from this workshop that will now help you make those decisions?
- How does our faith community decide which rights to affirm and promote in congregational life and in social justice ministries?
- Do our choices inevitably create a hierarchy of rights, with some more important than others? If so, how do we address that dilemma for ourselves individually? As a faith community?

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Customize Taking It Home and copy for all participants. You may wish to include this workshop's Faith in Action activity, this workshop's Find Out More section, and/or the Spiritual Preparation section of the workshop that is next in your series.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to share a word or phrase indicating something they are taking away from the workshop. Distribute Taking It Home. Share Reading 687 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, by John W. Brigham, and extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: THE CONGREGATION'S SOCIAL JUSTICE PRIORITIES

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Natural Rights, Legal Rights, and Human Rights](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the description of this activity and reflect on the Faith in Action questions, in your journal or with your co-leader.
- Familiarize yourself with the major social justice priorities and projects of your congregation.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to explore personal and congregational social justice commitments that affirm and promote rights.

Brainstorm a list of the congregation's major social justice priorities. Supplement participants' contributions with the information you have researched. Lead the group to consensus about the congregation's three or four top priorities.

Write each of the top priorities on a separate page of newsprint, and post. Consider each item in turn, inviting discussion about the rights each social justice commitment affirms and promotes and recording the rights on the newsprint. For example, if marriage equality is a priority project for your congregation, your congregation might affirm and promote equal civil rights for gay/lesbian individuals; if homelessness is an area of concern for your congregation, your congregation might affirm and promote the right to basic housing or the right to have basic physical and medical needs met.

Next, identify if those rights are natural rights, legal rights, human rights, or fall into more than one category. (Use Leader Resource 1 for background.) Record the identified categories next to each right.

After you have considered each social justice priority, lead reflection on the rights affirmed and promoted by the priorities. Ask:

- Do the congregation's social justice priorities deepen your sense of pride in your congregation, Unitarian Universalism, and/or yourself?
- Do the congregation's priorities inspire or motivate you to support those values, priorities, and projects?

Invite the group to decide together to take part in a congregational social justice project and plan actions to get started.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?

- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?
- Where was it easy for you to work together? Where was it difficult? What changes might you make for future workshops?
- Are there questions left over from this workshop that might be addressed in future workshops? If so, how will we address them?

Save the covenant newsprint to post at each workshop. Review and assign tasks for the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. — The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations on December 10, 1948

Think about how you act in support of certain rights. As you do so, consider these questions:

- What role do items like bumper stickers, signs, and pins make in showing your support for certain rights? What actions do you take that are in line with the messages you display?
- What rights are you able to count on by virtue of citizenship, family status, age, race, gender, economic status, or affectional orientation? How do you, or might you, support extending those rights to others who cannot count on them?
- Are there rights you believe are absolute? Inherent? How much are you willing to do in support of those rights? Do your actions match the strength of your belief?
- On what spiritual grounding do you draw to guide your actions? Does your Unitarian Universalist faith lead you to prioritize certain rights?

Share your reflections with a family member or another trusted conversation partner.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: RIGHTS ISSUES IN OUR TIME (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Variety of writing and drawing materials, including paper, pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils
- Several articles on current events that illuminate questions about legal, natural, or human rights. Check these websites for current articles: [Unitarian Universalist Service Committee](http://www.uusc.org/) (at www.uusc.org/), [Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office](http://www.uu-uno.org/) (at www.uu-uno.org/), [UU World](http://www.uuworld.org/) (at www.uuworld.org/index.shtml), [Standing on](#)

[the Side of Love](http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/) (at www.standingonthesideoflove.org/), and [Amnesty International](http://www.amnesty.org/) (at www.amnesty.org/)

Preparation for Activity

- Choose, print, and display several articles that illuminate ethical or moral issues having to do with rights. Include enough articles for participants to work in groups of three, each group with a different article.
- Set out drawing materials where all can reach them.
- Write on newsprint, and set aside:
 - What right or rights are in question? Are they natural rights, legal rights, human rights, or something else?
 - How is it decided that something is a right? Who makes such a decision?

Description of Activity

Invite participants to examine the displayed articles and select one story/issue they find compelling. Invite them to form groups of three, read the chosen article together, then write or draw in their individual journals, highlighting what moves them about or connects them to the issue. Ask: "Do you feel an ethical or moral obligation to do something about the issue in your article? If so, what?" (Ask for volunteers to move, if needed to even the groups' size.

Allow 15 minutes for participants to read the articles and to write. Then, post the newsprint you have prepared and invite small groups to discuss the questions. Allow

ten minutes for small group conversation, and then re-gather the group and invite comments and observations.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: FURTHER REFLECTION ON THE SHOOTING IN KNOXVILLE (30 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Use these questions to deepen the discussion about the story of the Knoxville shooting.

- Are there circumstances under which people have a right to use arms in order to make a political, philosophical, or religious statement? Are there circumstances where violence *is* necessary in order to uphold a "right?" Who gets to decide this?
- Is it acceptable for a society to limit or alter legally granted rights? Under what circumstances? Is it acceptable for a society to limit natural rights? Under what circumstances?
- Congregational buildings are, for the most part, physically open to everyone. Unitarian Universalist congregations, in particular, value a diversity of religious and personal expression in our pews. Does our commitment to the right of religious and personal freedom, combined with our openness, put us at special risk? Is it possible to mitigate the risk, while maintaining a commitment to human rights?

STORY: THE TENNESSEE VALLEY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH SHOOTING

On July 27, 2008, people gathered in the sanctuary of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville to watch the children and youth of the congregation present the musical *Annie Jr.* Suddenly, a shot rang out. At first, many thought the noise was part of the musical, but they quickly realized there was a gunman in the sanctuary. Some people ran from the room, others threw themselves and their children under the pews. The gunman killed Greg McKendry when he moved in front of others to shield them from gunfire. The gunman wounded several other adults including Linda Kraeger, a visitor to the congregation, who later died of her wounds. People in the sanctuary tackled and subdued the gunman, who had concealed his shotgun in a guitar case as he entered the church. The police arrived and took into custody the shooter, David Adkisson. A witness said, "Everybody did exactly what they needed to do. There was very little panic, very little screaming or hysteria. It's a remarkable congregation of people. I've never seen such a loving response to such an overwhelming tragedy."

Adkisson, an Army veteran, had left a letter in his car expressing his frustration with being unemployed, and stating that he was motivated by hatred of liberals, democrats, African Americans, and homosexuals. He said in the letter that he had intended to continue shooting until the police came and killed him. The police affidavit reports that Adkisson later stated that, "he had targeted the church because of its liberal teachings and his belief that all liberals should be killed because they were ruining the country, and that he felt that the Democrats had tied his country's hands in the war on terror and they had ruined every institution in America with the aid of major media outlets." He further stated: "This isn't a church, it's a cult. They don't even believe in God. They worship the God of secularism. The UU church is the fountainhead, the veritable wellspring of anti-American organizations."

Press reports indicate that his former wife had at one time been a member of the church, but there is no evidence that Adkisson ever attended any events at the church. Nonetheless, he wrote, "They embrace every pervert that comes down the pike, but if they find out your [sic] a conservative, they absolutely hate you. I know. I experienced it."

In early 2009, Adkisson pled guilty to two counts of murder and six counts of attempted murder and was sentenced to life in prison.

The Tennessee Valley Church was rededicated a few weeks after the shooting and a relief fund for those affected was created in the Southeast District and at the Unitarian Universalist Association. Just before Adkisson's guilty plea in 2009, Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church named its fellowship hall for McKendry and its library for Kraeger.

HANDOUT 1: THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional, or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality, or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage, and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social, and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary, or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order, and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group, or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: NATURAL RIGHTS, LEGAL RIGHTS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Natural Rights: Natural rights are associated with philosophy and religion. The idea behind natural rights is that our humanity (our unique nature) imbues us with certain inherent rights, including the right to life. Such rights are commonly attributed to scriptural or religious teachings, the teachings of philosophy, or simply "common sense." We believe natural rights are bestowed on us by virtue of being human.

Legal Rights: Legal rights are bestowed by law. We are entitled to legal rights because our political and legal systems name them as rights. Because these rights have been given through the creation of law, they can also be changed, abolished, or strengthened through political and legal institutions. Many legal rights are also natural rights, for example, the right to life is supported by law and by our philosophical definition of humanity.

Human Rights: The concept of human rights is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. These are internationally agreed upon norms, which some countries protect through their laws and others do not. The Declaration in and of itself is not legally binding; it is an unenforceable moral commitment. While many of the rights contained in the Declaration are natural rights or derive from natural rights, others are legal rights. The term "human rights" is often used loosely to cover both natural and legal rights that the international community agrees belong to all people. It is important to remember that a right may be a legal right in some countries but not others; a right may also be considered a natural right in some cultures but not others.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: WHERE I STAND STATEMENTS

All people have the right to worship and believe what they choose.

People have the right to bear arms.

Church and state should always be separate.

Social clubs (like the Boy Scouts of America) have the right to limit their memberships however they see fit.

Citizenship should never be taken away from anyone regardless of crimes committed.

There should be no limits on free speech.

FIND OUT MORE

Human Rights

Former UUA President William F. Schulz is the author of [*In Our Own Best Interest: How Defending Human Rights Benefits Us All*](#) (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

Read *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* by Jack Donnelly (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003). [*The Overloaded Liberal: Shopping, Investing, Parenting, and Other Daily Dilemmas in an Age of Political Activism*](#) by Fran Hawthorne (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010) offers one person's account of making choices about what rights to affirm and promote in day-to-day living.

Knoxville UU Church Shooting

See [coverage of the incident](http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/117286.shtml) (at www.uuworld.org/news/articles/117286.shtml) and the [congregation's response](#) (at www.uuworld.org/news/articles/129409.shtml) on the *UU World* website.

WORKSHOP 6: THE STORY OF OUR LIVES: NARRATIVE ETHICS

INTRODUCTION

In the holding environment of true community, people share experiences of meaning—they share storylines, which are more compelling than the barriers or boundaries that separate them. These common narratives prepare the way for reconciliation. — Rev. Jacqueline Lewis, The Power of Stories

This workshop presents narrative ethics, a framework for ethical decision making grounded not in abstract concepts but in the more subjective, emotionally powerful reality of life experience. Undoubtedly, our life stories shape our moral and ethical positions and actions. For example, if someone is gay or lesbian or has a friend or family member who is gay or lesbian, their personal experiences will undoubtedly shape their moral stance regarding homosexuality. Our life stories carry their own logic, creating an emotional imperative with the power to either trump or support the theoretical ideas and laudable intentions of any other ethical system.

The narrative ethics framework for making moral and ethical choices fits easily with Unitarian Universalist values and practices. Our faith is rooted not in common scriptures but instead in common values, and as we live these values together, we draw on life experiences to illuminate, illustrate, and justify our moral and ethical choices and actions. Narrative ethics leads us to share our own stories and to attend to those of other people as we consider ethical and moral choices. Further, narrative ethics invites us to consider "the words and deeds of prophetic women and men," one of our Unitarian Universalist Sources.

This workshop asks: How can narrative ethics lead to sound moral decision making? What limitations and shortcomings might narrative ethics have?

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters found in the Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce narrative ethics
- Explore how life experience can provide a framework for ongoing ethical decision making

- Use narrative ethics as a lens to explore ethical issues related to antiracism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism
- Strengthen connections among participants.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about narrative ethics
- Identify and share examples of times when life experience influenced their ongoing moral and ethical decision making
- Practice gleaning ethical guidance from their personal stories
- Examine how another's life story or experience can provide guidance and a framework for ethical decisions, particularly in the areas of antiracism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	2
Activity 1: Opening Scenario	10
Activity 2: Sharing Stories	30
Activity 3: Changing the World	15
Activity 4: Narrative Ethics and Equality	15
Faith in Action: Stories from Our Social Justice Partners	
Closing	18
Alternate Activity 1: Telling Each Other's Stories	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time for journaling, reflection, prayer, and/or meditation, using these focus questions:

- Recall a time when you had an encounter with someone who had a significantly different background, identity, or life experience from your own. What difference did the encounter make in your broader understanding of people who share that background, identity, or life experience?

- Recall a time when you had a significant encounter with someone who is part of a marginalized group to which you do not belong (e.g., groups marginalized in our culture by race, ethnicity, economic status, affectional orientation, gender identity, or ability). What did you learn from the encounter? Did you or do you generalize what you learned to enhance your understanding of the challenges facing that group? Did you find parallels between your own experiences of marginalization and the experiences of the other person?
- Did the encounters with those different from yourself lead to new action on your part? Did it lead you to take a changed ethical or moral stance?
- What role might sharing the story of our lives play in shaping our moral framework?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil, and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.
- Post the group covenant, created in Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Welcome all participants and draw their attention to the workshop agenda.

OPENING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share Reading 585 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "Councils," by Marge Piercy.

ACTIVITY 1: OPENING SCENARIO (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Share this scenario:

You are a chaperone on a middle school youth group trip. As the bus passes through an economically depressed section of town, one of the youth comments on a teen walking down the street, saying that this teen's look is "so ghetto." You can tell from his tone that he is using this phrase to say the kid's clothes are "cool." None of the adults or teens around this youth respond to the comment.

Invite participants to respond to these questions:

- Would you choose to react in some way? If so, how? If not, why did you make that choice?

- On what values or personal experiences do you draw to help you make your decision?

ACTIVITY 2: SHARING STORIES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Drawing paper, 9x12 inches
- Variety of writing and drawing materials, such as pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Read this activity and Alternate Activity 1, Telling Each Other's Stories. Choose one for your group.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Are there enduring values or truths illustrated in the story you shared? Does what happened continue to have an influence on the moral or ethical decisions you make and actions you take in your daily living?
- Set out drawing materials where all can reach them.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to consider a moral or ethical choice they made. Ask them to choose a decision that is far enough in the past that they have had time to measure its outcome. Give examples:

- Perhaps you had to respond to someone of a different background or perspective from your own. Perhaps you became aware for the first time of the existence of people with that background or perspective.
- Perhaps you had to decide how to balance safety against independence or privacy in making decisions about the care of children or elders for whom you were responsible.
- Perhaps you had to decide whether or not to cheat or break the law for what you considered a good purpose.
- Perhaps you had to decide how to respond when you became aware that someone else was cheating or breaking the law.

Invite participants to write notes in their journal about the experience and what they learned. Let them know they will be asked to share the story with others. Allow five minutes for them to find their story and make notes. Then, offer paper and drawing materials for participants

to go deeper by drawing a representation of their experience. Ask: "What did the experience feel like? What were the moods and contours?" Invite them to give life to that experience, and those feelings, artistically. Be sure to mention that no one will be judged on artistic skills—this drawing can take any form or format they desire. Allow ten minutes for drawing. As the allotted time comes to a close, say participants can continue these drawings at home if they are not yet finished.

Inviting participants to go still deeper, ask how the experiences they have artistically represented affected their ethical sensibility. Ask: "How has this experience affected your ongoing choices, beliefs, and actions?"

Allow two minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite participants to move into pairs and share their writing and/or drawing with one another or simply relate the experience/story they chose. Invite pairs to respond to the posted questions after each has shared their story/experience. Allow ten minutes for paired conversation. Re-gather the large group and have volunteers share insights and observations that emerged from their paired conversations.

ACTIVITY 3: CHANGING THE WORLD (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Harvey Milk](#)" (included in this document)
- Optional: A copy of the story "[Olympia Brown](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read both stories and choose one to present. If you have time, consider using both stories.
- Print the story and prepare to read it aloud. Alternatively, recruit a volunteer in advance to read it aloud, and give this volunteer a copy of the story.
- Write on newsprint, and set aside:
 - If you are a person who is culturally marginalized by race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity, affectional orientation, or economic status, how does your marginalization affect your personal moral and ethical decisions?
 - If you have a friend, family member, co-worker, or acquaintance who is culturally marginalized by race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity, affectional orientation, or economic status, does their situation affect your own moral and ethical decisions? How?

- If you are familiar via communication media, book, sermon, or other means with the story and experience of someone who is culturally marginalized by race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity, affectional orientation, or economic status, does your awareness affect your moral and ethical decisions? How?

Description of Activity

Introduce the story, saying:

A narrative ethics framework involves not just reliance on our own stories and experiences for moral and ethical guidance, but also attending to the stories of others. The story I am about to read is about a person whose identity, life experience, and social circumstances—their life story—not only shaped their own ethic, but also shaped their efforts to shape the ethical decisions and actions of others.

Read your chosen story aloud. Then, lead a short discussion using this question to guide you:

- ["Harvey Milk"] How did Milk's approach use personal narrative to change people's actions and choices regarding gay people?
- ["Olympia Brown"] How did Brown's work not only advance her own vocation, but also create a pathway for others to follow?

Post the three questions you have written on newsprint and invite participants to silently consider them one at a time. Read each question aloud, and then allow a minute or two of silent reflection.

Including All Participants

Create a large-print handout that includes the discussion questions to assist those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 4: NARRATIVE ETHICS AND EQUALITY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers (enough for all participants), and tape
- Optional: Eight clipboards, plain drawing paper, and extra pencils/pens

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare four separate pieces of newsprint titled race/ethnicity, differing physical abilities, sexual orientation, and gender. Post them so that participants can easily write on them.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to consider what they have personally encountered, or witnessed, of the struggle for greater equality in the areas of race/ethnicity, differing physical abilities, sexual orientation, and gender. Perhaps they

have experienced barriers or witnessed someone else experiencing barriers to true equality. Perhaps they have experiences or stories of hope or resilience. Give each participant a marker and invite them to move around the room, and list a few key words or phrases on the appropriate newsprint to capture the experience that came to mind. Tell them that they need not have something to share in each category.

Invite participants to rejoin the large group. Read aloud the words and phrases shared on each piece of newsprint.

Ask: "How does telling these stories matter? Did the stories you represented here affect your choices and actions? How? Did the stories make moral or ethical demands on you? How do such stories make a difference, both for the teller and for the listener?" Invite comments about insights and observations from the exercise.

Including All Participants

Be sure to allow ample space for all, especially those who are mobility impaired. Post the newsprint at a height accessible for all. If you have participants who cannot move around the room, modify the activity, using eight sheets of paper on clipboards (two for each category), and passing them from person to person.

CLOSING (18 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [The Wisdom Tree](#) (included in this document)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1, The Wisdom Tree, and prepare to read it aloud.
- Customize Taking It Home and copy for all participants. You may wish to include this workshop's Faith in Action activity, this workshop's Find Out More section, and/or the Spiritual Preparation section of the workshop that comes next in your series.

Description of Activity

Lead a conversation using one of these questions as a guide:

- Just how important are personal experiences? Can we effectively engage where we don't have any kind of personal connection or experience?
- What are the limits of our personal stories? Where does their usefulness begin? Where does it end?
- Are there times when our stories should not be the framework by which we define or shape our

moral decisions? If so, how do we recognize and address those circumstances?

- What factors or circumstances limit our ability to fully comprehend another's experience and perspective? What effect might those limits have on our willingness to rely on narratives—our own or those known to us—to make moral and ethical choices?

After a few minutes of conversation, distribute Taking It Home. Share Leader Resource 1, The Wisdom Tree, as you extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: STORIES FROM OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTNERS

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Literature about the social justice organizations with which your congregation partners

Preparation for Activity

- Pick one or more social justice organization(s) with which your congregation partners and learn more about them:
 - What is that organization's story?
 - How did they come to be, and why and how are they engaged in the justice work that they are called to?
- With congregational social justice leaders, explore how your congregation came to partner with this particular organization, from the perspective of narrative ethics: How and why have your stories intersected?
- Optional: Invite someone in your faith community or in a partner organization to share stories about the organization or the partnership.

Description of Activity

Say:

Congregations typically partner with other organizations for one or more of their social justice ministries. These partner organizations have their own histories—the stories of how they became engaged in their work. Just as the narrative of experience is an important source of guidance for individuals, it is also an important source of guidance, and even inspiration, for institutions.

Share the story of the partner organization or invite your guest to share it. After sharing pose these questions:

- How does our congregation's story intersect with the story of this organization? Beyond shared values, in what ways does it make sense that we are partnering?

- What narratives/stories of individual congregants or your congregation as a whole that have led to your congregation's moral/ethical priorities?

Make a plan to collect partner organization stories from individual congregants. Publicize stories that support the partnership and its ongoing work.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?
- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?
- Where was it easy for you to work together? Where was it difficult? What changes might you make for future workshops?
- Are there questions left over from this workshop that might be addressed in future workshops? If so, how will we address them?

Save the covenant newsprint to post at the next workshop. Review and assign tasks for the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

In the holding environment of true community, people share experiences of meaning—they share storylines, which are more compelling than the barriers or boundaries that separate them. These common narratives prepare the way for reconciliation. — Rev. Jacqueline Lewis, *The Power of Stories*

Think about how you live out your own story in the world. Are there ways in which you have lived a life that others can take as an example as their own stories unfold? What stories from your own experience might offer guidance or wisdom for others? How might you share those stories?

Make it a spiritual practice to listen to the experiences of other people, especially those whose perspective, circumstances, or identity differ from yours. How can another's experiences offer guidance for ethical or moral decisions you face?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: TELLING EACH OTHER'S STORIES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Read this activity and Activity 2, Sharing Stories. Choose one for your group.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What enduring values or truths are illustrated in the story you shared?
 - Does what happened continue to influence your day-to-day moral or ethical decisions? How?

Description of Activity

Invite participants to consider a moral or ethical choice they made. Ask them to choose a decision far enough in the past that they have had time to measure its outcome. Give examples:

- Perhaps you had to respond to someone of a different background or perspective from your own. Perhaps you became aware for the first time of the existence of people with that background or perspective.
- Perhaps you had to balance safety versus independence or privacy in making a decision on behalf of children or elders for whom you were responsible.
- Perhaps you had to decide whether or not to cheat or break a law for what you considered a good purpose.
- Perhaps you had to decide how to respond when you became aware that someone else was cheating or breaking the law.

Invite participants to write in their journals about an experience and what they learned from it. Let them know they will share the story with others. Allow ten minutes.

Have participants to turn to a partner to share their story. Encourage listeners to pay close attention to their partners' story because the listener will share it with the large group. Invite the person telling the story to provide details and context that will paint a word picture for the listener, making recall easier. Allow ten minutes for pairs to share stories, inviting them to change roles about half way through the time.

Re-gather the larger group. Invite each pair to share each other's stories. Pause a minute after the story is told and allow the person whose story it is to correct any misinformation or missed details that might help others understand. After all the stories have been told, invite participants to speak about what it was like for someone else to tell their story. What was it like for the person telling the story? How does this task affect the interactions between the participants? Did the exercise illuminate the ways the narrative shaped their ethical understandings?

STORY: HARVEY MILK

In 1977, Harvey Milk was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, becoming the first openly gay man elected to public office in the United States. Milk grew up in New York, quiet about his homosexuality. He studied mathematics and graduated from New York State College for Teachers in Albany before joining the Navy during the Korean War. After his Navy service, he worked as a teacher and as an insurance actuary before experiencing considerable success as a researcher for a Wall Street firm. Throughout the 1960s he lived openly in a gay relationship, although he kept his gay life hidden from his family. Later, he left his financial job and moved with a new life partner to San Francisco. Together they opened a camera shop in the city's Castro District. By this time Milk's views had become more and more left of center; he decided to run for public office.

In 1973, Milk ran for a position on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Although he lost this election, he learned the importance of building coalitions. He allied with other small-business owners, Teamsters, construction-workers' unions, and firefighters, for a solid voting base. He ran for office again in 1975. During this campaign, he worked hard—promoting voter registration, organizing a community-building street fair in the Castro, and writing regularly in the local newspaper. He lost the election for a second time, but the mayor appointed him to the Board of Permit Appeals, making him the first openly gay commissioner in the country. In 1977, Milk ran a third time for the Board of Supervisors and won. He was the first openly gay person elected to any office in the country.

One his first tasks was to promote passage of a citywide Gay Rights Ordinance that protected homosexuals from being fired from their jobs. He also worked to protect those with little power from real estate developers and large corporations. When a political opportunist began a campaign for a ballot initiative that would have made it mandatory for schools to fire any homosexual teachers or any school employees who supported gay rights, Milk used his celebrity to call for homosexual people to educate others about their lives and their presence. At a 1978 speech commemorating the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, he urged gay people to "come out":

I ask my gay brothers and sisters to make a commitment to fight. For themselves, for their freedom, for their country. ... We will not win our rights by staying quietly in our closets. ... We are coming out to fight the lies, the myths, the distortions. We are coming out to tell the truth about gays, for I am tired of the conspiracy of silence, so I am going to talk about it. You must come out. Come out to your parents, your relatives.

Harvey Milk's public position elicited hate mail and death threats. On November 27, 1978, a former member of the Board of Supervisors, Dan White, who had clashed with Milk on gay rights and other issues, entered City Hall and assassinated first Mayor George Moscone and then Harvey Milk, shooting Milk five times at close range. That evening, tens of thousands of grieving people gathered and walked from the Castro to City Hall holding candles in honor of Harvey Milk. Milk was cremated, and his ashes were scattered in the city he had adopted and served. Some of his ashes are buried under the sidewalk at the former site of his camera store.

Although he was gone, his life and death left a profound legacy. He once said:

You've got to keep electing gay people ... to know there is better hope for tomorrow not only for gays, but for blacks, Asians, the disabled, our senior citizens and us. Without hope, we give up. I know you cannot live on hope alone, but without it life is not worth living. You and you and you have got to see that the promise does not fade.

STORY: OLYMPIA BROWN

Universalist Olympia Brown is known as the first woman minister whose ordination was recognized by a denomination. She spent a lifetime working for women's suffrage and was among the few original suffragists still alive to vote, at long last, in 1919.

Olympia Brown was born to a Universalist family who valued education. Determined to seek higher education, she persuaded her father to allow her and a younger sister to go to college, first at Mary Lyons's Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in Massachusetts, and then at the better-suited Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Brown felt called to the Universalist ministry, and sought admission to theological school, although this was not an option open to women. She finally persuaded the president of St. Lawrence University to admit her in 1861. In her autobiography she writes, "Mr. Ebenezer Fisher, the President, replied that I would be admitted but he did not think women were called to the ministry." She continues, "President Fisher, in spite of his discomfiture at my entering the school, was just to me as a student, and never discriminated against me until I began to take steps toward ordination." When Brown completed her course of study in 1863, she had to convince the male ministers of the St. Lawrence Universalist Association to vote to ordain her so she could be called to parish ministry. The positive reception she received when she preached at local churches swayed the opinions of many of the ministers in her favor and Brown was ordained. She says, "Mr. Fisher had so far overcome his feelings that he took part in the [ordination] exercises."

After ordination, Brown served the church in Weymouth Landing, Massachusetts. With the blessing of her congregation, she spent months in Kansas speaking on behalf of women's suffrage, making her own living and speaking arrangements as she traveled. In 1870, she accepted a call to the Bridgeport, Connecticut, church. She married in 1873, keeping her own name, and gave birth to her first child the next year. In 1874, she decided to resign her ministry, although she continued to live in Bridgeport for two more years, giving birth to a second child in 1876.

After careful consideration of her calling and her options after her resignation from Bridgeport, Brown wrote to Mr. A. C. Fish, the clerk of the Universalist Church in Racine, Wisconsin, to offer her services. He wrote back that the parish was in an unfortunate condition, thanks to "a series of pastors easy-going, unpractical, and some even spiritually unworthy, who had left the church adrift, in debt, hopeless, and doubtful whether any pastor could again rouse them." Brown accepted the challenge, and she and her family moved to Racine in 1878. She worked to rejuvenate the church and establish it as a center of learning and culture and a forum for the discussion of social issues of the time, including women's suffrage. She invited Julia Ward Howe, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony to air their views from the pulpit. Under her ministry the women began to vote and hold offices in the church. After nine years of ministry, Brown left a thriving congregation and moved on to a new challenge. She left full-time ministry to become an activist for women's rights. For the next thirty-two years, she labored, spoke, and demonstrated on behalf of this cause.

In the fall of 1920, she returned to the Racine church and spoke about her life's work. She spoke the familiar words we find in *Singing the Living Tradition*, Reading 569:

Stand by this faith. Work for it and sacrifice for it. There is nothing in all the world so important as to be loyal to this faith which has placed before us the loftiest ideals, which has comforted us in sorrow, strengthened us for noble duty and made the world beautiful. Do not demand immediate results but rejoice that we are worthy to be entrusted with this great message, that you are strong enough to work for a great true principle without counting the cost. Go on finding ever new applications of these truths and new enjoyments in their contemplation, always trusting in the one God which ever lives and loves.

Looking back on her career as a parish minister, Olympia Brown wrote:

Those who may read this will think it strange that I could only find a field in run-down or comatose churches, but they must remember that the pulpits of all the prosperous churches were already occupied by men, and were looked forward to as the goal of all the young men coming into the ministry with whom I, at first the only woman preacher in the denomination, had to compete. All I could do was to take some place that had been abandoned by others and make something of it, and this I was only too glad to do.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: THE WISDOM TREE

By Meg Barnhouse. Used with permission.

I dragged myself to the early morning Theme Talk, even though it was the last day of a week at church camp and I was tired from staying up late singing with friends and dancing my fool head off. A panel of old-timers was talking about the early days of SUUSI—Southeastern UU Summer Institute, but no one calls it that—which has now grown to nearly a thousand Unitarian Universalists coming together every July on the campus of Virginia Tech. Here is the story that stuck in my mind; Roger Comstock, the former district executive of our Thomas Jefferson District, is the one who told it.

There was a teacher who used to come to the camp every summer, a man who could transform himself into Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, or Theodore Parker in turn. He would bring his class to sit under a large oak tree out on the quad, and the conversation would range over history, philosophy, and theology. Summer after summer folks would look forward to that class, to sitting under what they came to call "the wisdom tree." They would look forward to having the kind of conversations where you hear and even say things yourself that surprise and delight you.

One summer night, during the church camp, a storm came through. As the people slept, winds and rain whipped the campus. Lightning flashed and struck hard. It struck close. In the morning, daylight revealed the wisdom tree scattered in splinters on the ground.

As the grounds crew came to clear it away, church people came from every corner of the campus to circle round. One by one they asked to take a piece of the tree home with them.

This story struck me. It makes such a good picture of who we UUs are. There is a broad and spreading wisdom available to us, which shows up in history, theology, poetry, music, art, scripture, conversation, nature, and ritual. Individuals have a spark of the Divine inside, an inner wisdom that, related to sanely, responsibly, and in community, will lead to truth and peace.

Sometimes the place where you used to find wisdom gets destroyed. People fail you, a church disappoints you, new information strips away your feeling about a scripture. It's as if your wisdom tree is lying in splinters.

In the aftermath of such a coming apart, we are tempted to take our piece of wisdom home with us and stick it in a place of honor, savoring and celebrating that one little piece of wisdom of which we can be sure, pulling it out whenever there is a new question, a new issue, acting as if that piece of wisdom is self-sustaining, and as if it is enough, on its own, to sustain us.

In acting like this, we are forgetting the crucial next step. What is needed is to bring our piece of the wisdom tree back together with the others, to stand together on the roots of what wisdom we have. We do have wisdom within us, but it is not enough to hold and savor just the wisdom we can grasp. Our piece needs to be added to the others.

It is difficult to walk a good spiritual path solo. It helps to be in relationship to a community where your wisdom can be made more whole, challenged, and where it can have fresh life breathed into it by touching it, again and again, to its roots, by bringing it together with the wisdom others carry with them. Then if lightning strikes, if all the places you used to go to learn are ruined, if all the things you used to know for sure are gone, just hold up your piece of wisdom. I'll be holding mine, and we'll find each other.

FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about how personal experiences can offer guidance for undertaking complex moral, ethical, and spiritual challenges, see [The Power of Stories](#) by Jacqueline Lewis (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009). You might also read the introduction to [Building the World We Dream About](#), a Tapestry of Faith program written by Dr. Mark Hicks for Unitarian Universalists and congregations about welcoming racial and ethnic diversity.

Olympia Brown

See her [entry](#) in *The Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*.

Watch a [portrayal of Olympia Brown](#) by the Reverend Dr. Janet H. Bowering.

Harvey Milk

Watch the film *Milk* (dir. Gus Van Sant, 2008), and use the Tapestry of Faith [study guide](#) for the film, by the Rev. Mark L. Belletini.

WORKSHOP 7: RELATIONAL ETHICS

INTRODUCTION

Much of the insensibility and hardness of the world is due to the lack of imagination which prevents a realization of the experiences of other people. — Jane Addams, from Democracy and Social Ethics (1907)

Hello, babies. Welcome to Earth. It's hot in the summer and cold in the winter. It's round and wet and crowded. At the outside, babies, you've got about a hundred years here. There's only one rule that I know of, babies—God damn it, you've got to be kind. — Kurt Vonnegut, 20th-century writer and Unitarian Universalist, from God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater

If we believe our ethical/moral code, and by extension our behavioral choices, derives solely from a conceptual framework that helps us determine right and wrong, we overlook a fundamental influence in our ethical decision making: our relationships with others. As we live our day-to-day lives, we don't always ground our decisions in neatly framed logic, but instead respond from the heart—with compassion, empathy, or a sense of shared humanity. This reality provides the foundation for relational ethics, a framework that speaks to our relationships with one another and how those relationships influence our decisions.

In our culture, an ethic based on relationship and compassion has, at times, been denigrated as a primarily female perspective. Most Unitarian Universalists reject such a notion and understand compassion as a moral guidepost of use to people of all genders. Our second Unitarian Universalist Principle speaks of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, while our seventh Principle speaks of our interconnectedness one with another.

This workshop explores how relational ethics does or can inform our personal moral decisions. How do relational ethics guide us to social justice work? How do, or might, relational ethics guide the way we do that work? Participants discover the relational ethics frameworks in the work of Jane Addams in the turn-of-the-20th-century Settlement movement; the work of Carol Gilligan, a late 20th-century feminist ethicist; and the recently launched Community Capacity Building initiative of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council. Participants reflect on the role of compassion and relationship in ethical decision making.

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters found in the Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce relational ethics
- Explore the role compassion and relationship does, or might, play in personal moral and ethical decision making
- Offer opportunities to explore the role an ethic based on compassion and relationship might play in cross-cultural contexts
- Strengthen connections among participants.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about relational ethics
- Explore the relational ethical framework's traditional connection with women in American culture, through the work of Jane Addams and Carol Gilligan
- Identify behavioral choices which would result from an ethical framework based on compassion and relationship
- Apply an ethics grounded in relationship and compassion to cross-cultural relationships.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	2
Activity 1: Opening Scenario	10
Activity 2: Reflection and Conversation	15
Activity 3: In a Different Voice	20
Activity 4: Relational Ethics at Hull House	15
Activity 5: Partner Church Relationships	15
Faith in Action: Begin or Deepen a Church Partnership	
Closing	13
Alternate Activity 1: Community Capacity Building — UUCPP Video	45

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time for journaling, reflection, prayer, and/or meditation, using these focus questions:

- When have you acted with compassion toward someone else, with the understanding that your action was the "right" thing to do? What were the circumstances? What questions or possibilities did you entertain before choosing to act?
- What motivates you to help others?
- What is the difference between what you might do for a friend and what you might do for a stranger? Can you expand your own circle of compassion?
- How do you determine what is the compassionate response in a given set of circumstances? How do you stay in relationship with another when acting out of compassion?
- Do you see acting with compassion and respecting relationship as choices or skills related to cultural norms or expectations for your gender? In what ways does a lens of gender add a new perspective to your understanding of ethics?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil, and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.
- Post the group covenant, created in Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Welcome all participants and draw their attention to the workshop agenda.

OPENING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share Reading 468 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "We Need One Another" by George E. Odell.

ACTIVITY 1: OPENING SCENARIO (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Share this scenario:

Your congregation has an ongoing relationship with a local organization serving at-risk youth. The relationship includes advocacy financial support. As a result of budget cuts, the organization will soon be defunct and the youth it serves cut off from vital services. Your congregation immediately organizes to contact government officials, write letters to the editor, and raise a public voice to try and save the funding for the organization.

Ask: "What moral arguments do you use to make your case?"

ACTIVITY 2: REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Variety of writing and drawing tools, such as pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Set out drawing materials where all can reach them.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Does the existence of a relationship make a difference in your personal moral and ethical decision making?
 - Does relationship bias our ethical decisions and/or engagement in social justice? How?

Description of Activity

Invite participants to consider an ethical or moral choice they made that concerned someone with whom they had some kind of relationship. Invite them to describe in their journals with writing or drawing the situation and the factors they weighed in their decision making. Allow five minutes for journaling. Then, ask participants to think of an ethical or moral choice they made that concerned someone they did not know at all. Ask them to describe that situation and the factors they weighed in their decision making. Allow five minutes for writing or drawing.

Invite participants to examine differences and similarities between the two decisions. Ask them to share their reflections in pairs, using the posted questions to guide the conversation.

ACTIVITY 3: IN A DIFFERENT VOICE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Carol Gilligan and a Different Voice](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Handout 1, Carol Gilligan and a Different Voice, and copy for all participants.

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 1 and invite participants to read it. Say:

Gilligan argued that there are different ways of framing moral issues and that her contemporaries were leaving out or undervaluing the moral perspectives of women.

Lead a discussion with these questions:

- To what extent is Gilligan's critique still valid?
- How do people prioritize relationship in ethical decision making?
- What does someone's gender have to do with the way they prioritize relationship? Is there a difference in how we perceive the ethical priorities and perspectives of males and females?
- What differences in perspectives arise when we break the binary of gender in order to include transgender people and others who are gender variant?
- Do you perceive generational and/or cultural/racial/ethnic differences of perspective on these questions?

Including All Participants

Create a large-print handout that includes the discussion questions, to assist those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 4: RELATIONAL ETHICS AT HULL HOUSE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Jane Addams](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "Jane Addams" and prepare to present it, or invite a participant to present the story and give them a copy in advance.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - "We have learned to say that the good must be extended to all of society before it can be held secure by any one person or class; but we have not yet learned . . . that unless all men [sic] and all classes contribute to a good, we cannot even be sure that it is worth having." — Jane Addams, 1907
 - How do Jane Addams' life and work reflect an ethic based in relationship and compassion?
 - What examples can you think of, in your own life and in your community, where being in deeper relationship might make a difference in your ethical and moral decision making?
 - In what ways are Addams' ethical and ethical commitments similar to the commitments in our Unitarian Universalist Principles?

Description of Activity

Present the story, "Jane Addams."

Call attention to the posted quote, from Addams's book *Democracy and Social Ethic*, and lead a discussion using the posted questions.

Including All Participants

Create a large-print handout that includes the discussion questions to assist those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 5: PARTNER CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Community Capacity Building in Arkos, Transylvania](#)" (included in this document)
- Optional: [UUPCC 20th Anniversary video](#) (5:11)
- Optional: Computer with Internet connection, projector and speakers

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "Community Capacity Building in Arkos, Transylvania" and prepare to present it.
- Visit the [Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council \(UUPCC\) website](#) (at www.uupcc.org) to learn more about the organization, its projects, and how North American congregations participate.
- View the video from the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council for background.
- Optional: If your congregation participates in UUPCC programs, talk with your minister or the members who are involved to find out how the congregation is in partnership with another.
- Optional: Queue video and test equipment.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to consider how the Unitarian Universalist Association's partner church program embodies the work of building authentic relationship. Then lead a conversation using these questions:

- What is the ethical basis for a program like Community Capacity Building? What is meant by "capacity, not charity"? What is the difference in the partnership relationship when the focus is on capacity building rather than direct assistance?
- How does the stance that the less financially wealthy partner ought to be the one who decides what kind of support it needs challenge the way our culture typically views social justice and issues related to providing assistance?
- In what ways is the North American partner church practicing "justice, equity, and compassion" through this program? How does

the partnership help the North American partner grow its capacity?

- In what ways is the idea behind the Community Capacity Building program similar to the ethical philosophy of Jane Addams?

CLOSING (13 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Customize Taking It Home and copy for all participants. You may wish to include this workshop's Faith in Action activity, this workshop's Find Out More section, and/or the Spiritual Preparation section of the workshop that comes next in your series.

Description of Activity

Lead a conversation using these questions:

- If our congregation were to use a relational ethics framework to guide its decision making, what might change? How would social justice work be affected? How would antiracism conversations change? How would the congregation's school and youth group change? How might the structures of power and authority change?
- Does a relational ethical framework hold us accountable differently than the other ethical frameworks we have studied? How?
- Could relying exclusively on a relational ethical framework pose any challenges? What might these be?

Invite participants to share a word or phrase indicating a feeling or thought they are taking away from the workshop. Distribute Taking It Home. Share Reading 601 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "When All the People," by Mo-Tse, as you extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: BEGIN OR DEEPEN A CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Information about your partner church (if your congregation has a partner) or about the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC). The [About Partnerships](#) tab on the UUPCC website is a good place to start

Preparation for Activity

- Print resources from the [UUPCC](#) website to share with participants, and/or send participants the UUPCC link in advance of this workshop.
- Ask your minister or congregational lay leaders if you have a partner church or had one in the past.
- Optional: Invite someone from your congregation knowledgeable about your partner church to share with the group. Ask them to prepare stories that have to do with financial assistance to the partner church, including what was learned from both positive and not-so-positive experiences. Provide the guest with the bulleted questions below, in advance.

Description of Activity

Share resources from the UUPCC website and explore them together. If you do not already have a partner church, consider what steps your congregation would take to become involved in the program. Ask: "How might relational ethics guide the establishment of such a partnership?"

If you have invited a guest who is knowledgeable about your relationship with your partner church, invite them to share their experiences. Here are some questions to get started:

- Where is our partner church located? What is that congregation's story—who are its members? What are the congregation's gifts? What are their needs?
- How do the two congregations express their relationship? Have people from your congregation ever visited them, or have people from the partner church visited your congregation? Have there been other kinds of exchanges (letter, email, etc.)?
- What kinds of support/help has your congregation offered and provided? What are success stories? How has your congregation decided what support or help to give? Are there stories of help that was not as helpful as it might have been?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?
- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?

- Where was it easy for you to work together? Where was it difficult? What changes might you make for future workshops?
- Are there questions left over from this workshop that might be addressed in future workshops? If so, how will we address them?

Save the covenant newsprint to post at each workshop. Review and assign tasks for the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

Much of the insensibility and hardness of the world is due to the lack of imagination which prevents a realization of the experiences of other people. — Jane Addams, from *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 1907

Hello, babies. Welcome to Earth. It's hot in the summer and cold in the winter. It's round and wet and crowded. At the outside, babies, you've got about a hundred years here. There's only one rule that I know of, babies—God damn it, you've got to be kind. — Kurt Vonnegut, 20th-century writer and Unitarian Universalist, from *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*

Are there ways in which you can bring relational ethics into your life? Could focusing on relationship and compassion as you make decisions change the way you interact with others? Pay attention to how you treat people with whom you have a relationship, as well as strangers.

Investigate if groups you support—with money, with time, or by distributing information—ground their work in relationship with those whom they serve. Do these groups invite you to put yourself in another's shoes? Might you want to open a conversation about how the work could be done differently?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING — UUPCC VIDEO (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Community Capacity Building in Arkos, Transylvania](#)" (included in this document)
- [Community Capacity Building videos](#) and a computer with Internet access and large monitor

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "Community Capacity Building in Arkos, Transylvania" and prepare to present it.
- View the UUPCC video. Arrange for a computer with Internet access and a monitor to share the video with participants.
- Optional: Visit the [Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council \(UUPCC\) website](#) to learn more about the organization, its projects, and how North American congregations participate.
- Optional: If your congregation participates in the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church program, talk with those who can tell you more about the way in which your congregation is in partnership with another.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to consider how the Unitarian Universalist partner church program embodies the work of building authentic relationship. Show the video, then lead a conversation using these questions:

- What is the ethical basis for a program like Community Capacity Building?
- What is meant by "capacity, not charity"?
- What is the difference in the partnership relationship when the focus is on capacity building rather than direct assistance?
- How does the stance that the less financially wealthy partner ought to be the one who decides what kind of support it needs challenge the way in which our culture typically views social justice and issues related to providing assistance?
- In what ways is the North American partner church practicing "justice, equity, and compassion" through this program? How does the partnership help the North American partner grow *its* capacity?
- In what ways is the idea behind the Community Capacity Building program similar to the ethical philosophy of Jane Addams?

STORY: COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING IN ARKOS, TRANSYLVANIA

Background Information

Since 1993, the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council ([UUPCC](http://www.uupcc.org/) (at www.uupcc.org/)) has encouraged and supported partnerships between United States and Canadian Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist congregations and Unitarian and Universalist congregations in other parts of the world. Originally founded to focus and coordinate partnerships between North American Unitarian Universalist congregations and Unitarian churches in Central Europe following the collapse of communism in December 1989, the UUPCC now supports almost 200 partnerships between North American congregations and congregations in Transylvania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Khasi Hills of India, the Philippines, Poland, and Nigeria.

Over time, the UUPCC observed that money created tension between some North American congregations and their partners. A blue-ribbon panel researched the question, interviewing partner congregations in North America and abroad. They concluded that giving money as part of a partnership almost always leads to problems, because donations are sometimes inappropriate for the recipient congregation's or village's needs and because the gift can set an unhealthy dynamic between the donor congregation and recipient congregation which impedes reciprocal learning and sharing, the mark of true partnership.

In 2004, the UUPCC launched a new model of partnership patterned on a model developed by Dr. Richard Ford at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Billed as "capacity, not charity," the model aims to provide partnership support that gives each community the power to forge its own future and to leverage its own resources to alleviate poverty. A key element of the program includes trained guidance that helps a community organize information, identify community problems and potential solutions, identify and mobilize resources, and create and complete action plans.

There are wonderful success stories in this new relationship-based approach. One comes from Arkos, Transylvania, a village whose Unitarian congregation is partnered with the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, Texas.

Story

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

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

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

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

STORY: JANE ADDAMS

In January 1889, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr searched for a location for a settlement house in Chicago that would serve as a place for young women of means to live cooperatively with recent immigrants and migrants whose living and working conditions were horrible. Addams' idea was that although recent immigrants needed a lot of help to ameliorate deplorable living and working conditions, there was also much that they could teach others about social relations and caring community. She wrote: "Hull-House was soberly opened on the theory that the dependence of classes on each other is reciprocal; and that as social relation is essentially a reciprocal relation, it gives a form of expression that has particular value." She believed firmly that the health of American democracy required that each member of the society be allowed to fully develop themselves, and Hull House was to be a center for the development of all who lived, visited, and engaged in its communal life.

Laura Jane Addams was born in 1860 in Cedarville, Illinois, and grew up in a family with both status and material comfort. Her mother died while she was an infant and her inquisitive, caring, and responsible nature was nurtured by her father, a miller, businessman, and local political office holder. She later wrote of her childhood:

I recall an incident which must have occurred before I was seven years old, for the mill in which my father transacted his business that day was closed in 1867. The mill stood in the neighboring town adjacent to its poorest quarter. Before then I had always seen the little city of ten thousand people with the admiring eyes of a country child, and it had never occurred to me that all its streets were not as bewilderingly attractive as the one which contained the glittering toy shop and the confectioner. On that day I had my first sight of the poverty that implies squalor, and felt the curious distinction between the ruddy poverty of the country and that which even a small city presents in its shabbiest streets. I remember launching at my father the pertinent inquiry why people lived in such horrid little houses so close together, and that after receiving his explanation I declared with much firmness when I grew up I should, of course, have a large house, but it would not be built among other large houses, but right in the midst of horrid little houses like those.

As a young woman, Addams attended Rockford Female Seminary, where the expectation was that young women who wished to serve others would do so by becoming missionaries. Unresponsive to the appeal of evangelism, she and her small circle of friends read the ideas of

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Bronson Alcott, and frequently discussed moral philosophy. When she was selected as the orator who would represent her school in the intercollegiate oratorical contest of Illinois, she found herself representing not just her school, but also the wishes and hopes of college women in general. She later recalled a portion of her speech which she called "the schoolgirl recipe that has been tested in many later experiences." She said:

Those who believe that Justice is but a poetical longing within us, the enthusiast who thinks it will come in the form of a millennium, those who see it established by the strong arm of a hero, are not those who have comprehended the vast truths of life. The actual Justice must come by trained intelligence, by broadened sympathies toward the individual man or woman who crosses our path; one item added to another is the only method by which to build up a conception lofty enough to be of use in the world.

After her father's death, Addams began to study medicine, but left her studies because of poor health. Following a major surgery, Addams traveled to Europe to consider her life's direction. While in Europe she and Ellen Starr toured Toynbee Hall, a settlement house, and formed a plan to establish a settlement house in the immigrant neighborhoods of Chicago. Returning to Chicago, Addams and Starr found the perfect house for their purposes—a large home built by Charles Hull at the corner of Halsted and Polk Streets. They leased the house and raised money "to provide a center for higher civic and social life; to institute and maintain educational and philanthropic enterprises, and to investigate and improve the conditions in the industrial districts of Chicago." The settlement house was located in a densely populated area where immigrants lived—at first, Italian, Irish, German, Greek, Bohemian, Russian, and Polish, and later Mexican immigrants and African Americans who had migrated from the American South. Hull House served as a location for people to join clubs, discussions, and activities, as well as take English and citizenship classes, and theater, music, and art classes. Hull House provided a kindergarten and day care for the children of working mothers, an employment bureau, an art gallery, a museum, and libraries. And it provided a safe place for ideas of all kinds—through lectures, discussions, organizations, and conversations. Generally, 25 people, including Addams and Starr, lived at the house. During hard economic times the community served more than 2,000 people a week with their services, assistance, and outreach. Addams paid attention to the expressed dreams and needs of the people of the neighborhood before introducing services or programs to Hull House, and was able to effectively use the stories of those who lived in the neighborhood to

help with the fund-raising necessary to support the project.

As time went on, Hull House expanded to thirteen buildings, including a museum, clubs, and meeting places for trade union groups and cultural events. Addams said once, "We have learned to say that the good must be extended to all of society before it can be held secure by any one person or class; but we have not yet learned ... that unless all men [sic] and all classes contribute to a good, we cannot even be sure that it is worth having."

Jane Addams not only created a location for people in the Hull House neighborhood to receive help and support but soon realized that the broader society needed to change in order to improve living conditions for the poor. She worked tirelessly to change the social

and legal, economic and political systems that contributed to abysmal conditions for those in the Hull House neighborhood. She advocated for child labor laws, effective garbage pick-up, and better conditions for factory workers, among other causes. Although she was a regular attendee and lecturer at both the Unitarian church and the Ethical Culture society in Chicago, she retained her membership in the Presbyterian church she had joined as a young adult. In her later years, Addams wrote books and lectured all over the country, spotlighting the necessity of work like hers to ensure that all people could be part of a healthy democracy. In 1931, she received a Nobel Peace Prize for her groundbreaking work, which was a forerunner to modern social work. Following her death in 1935, a funeral service was held in the courtyard of Hull House, where she had lived and worked for 46 years.

HANDOUT 1: CAROL GILLIGAN AND A DIFFERENT VOICE

In A Different Voice

In 1982, developmental psychologist Carol Gilligan published a groundbreaking book, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). In her book, Gilligan challenged the prevailing understanding of moral development, in particular the theories of the person with whom she had studied, Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg had discovered that the boys he interviewed in his studies preferred a morality of rights that emphasized separation and independence, while girls of the same age preferred a morality of responsibility that emphasized relationship and interdependence. His theory posited that children move through stages of moral development much as they move through Piaget's stages of cognitive development, and he assigned a higher level of moral development to those whose moral reasoning is based on rules and moral principle than to those whose moral reasoning was based on empathy for others. Gilligan's work challenged Kohlberg's conclusion that those who based their moral reasoning on rights had reached a higher level of development than those who based their moral reasoning on responsibility. She argued that girls and boys were socialized differently and each reflected the moral reasoning that was most appropriate for their location and for the ways in which they had been taught to understand their role in the world. She further argued that the female perspective and its ethic of responsibility which put relationship first had been ignored by others in her field.

Highlighting Gender Difference

Gilligan included in her book two interviews that were part of Lawrence Kohlberg's 1973 study of individual views on the rights and responsibilities of human beings. Both of the respondents had been 25 years old when they were interviewed.

The first voice, a male person:

[What does the word morality mean to you?] Nobody in the world knows the answer. I think it is recognizing the right of the individual, the rights of other individuals, not interfering with those rights. Act as fairly as you would have them treat you. I think it is basically to preserve the human being's right to existence. I think that is the most important. Secondly, the human being's right to do as he pleases, again without interfering with somebody else's rights.

[How have your views on morality changed since the last interview?] I think I am more aware of an individual's rights now. I used to be looking at it strictly from my point of view, just for me. Now I think I am more aware of what the individual has a right to.

The second voice, a female person:

[Is there really some correct solution to moral problems, or is everybody's opinion equally right?] No, I don't think everybody's opinion is equally right. I think that in some situations there may be opinions that are equally valid, and one could conscientiously adopt one of several courses of action. But there are other situations in which I think there are right and wrong answers, that sort of inhere in the nature of existence, of all individuals here who need to live with each other to live. We need to depend on each other, and hopefully it is not only a physical need but a need of fulfillment in ourselves, that a person's life is enriched by cooperating with other people and striving to live in harmony with everybody else, and to that end, there are right and wrong, there are things which promote that end and that move away from it, and in that way it is possible to choose in certain cases among different courses of action that obviously promote or harm that goal.

FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about Jane Addams, visit the Hull House [museum](#) (at www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/_learn/_aboutjane/aboutjane.html) website and read the biography of [Jane Addams](#) (at nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1931/addams-bio.html) at the Nobel Peace Prize website.

To learn more about the work of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council and their Community Capacity Building program, visit the [UUPCC](#) website.

WORKSHOP 8: UNDERSTANDING ETHICS FROM THE MARGINS

INTRODUCTION

No matter how personal we wish to make ethics, it always has a collective dimension. Ignoring or minimizing this dimension is the root of all injustices. — Miguel De La Torre, 21st-century ethicist

Ethical systems and frameworks are about behavioral choices. What action do we choose to take in a particular situation and what is the basis for that action? While religious ethics find a basis in our theological understanding of humanity and of humanity's relationship with the divine (if we understand such a relationship to exist), the ethical precepts that guide us come also from our personal experiences and points of view. This workshop introduces an ethical framework that comes from collective, rather than individual, experiences—ethics viewed from the perspectives of those on the margins, those who, while their options and choices are narrowed by oppression, may choose to respond to situations and circumstances with actions that are vibrant, life-filled, and affirming of individual and collective agency and humanity. This ethical system draws on Christian liberation theology and the idea that all ethics are grounded in the lived experience of the poor, the marginalized, and the disenfranchised.

This workshop introduces three scholars of the late 20th and early 21st century who challenge the moral thinking of the dominant U.S. culture, a culture that ignores the collective social dimension of oppression and influences moral norms in ways that ignore (or even foment) oppression. These scholars are Latino ethicist Miguel De La Torre, African American womanist ethicist Katie Cannon, and African American humanist theologian Anthony Pinn. Each of the three begin the formulation of their ethical understanding in a recounting of history, the story of their people's survival in the face of oppression at the hands of the dominant culture. Each lifts up stories of their people's triumphs, strengths, and survival. They each directly challenge some of the moral "universals" and principles of character ("virtues") espoused by the dominant culture, exposing that moral universals or principles can be as easily used in the service of oppression as in the service of liberation. For those on the margins, De La Torre tells us, "the primary source for doing ethics is their lived, everyday experience." The ethical framework of marginalized people validates that which is life-affirming, maintains dignity and identity in the midst of overwhelming assaults on both, and supports both individual and

collective resistance to systems and powers that oppress. Secondly, this ethical system challenges those who are privileged by the dominant culture to educate themselves and others about the view from the margins, and to work to dismantle not only oppression but the system of privilege that supports oppression. Participants explore the collective dimension of ethics and the place of power, privilege, and social position in determining our behavioral choices.

Consider expanding this workshop to two sessions, particularly if you wish to include Alternate Activity 1, An Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance — Racial/Ethnic Identity-based Caucusing and/or Alternate Activity 2, Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance in Folk Tales.

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce ethics from the margins
- Introduce three ethicists whose work illuminates ethics from the margins: Miguel De La Torre, Katie Cannon, and Anthony Pinn
- Consider ways ethical frameworks of the dominant culture have been inadequate to describe and prescribe moral behavior for those from oppressed communities because they neither draw from nor take into account the community's lived realities
- Challenge participants to acknowledge ways in which they are privileged by the dominant culture, to examine a collective dimension of ethics, and learn more about perspectives of those on the margins
- Invite participants to acknowledge ways in which they are oppressed by the dominant culture, and to name ways in which their ethical understandings are informed by their personal histories and the history of their people(s).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about the work of ethicists who bring a perspective from the margins of the dominant culture
- Respond to insights and questions that arise from this ethical framework
- Identify and commit to specific actions to deepen their understanding of the collective dimension of ethics.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	3
Activity 1: Opening Scenario	15
Activity 2: Reflection and Conversation	15
Activity 3: An Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance	25
Activity 4: Anthony Pinn and Black Humanism	15
Activity 5: The Next Thing I Will Do	15
Faith in Action: Following the Lead of Those on the Margins	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: An Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance —Racial/Ethnic Identity-based Caucusing	60

Alternate Activity 2: Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance in Folk Tales

30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time for journaling, reflection, prayer, and/or meditation, to center yourself and open your heart and mind to that which is new and challenging. Ask yourself:

- Do I have to be concerned about my day-to-day existence? Do I have enough to eat? A place to live? Options and choices in my life?
- Is my life or well-being at risk from systems and structures of government or of the dominant culture? If so, in what ways and under what circumstances? If not, how have I sought to understand the perspective of those whose lives or well-being are at risk?
- Am I prepared for the spiritual work of deep listening and openness to others' stories? Am I prepared to be changed by those stories?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil, and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.
- Post group covenant, created in Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Welcome all participants and draw their attention to the workshop agenda.

OPENING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.
- Practice the opening reading aloud.

Description of Activity

Share these words of mid-20th-century Christian theologian Howard Thurman, from his book *Jesus and the Disinherited*, as you or one of the participants lights the chalice:

During much of my boyhood I was cared for by my grandmother, who was born a slave and lived until the Civil War in a plantation near Madison, Florida. My regular chore was to do all of the reading for my grandmother—she could neither read nor write. Two or three times a week I read the Bible to her. I was deeply impressed by the fact that she was most particular about her choice of Scripture. For instance, I might read many of the devotional Psalms, some of Isaiah, the Gospels again and again. But the Pauline epistles, never—except, at long intervals, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. My curiosity knew no bounds, but we did not question her about anything. When I was older and was half through college, I chanced to be spending a few days at home near the end of summer vacation. With a feeling of great temerity I asked her one day why it was

that she would not let me read any of the Pauline letters. What she told me I shall never forget. "During the days of slavery," she said, "the master's minister would occasionally hold services for the slaves. Old man McGhee was so mean that he would not let a Negro minister preach to the slaves. Always the white minister used as his text something from Paul. At least three or four times a year he used as a text: 'Slaves, be obedient to them that are your masters ... as unto Christ.' Then he would go on to show how it was God's will that we were slaves and how, if we were good and happy slaves, God would bless us. I promised my Maker that if I ever learned to read and if freedom ever came, I would not read that part of the Bible."

ACTIVITY 1: OPENING SCENARIO (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the scenario and facilitator notes in the Description of Activity. Prepare to present the scenario and facilitate the conversation that follows in such a way as to ensure the emotional and spiritual safety of people of color and/or working-class people who may be part of your group.

Description of Activity

Share this scenario and lead a discussion using the questions that follow:

Your congregation decides to help the children who attend a day care center in an economically depressed area of a neighboring city. You collect very nice costumes that children of your congregation have used for recitals, plays, and other events in order to give them to the children of the day care center so that the children of that neighborhood will have something to wear for Halloween. When you call the day care center to tell them about the wonderful costumes you have collected, the center director refuses to accept the costumes, effectively saying, "Our parents are perfectly capable of dressing their kids up for Halloween. If you want to do something, bring your kids over here and get to know us."

Ask:

- What are the underlying moral issues?
- How would you react under these circumstances if you were the day care center director receiving the offer of the costumes? If you were a congregational volunteer making the offer? If you were a member of the congregation who

also used the day care center (or whose sibling/cousin/friend used the center)?

- What unstated stories and histories might be at play?

Note to facilitators: This conversation has the potential for being painful for people of color, lower-income people, working-class people, and/or parents who struggle with finances. Be alert for "they" and "them," "we" and "us" language that makes the day care center staff or clientele a group whose concerns and circumstances are outside the experience of the members of the group. Examples:

- "I don't know why they turned down the offer. Those kids have so little. You would think they would be grateful."
- "We try so hard to do the right thing; why don't they understand that we meant well?"
- "It's too bad they were so stubborn about this; they don't know what they are missing"
- "Don't they understand how busy our kids are/we are? It would be so hard to arrange for our kids to meet theirs. What do they expect us to do?"

When you encounter we/they, us/them language, gently remind participants that such language assumes the day care center staff/clientele are people whose concerns and circumstances are outside the experience of the everyone in the workshop group. Invite participants to open their hearts to broader perspective and understanding.

ACTIVITY 2: REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Writing and drawing materials, such as pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Set out drawing materials where all can reach them.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - When have you been the potential giver of costumes or other benefits? When have you offered hospitality, access, or goods to others from a position of having more?
 - When have you been a potential receiver? When have you been offered hospitality, access, or goods by others because they perceived that you needed what they had to offer? Was the offer welcome?

- When have you been in the position of the day care director? When have you taken the role of advocating for the right of those who are perceived to have less to name their own needs or chart their own course?

Description of Activity

Invite participants into a time of journaling or drawing. Say:

Reflect on your own life experiences. Where do you see yourself in the costumes for the day care center scenario?

Call attention to the posted questions and invite participants to take five minutes to draw, write, or make notes in their journal and prepare to share with a partner. After five minutes, invite participants to turn to a partner and share their story and reflections. Tell them that they will have ten minutes for sharing; you may wish to alert pairs to switch roles when five minutes have passed.

ACTIVITY 3: AN ETHIC OF AFFIRMATION AND RESISTANCE (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [An Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read Handout 1, An Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance, and prepare to present it to the group. Copy the handout for all participants.
- Write these questions on newsprint, and post:
 - How does the idea of recounting "the story of my people" or "the story of my community" create a different basis for understanding identity than does "my personal story" or "the story of my family?"
 - In Cannon's and De La Torre's ethical systems, what values are at the center? Which people are at the center? What role does the ethical system supported by the dominant culture play?
 - How does this ethical system illuminate, expand, or challenge your understanding of what it means to live a moral life?
 - What do you find affirming and uplifting in this ethical system? What challenges or puzzles you? What calls you to reflection? To action?

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 1, An Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance, and read the handout aloud. Invite

participants to move into groups of three or four. Give each group newsprint and markers and invite them to list their observations, insights, questions, and challenges, using the posted questions as a guide. After 15 minutes, re-gather the group and invite small groups to post and share their lists.

ACTIVITY 4: ANTHONY PINN AND BLACK HUMANISM (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[On Becoming Humanist — A Personal Journey](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the story for all participants.

Description of Activity

Distribute the story and invite participants to read it silently to themselves. Hold silence for a couple of minutes, then lead a conversation with these questions:

- What are you thinking as you reflect on Pinn's story?
- What do you understand better or more clearly as a result of this story? What is less clear to you than it was before?
- What questions does the story raise for you? Does anything you read puzzle you?
- How is Pinn's ethical framework similar to the frameworks presented by Cannon and De La Torre? How is it different?
- Does Pinn challenge any assumptions you may have held about our Unitarian Universalist faith? About race? About the moral/ethical challenges facing Unitarian Universalists today?
- Do you agree with Jones, and with Pinn, that Unitarian Universalism has failed to develop an understanding of power as it relates to our social ethics?
- Does Pinn change your thinking about the opening scenario for this workshop, concerning the proposed donation of Halloween costumes? If so, how?

Assure participants that this conversation can only begin to touch on some of the issues raised and challenge them to take time in the days and weeks ahead to reread the resources and find out more about the ethical frameworks presented in this workshop. Limit the large group conversation to allow enough time for Activity 5.

Including All Participants

Create a large-print handout that includes the story as well as the discussion questions, to assist those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 5: THE NEXT THING I WILL DO (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Self-sticking magnetic strips
- Unlined index cards
- Fine point markers or calligraphy pens

Preparation for Activity

- Make sure each person has a surface suitable for writing.
- Set out supplies where all can reach them.

Description of Activity

Acknowledge that there is a lot to absorb in this workshop, and that it is possible, or even likely, that questions and puzzlements remain. Give each participant an index card and ask them to write a commitment to one follow up action after the workshop, for example:

- Learn more about something introduced in this workshop.
- Invite a group to which you belong to learn more together about ethics from the margins.
- Schedule a conversation with a friend or spiritual guide about something you learned in this workshop.
- Take a mini-retreat (journaling, walking, praying) to check in with yourself about something you learned in this workshop or that you wonder after it, and discern actions you might to take.

Invite participants to stick a magnetic strip to their index card and affix it to a surface at home where they will see it as a reminder of their personal commitment. Invite a few volunteers to read their commitments aloud.

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Customize Taking It Home and copy for all participants. You may wish to include this workshop's Faith in Action activity, this workshop's Find Out More section, and/or the Spiritual Preparation section of the workshop that is next in your series.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Share this closing reading from Howard Thurman's book *The Inward Journey* as you extinguish the chalice:

To be known, to be called by one's name, to find one's place and hold it against all the hordes of hell. This is to know one's value, for one's self alone.

FAITH IN ACTION: FOLLOWING THE LEAD OF THOSE ON THE MARGINS

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange for your minister, religious educator, a social action committee representative, and/or another congregational leader involved in congregational social justice projects to talk with the group about the social justice projects the congregation supports. Give guest speakers the questions in the Description of Activity in advance. You may also wish to give them the Story, Handout, and Leader Resource used in this workshop, or send them the links to these materials on the Tapestry of Faith website.

Description of Activity

Meet with invited congregational staff and/or leaders to find out about social justice projects the congregation supports and discuss together how the congregation does and/or could apply a lens of ethics from the margins to these projects.

Once guest speakers arrive, explain, in these words or your own:

In learning about ethical frameworks compatible with Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values, this group has explored several frameworks that are grounded in experiences and perspectives from the margins of the dominant culture. We are seeking ways to apply this ethical framework in our own individual and congregational lives. We want to work at hearing the perspectives and the stories from society's margins, to help us better understand how to be of service while exploring an ethical framing for the contributions we make. We think some of this work can dovetail with service and action our congregation already has begun.

Invite the guests to briefly describe congregational social justice projects. Then, ask:

- Are there projects in which the congregation takes part that are led by economically, culturally, or racially marginalized people—that is, led by members of a group that is served?
- How do the congregation's social justice projects reflect an ethic of affirmation and resistance? How do they engage in truth-telling about the stories and histories of people(s) on the margins?
- How do the congregation's social justice projects promote the spiritual practice of deep listening

to the voices and perspectives of others, especially those on the margins?

With your guest, imagine ways your congregation's social justice projects and priorities might better embrace an ethic of affirmation and resistance. Leave time for the group to commit volunteer time to an existing or potential social justice project whose leadership is drawn from the people who are served.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?
- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?
- Where was it easy for you to work together? Where was it difficult? What changes might you make for future workshops?
- Are there questions left over from this workshop that might be addressed in future workshops? If so, how will we address them?

Save the covenant newsprint to post at the next workshop. Review and assign tasks for the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

No matter how personal we wish to make ethics, it always has a collective dimension. Ignoring or minimizing this dimension is the root of all injustices. — Miguel De La Torre, 21st-century ethicist

Reflect on and plan how you will achieve "The Next Thing I Will Do" identified in the workshop. Consider other actions to follow that one. What can you learn about the cultural, economic, and political story of United States relationships with Central and South America? What conversations would you like to have, perhaps with a co-worker, a friend, or another congregant who is from a different ethnic, cultural, racial, or gender group than your own? Go outside of your usual circles and become acquainted with communities of people on the margins, perhaps as a volunteer in a social justice project led by members of the community being served. Learn to listen to the stories and perspectives of people on the margins of the dominant culture.

Take time to nurture your spiritual life as you delve more deeply into the ideas raised in this workshop. Plan time for prayer, solo walks, or journaling to check in with yourself about what you are discovering, what you are questioning, and what challenges you are meeting as you choose ethical responses to the existence of

privilege, oppression, dehumanization, and marginalization in our world today.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: AN ETHIC OF AFFIRMATION AND RESISTANCE — RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY-BASED CAUCUSING (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [An Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [About Race-Based Reflection Groups](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- If you are not familiar with racial/ethnic identity-based caucusing, read Leader Resource 1, About Race-Based Reflection Groups, reprinted from Workshop 12 of the Tapestry of Faith program [Building the World We Dream About](#) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/btwwda/).
- Read Handout 1, An Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance, and copy for all participants.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - How does the idea of recounting "the story of my people" or "the story of my community" create a different basis for understanding identity than does "my personal story" or "the story of my family?"
 - In Cannon's and De La Torre's ethical systems, what values are at the center? Which people are at the center? What role does the ethical system supported by the dominant culture play?
 - How does this ethical system illuminate, expand, or challenge your understanding of what it means to live a moral life?
 - Is this ethical system in harmony with the moral and values you have been taught and/or currently affirm? In which ways?
 - What do you find affirming and uplifting in this ethical system? What challenges or puzzles you? What calls you to reflection? To action?

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 1, An Ethic of Affirmation and Resistance and read it aloud. Using the background in Leader Resource 1, About Race-Based Reflection Groups explain the idea of caucusing and answer any questions participants may raise. Invite participants to move into race/ethnicity-based reflection groups and invite groups to consider the posted questions. After 50

minutes, re-gather the larger group. Invite volunteers to share any observations, questions, or reflections.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: ETHIC OF AFFIRMATION AND RESISTANCE IN FOLK TALES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Stories to read aloud, chosen from options in Preparation for Activity
- Optional: Computer, with speakers if available, with Internet connection

Preparation for Activity

- Purchase folk tale books or borrow from a library, choosing one of these:
 - [Every Tongue Got to Confess: Negro Folk-tales from the Gulf States](#), collected by Zora Neale Hurston (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002)
 - [Mules and Men](#), collected by Zora Neale Hurston (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008)
 - Selection of [children's books](#) based on the stories collected by Hurston. Possibilities include:
 - *What's the Hurry, Fox? and Other Animal Stories*
 - *The Six Fools*
 - *The Three Witches*
 - *Lies and Other Tall Tales*
 - *The Skull Talks Back*
- Select two or three stories to share with the group. Practice reading them aloud. Alternatively, invite a participant to prepare to read the stories.
- Optional: Listen to the audio clip (6:45) of Ruby Dee reading from Hurston's *Mules and Men*, on the [Zora Neale Hurston website](#). Hurston tells how she came to collect African American folklore and its role in the community. Set up the computer, and speakers if you have them, so you can share the clip.

Description of Activity

Say:

Along with being a novelist, Zora Neale Hurston was a formally trained anthropologist. As part of her Ph.D. work at Columbia University, she collected folk tales and African American wisdom had been passed from generation to generation. These tales, which date back to the time of slavery, illustrate an ethical system that

lifts up survival, identity, and dignity of the marginalized.

Read aloud the story(ies) you have chosen. Follow each story with a discussion of these questions:

- What wisdom does this tale transmit?
- How does the wisdom in this tale affirm life, dignity, and identity for those who are powerless?
- How does it demonstrate an ethic of resistance?
- What strikes you about this story, when you read it as an example of ethics from the margins?

STORY: ON BECOMING HUMANIST — A PERSONAL JOURNEY

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... My formative years were spent within the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, a part of the Black church tradition. At an early age, lay activity was no longer enough; I felt a "call" to Christian ministry, a need to serve the Church through ministerial leadership. I started preaching at the age of fourteen and the AME Church ordained me a deacon after my first year in college.

While in school, I ministered as a youth pastor in various AME churches and saw firsthand the efforts of Black Christians to make sense of their daily struggles in light of Christian theology and doctrinal structures. Such experiences raised queries for me concerning the tension between lived reality and Christian "truths." Hard questions became unavoidable: Does the Christian message say anything liberating to a suffering humanity? Do Christian explanations of human suffering make a "material" and concrete difference? ...

[The] response to the problem of evil begins with slavery, where the religious question of human suffering first emerges for Black Americans. Brought here as chattel, African Americans have faced dehumanization through the destruction of culture, the ripping apart of family units, rape, beatings, and any other avenue that linked the control of Black bodies with the increase of plantation profits. All this, Africans Americans were told was rightly done in the name of God. Some slaves accepted their lot in life. Others questioned the religious doctrine given to them, and searched for an explanation of their plight beyond the plantation minister's rhetoric. The effort to understand God amid contradictory messages of existential hardship and the Christian gospel continued during the movement from "hush harbors," or secret meetings, to early Black churches, and into the late 20th century. Continued oppression made this questioning inescapable.

Spirituals and church leaders, in many instances, developed a[n] ... approach centered on the notion of redemptive or fruitful suffering. ... God manipulates this moral evil and fosters good consequences ...

Moving forward in time, one senses this understanding of suffering, for example, in a 1959 speech to the

Montgomery Improvement Association by Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.:

As we continue the struggle for our freedom we will be persecuted, abused, and called bad names. But we must go on with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive, and love is the most durable power in all the world.

This understanding of human suffering troubled me. I could not accept the idea that the collective suffering of those I saw on a daily basis had any value at all. I needed to explore an alternate response that uncompromisingly affirms—at all costs, including even the rejection of Christian concepts such as God—the demonic nature of collective suffering because human liberation is more important than the maintenance of any religious symbol, sign, cannon, or icon.

... I could see nothing in history pointing toward the presence of something in the world beyond visible realities

After taking a deep breath, I spoke a new word: God does not exist. Even with this confession made, I was still committed to doing theology, but without reliance on notions of God. I would do theology as a humanist. ... I continued my work with this commitment: Religious questions can surely be posed without the assumption of God. ...

Until recently, I thought I did a fairly good job of explaining my position as a theologian. I said there is no God with conviction, yet sensitivity, and thought about other ways of holding humans in moral/ethical "check": do not hurt others because they deserve respect and proper care. I thought my professional life and academic writings made this clear, clear for both those in and outside the academy. ... I was proud of myself for having been so straightforward—making private life and public confessions respectfully consistent.

This was the case until ...a reporter ... kept asking questions that I believed I had convincingly responded to: Who is Tony Pinn? Why is it you do what you do? And, why do you label your work using such academic language?

Some did not understand ... the connections between my professional life and my private life, complete with its religious dimensions. I think this stems from a lack of knowledge ... concerning the historical roots of humanism in Black communities, as well as my lack of institutional affiliation. I would like to briefly address both of these points in turn.

... [The] question of liberation, which is a primary consideration, stimulated humanist responses very early in the life of African American communities ... it seems fairly clear that the early presence and rationale for humanism within African American communities revolve around the inadequacy of Christianity for responding to

moral evil. Humanism, in turn, gives more attention to humanity's responsibility for evil in the world, hence humanity's responsibility for re-orienting human destiny and fostering equality.

... humanism continued to grow in Black communities; think of figures such as Frederick Douglass, Zora Neale Hurston, and W. E. B. DuBois among other notables. One can say that humanism reaches its zenith with respect to open declarations and expression during the two periods of what has been labeled the Harlem Renaissance.

The [20th-century] Civil Rights Movement's ideological underpinnings are further clarified through attention to humanist principles. I, for one, cannot help but believe that the movement away from the Christian-based Civil Rights Movement sparked by SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee] and the thundering call for Black Power pointed to deep theological differences. It is more than likely that the theistic motivations and explanations did not adequately address the concerns and ideas of some of the more "radical" elements of the movement. ... Gone were its integrationist goals [of] the Civil Rights Movement; gone was its reliance upon Christian doctrine and paradigms for action. SNCC decided that social transformation would only occur when African Americans took control of their destiny and worked toward change. ...

... [Dr.] William R. Jones of Florida State University ... argues that the African American humanist project emerges not as a consequence of the Enlightenment but rather as a direct response to a unique set of circumstances facing African American communities in the United States ... [and] that a variety of approaches must be utilized if liberation of African Americans is actually the central objective. Countering claims that the Black church is the source of liberation for Black Americans, Jones asserts that the Black churches have a "checkered" past with respect to liberative praxis.

Although African Americans have held humanist perspectives and operated accordingly for centuries, the phrase, Black humanism, is fairly recent. Because the Unitarian Universalist Association was already open, at least in part, to the label of humanism, it makes sense that one of the first references to Black humanism would take place within the UUA's struggles over race questions and the advancement of Black Power during the late 20th century. Mark Morrison Reed's *Empowerment: One Denomination's Quest for Racial Justice, 1967-1982* provides information concerning the use of this term, linking its use with the Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus created to respond to racial issues within the UUA. This religiosity brings into play the "unique" demands and existential context of African Americans; the value of their "blackness" was brought into human-centered thought and action. This is particularly important for me because of my initial

confession: I am in search of a home, an institutional base.

Some have argued that the UUA provides an alternative that recognizes new possibilities, the value of thought and freedom. These are essential elements—you can imagine—for persons from a group that has been historically denied open expression of freedom and thought. ...

Regardless of such potential, there are few African Americans in the UUA. Why? One thing is certain, old rationales for this gap are inappropriate and inaccurate. It is, I think, a mistake to assume that African Americans are not UU because of the this-worldly nature of humanist principles and underpinnings, nor is the location of said churches a major obstacle for car-owning African Americans who might be inclined to participate. ...

It is possible that the issue revolves around the UUA's changing ideological framework and an ineffectual grasp of the nature and depth of America's race problem. ...

The UUA has had its encounters with the African American surge toward freedom—Black power. Hard questions and perplexing moments like these are acknowledged but, it appears, glossed over. I have in mind, for example, Charles Gaines' words in a prior issue of *Religious Humanism* (Summer/Fall 1997). At times he mentions the problem, but always invokes an optimism that may not be warranted:

Unitarian Universalists, as a whole, have moved beyond just tolerance to positive feelings of inclusiveness. Therefore many personal freedom issues have not had to be fought with an intensity at the denominational level.

The author points out the UUA's record with respect to gays, lesbians, and white women, but he glosses over its struggle with respect to race, as well as the changing face of racism. In strong terms, William Jones, in an article "Towards a New Paradigm for Uncovering Neo-racism/Oppression in Unitarian Universalism," pulls no punches. Jones:

And when the grid is applied to Unitarian Universalism, a singular conclusion emerges. We too continue to perpetuate the virus of racism/oppresion in our public and private lives because we act on misconceptions of what it is and how it operates. In particular we fail to recognize that racism has mutated into neo-racism and that this mutant virus, the racism/oppresion of the 80s and 90s, is immune to the vaccine we developed in the 1960s.

Dr. Jones continues in an article "Power and Anti-Power" that the dilemma revolves around the failure of the UUA to recognize the "role, status, and value of power in human affairs." The UUA, he continues, does not "have a viable theology of power to undergird [its]

social ethics, and this absence not only renders us ineffective, but often places us on the wrong side of ethical issues." Furthermore,

[the UUA has] advanced glowing and commendable resolutions on the pressing social issues of the day; [it does not] lack the sensitive eye and heart to see what needs to be done; but we often flounder when we reach the question of how: the question of strategy.

... For African Americans, such as myself, who wrestle through these tangled issues, hoping to find a new vision for a troubled world, the dilemma continues because they must enter a tradition that is itself seeking renewal and rethinking its identity. ... The interaction between communities of "color" and the UUA is filled with promise and pitfalls. And our discussion of the

historical interaction between these two must move beyond prescriptions and platforms developed earlier this century. Yet, I cannot offer resolutions to these problems; however, I believe it's important to begin discussing this and other questions openly and honestly. Perhaps struggling with hard questions in order to gain "hard" answers is the first step.

Finally, I have spent time here going over my own religious journey, and the pros and cons of membership in the UUA, in order to begin thinking through the questions that face us. From the writing of these remarks to the time of their publication, the process has been helpful for me, and I hope you have found this exercise somewhat useful. If nothing else I hope it will spark an ongoing conversation.

HANDOUT 1: AN ETHIC OF AFFIRMATION AND RESISTANCE

Doing Ethics from the Margins

Over the last two decades, a number of ethicists and theologians who are people of color have articulated a critique of the dominant culture's ethical systems, including Kant's ethics, utilitarian ethics, and virtue ethics. (These frameworks are explored in Workshops 2, 3, and 4 of this program). These scholars articulate ethical frameworks grounded in the perspective of marginalized people, a perspective that celebrates resistance, identity, and vibrant survival in the face of social, political, and economic marginalization. There are several common characteristics to the ethical frameworks they describe, including:

- Ethics are communal and not individual, public and not private. They are grounded in the lived experience and day-to-day realities of survival and resistance of those who are oppressed.
- Values, principles, and religious texts and sources can as easily be used to oppress as they can to liberate, and interpretations of those values, principles, texts, and sources must speak to the experiences of people on the margins. What is most important is whether or not a particular reading or understanding supports the survival and vibrancy of oppressed people or leads to actions that enhance their quality of life.
- Ethical behavior enhances survival, quality of life, and capacity to experience of being fully human and valued. Ethical behavior redeems the exploited and marginalized, overturning invisibility and namelessness while inviting joy and celebration of humanity and identity.
- Ethical behavior resists systems of oppression and develops the capacities of marginalized people to challenge the power structures of the dominant culture.

Katie Cannon, educator, author, first black woman ordained by the Presbyterian Church (1950-)

Katie Cannon's ethics begin with affirmation of the resourcefulness and survival of black women in the United States through centuries of a slave system in which women were exploited to work in the fields; to raise white women's children; to serve the sexual needs of white men through rape; and to carry and birth children, valuable commodities in slave-based capitalist economic system. She lifts up the value of folk tales, family stories, spirituals, and Christian faith supported by liberating readings of Biblical texts as sources of inspiration and instruction for survival—of self, of children and family, of dignity, of identity, and of the right

to name oneself and redeem personal value in a hostile world. Cannon, who grew up in North Carolina at a time of legalized apartheid, notes that "the cherished ethical ideas predicated upon the existence of freedom and a wide range of choices proved null and void in situations of oppression" and goes on to explore the many ways in which legacy of exploitation based on race, gender, and economic circumstances continues to this day. The ethical framework she embraces is "black womanist ethics," using the term "womanist" earlier defined by writer Alice Walker as a black feminist or feminist of color who is outrageous, audacious, courageous, willful, responsible and *serious*. (Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1983) Cannon's black womanist ethics affirm female moral agency under oppressive systems. Cannon writes:

Blacks may use action guides which have never been considered within the scope of traditional codes of faithful living. Racism, gender discrimination and economic exploitation, as inherited, age-long complexes, require the Black community to create and cultivate values and virtues in their own terms so that they can prevail against the odds with moral integrity. ... In the Black community, the aggregate of qualities which determine desirable ethical values regarding the uprightness of character and soundness of moral conduct must always take into account the circumstances, the paradoxes, and the dilemmas that constrict Blacks to the lowest range of self-determination.

To demonstrate womanist ethical values, including survival of self and affirmation of dignity and quality of life, Cannon looks to the black women's literary tradition, and especially to the stories and novels written and collected by Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960), the first trained African American woman anthropologist, whose was part of the 20th-century Harlem Renaissance. Cannon's ethical framework looks to the cultural inheritance passed down from generation to generation of African American women:

The Black woman's collection of moral counsel is implicitly passed on and received from one generation of Black women to the next. Black females are taught what is to be endured and how to endure the harsh, cruel, inhumane exigencies of life.

A well-respected and beloved educator, Cannon has taught black womanist ethics to students of many races and genders. Using challenging questions and observations, she invites students to unpack their personal, family, and community stories, noting gaps and dissonances, then guides them to see both systems of oppression and stories of resistance and hope at work in their own lives and histories. Becoming aware of and naming the ways in which both oppression and

resistance have affected their own lives, histories, and communities enables students to develop the practice of making behavioral choices that affirm identity, vitality, and fullness of life while resisting systems that thwart and deny that which is life-enhancing for all.

Miguel De La Torre, educator, author, ordained Baptist minister (1958-)

Miguel De La Torre's personal story begins with his family's migration from Cuba to the United States when he was an infant, an indirect result of the United States government's involvement in Cuba on behalf of corporate interests. De La Torre's ethical framework is grounded in the broader community story of Latina/os in the United States, a story not only of exploitation, theft, oppression, and marginalization, but also of family, faith, organizing, triumph, and survival. He begins his examination of Latina/o oppression with the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-1848), when the United States, riding the dominant cultural theme of "Manifest Destiny," declared war on the newly independent (1821) Mexico. By the time the war was over, the United States had taken a large part of Mexico, from Texas to California, and most of the seaports and natural resources that had previously belonged to Mexico. De La Torre is strongly critical of European American ethical systems which ignore both the U.S. theft and exploitation of resources from Central and South America and the current economic exploitation and oppression of Latina/o people, both those who choose to immigrate and those who do not:

The view of the ethical landscape from the pedestal of privilege is radically different than from the depths of disenfranchisement. ... By its very nature, Eurocentric ethical theory maintains that universal moral norms can be achieved independent of place, time, or people group. Such ethical norms created by Euroamerican ethicists are accepted as both universal and objective, and thus applicable to the Latino/a milieu. To speak from any Eurocentric perspective is to speak about and for all of humanity, including Hispanics. ... Nevertheless, marginalized communities of color have long recognized that no ethical perspective is value-free.

Drawing on Christian liberation theology and the idea that all ethics is grounded in the lived experience of the poor, the marginalized, and the disenfranchised, De La Torre states:

Latinos know how to live and survive in both the center and periphery of society, unlike those privileged by the prevailing social structures, which generally fail to understand the marginalized experience.

He points out that Latina/o ethics is concerned not with the betterment of the individual, but with "the sustainability of the Hispanic community and the quality

of life it leads." Ethical choices are grounded not in abstract theory or universal values, but in practical choices that lead to the betterment of the community:

To do ethics from the Latino/a margins is to attempt to work out truth and theory through reflection and action in solidarity with la comunidad. In this sense, praxis is not guided by theory. Ethics done en conjunto is not deductive, that is, beginning with some universal truth and determining the appropriate response based on that truth. Hispanics tend to be suspicious of such universal claims, which have a history of justifying Latina/o oppression.

In De La Torre's framework, ethical behavior is found in resistance to and disruption of oppressive systems that destroy, demean, and dehumanize people and communities. Like Cannon, he points to folklore about resisters, disrupters, and tricksters who oppose oppressive systems.

While focused on the Latina/o community, De La Torre calls on people of the dominant culture to learn U.S. history and current U.S. economic and immigration policies with regard to the peoples of Central and South America. He challenges privileged people to engage in conversation with people marginalized by those policies. He further calls on U.S. people of faith to rethink the language of hospitality in reference to immigrants from countries south of the United States, saying:

Hospitality means, I own the house and out of the goodness of my heart, I am letting you be here. But it's not an issue of hospitality—it's about restitution. The lens of restitution would allow us to claim our ethical calling dealing with the immigration situation. ... All of our wealth is connected to the impoverishment of the two-thirds world. We are all economically privileged—how do we do restitution?

[Editor's note: De La Torre uses the term "two-thirds world" in lieu of the common term "third world, to highlight the fact that the countries typically designated as "third world" nations actually make up two thirds of the world's geography. Legacies of colonialism and empire have helped make people in these nations the world's most economically disenfranchised.]

LEADER RESOURCE 1: ABOUT RACE-BASED REFLECTION GROUPS

Adapted from Workshop 12 of the Tapestry of Faith curriculum Building the World We Dream About by Dr. Mark A. Hicks.

Race-based identity groups, or caucuses, provide a chance for people to talk in a structured format with others from their own ethnic/racial group, an opportunity that is rare, even for those who regularly participate in multicultural dialogues. This kind of within-group talk more often than not surfaces a different type of conversation, both in tone and content, than does multicultural dialogue. In racial affinity groups, people who identify as White or of European ancestry are able to ask questions and raise issues without the fear of offending People of Color and people from racially or ethnically marginalized groups. People socialized in racially or ethnically oppressed groups find that they can talk about issues without the burden of rationalizing and proving the validity of their experience to White people.

There may be discomfort among some who believe this sort of exercise is divisive or unnecessarily painful. Some may resist moving into such groups. This may be true (for different reasons) for both White people and people from marginalized racial and ethnic identities. White people, for example, might say, "I want to hear/learn from People of Color." People of Color and from racially or ethnically marginalized groups may have a need to affirm their universal humanity and say, "I prefer not to wear a racial hat." Biracial and multiracial people may find it difficult to "make a choice about which group to join." Other issues and concerns may be voiced.

Acknowledge concerns and explain that the intent of the exercise is to deepen and broaden the perspectives of participants to produce new ways of thinking, because creating a different type of group can create a different kind of conversational outcome.

Emphasize that the purpose of racial identity group dialogues is to support multicultural community. One way this happens is by providing a safe and intentional space for people to "do their homework before a true intercultural encounter can occur." (Eric H. F. Law, in *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993))

This exercise is intended to further encourage the development of spiritual practices that support the doing of antiracist/multicultural work. Note that all the other workshops have offered conversations across racial lines and that there will be more opportunity for multicultural and multiracial dialogue in future workshops.

When participants divide into racial identity groups, emphasize that the decision about which group to join is up to the individual. Congregations in which there are no racially/ethnically marginalized groups should still participate in this activity. There will be opportunities in later sessions to explore issues related to this particular project. Although there may be a variety of different racial/ethnic identities among those who identify as People of Color and from racially or ethnically marginalized groups, suggest that they form one "racially or ethnically marginalized identity" group. In some cases, participants may choose to form a fourth group for people of a particular ethnic or racial identity.

FIND OUT MORE

Learn more about the [U.S./Mexican War](#) on the PBS website.

There are video clips of Miguel De La Torre speaking on his [home page](#).

More about Zora Neale Hurston can be found [here](#).

Find two of Anthony Pinn's essays, "[Anybody There? Reflections on African American Humanism](#)" and "[On Becoming Humanist: A Personal Journey](#)" on the HUUMANISTS website.

Scholarly, yet accessible, books on doing ethics from the margins include:

Cannon, Katie Geneva, *Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community* (New York: Continuum, 1995, 2008)

De La Torre, Miguel, *Latina/o Social Ethics: Moving Beyond Eurocentric Moral Thinking* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010)

Dorrien, Gary, *Economy, Difference, Empire: Social Ethics for Social Justice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010)

Pinn, Anthony B., *By These Hands: A Documentary History of African American Humanism* (New York: New York University Press, 2001) and *Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003)

Thurman, Howard, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976)

WORKSHOP 9: AN ETHIC OF RISK

It is possible for there to be a dance with life, a creative response to its intrinsic limits and challenges... — Sharon Welch

Unitarian Universalist ethicist and theologian Sharon Welch's work was born of her observation that those who engage in justice struggles always do so from a position of incomplete understanding and limited perspective. In the feminist movement, she learned it is impossible to control or guarantee the outcome or success of a particular action. She observed that oppressed communities have found a way to sustain resistance generation after generation in the face of repeated failure and defeat. She contrasts this with what she names as middle-class cynicism and despair which comes from an inability to control the outcome of action or to solve complex social problems.

This workshop will introduce and consider Welch's ethic of risk, which includes a redefinition of responsible action, grounding in community, and strategic risk-taking. An ethic of risk leads us to a different kind of response to the moral issues of our time—issues of oppression and violence against people, groups, and the environment. Welch challenges us to form communities of accountability with people of different perspectives, values, and mores. Participants consider Welch's stance that because an individual perspective on moral issues is always partial, "a single actor cannot be moral."

Note: Alternate Activity 1, The Music of Justice invites participants to bring music to share with the group. If you plan to do this activity, extend the invitation before the workshop.

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters found in the Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce an ethic of risk and Sharon Welch's framework for determining moral/ethical action
- Explore ways relationships among communities with different perspectives and experiences can lead to more effective, sustained resistance
- Strengthen connections among participants.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn the central elements of Welch's ethic of risk
- Consider the challenges and possibilities offered by Welch's ethic of risk
- Learn about labor organizer Dolores Huerta and explore ways in which her work demonstrates an ethic of risk
- Weigh an ethic of risk against other ethical frameworks explored in this program
- Reflect on how their religious, spiritual, and community life does and does not support them in choosing actions they regard as moral, and what changes they might make in that regard.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	2
Activity 1: Opening Scenario	15
Activity 2: Reflection and Conversation	20
Activity 3: An Ethic of Risk	25
Activity 4: Dolores Huerta	25
Faith in Action: Multiple Perspectives	
Closing	13
Alternate Activity 1: The Music of Justice	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time for journaling, reflection, prayer, and/or meditation, using these focus questions:

- What have you done in your own life to work toward justice? What grounds your work?
- Have you become discouraged or cynical about the results of justice work? What were/are the circumstances? How do you gauge your current capacity to work toward justice in the world?
- What response do you have to Welch's assertion that "a single actor cannot be moral" due to limited and partial understanding of a given situation?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.
- Post group covenant, created in Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Welcome all participants and draw their attention to the workshop agenda.

OPENING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share Reading 574 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "The Glories of Peace," from Micah 4:3.

ACTIVITY 1: OPENING SCENARIO (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Review the two scenarios and select the one you will use.

Description of Activity

Share one of these two scenarios and lead a discussion using the questions in your chosen scenario.

Scenario 1

You are a member of an urban congregation and the city you are located in provides very few services for the homeless. The local Interfaith Alliance to Combat Homelessness has requested that you open your building and grounds for their work with homeless people, which includes providing sleeping space during hours when a large part of the building is normally not in

use. While some congregants believe that inviting such a use of the building is exactly what the congregation should be doing, others have concerns about the security of the building and the safety of congregational members. A concern is raised that diseases such as Hepatitis B can survive on surfaces after contact, and that the congregation's children use some of the spaces in question. Would you support the Alliance's request to use your building? Why or why not? What moral/ethical ideas ground your response?

Scenario 2

The ethical eating study and support group in your congregation invites the board and congregation to raise their consciousness about environmental issues inherent in our food choices by voting to have only vegetarian food offered at congregational events. While many in the congregation try to practice "ethical eating," there are some who argue that to practice vegetarianism presupposes that one has the means and access to purchase and prepare vegetarian dishes. There is concern that if the congregation votes for such a policy change, an unintended result will be to exclude some people from participation in congregational events. Would you vote for the initiative of the ethical eating study and support group? Why or why not? What moral/ethical ideas ground your response?

ACTIVITY 2: REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Writing and drawing materials, such as pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Set out writing and drawing materials where all can reach them.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Did you think you had enough information at the time to predict the results of your action?
 - Did your action produce the intended result?
 - Did your action produce results that were not intended?

Description of Activity

Invite participants into a time of journaling or drawing, saying:

Recall a time in your life when you acted with the intent of creating more justice or more peace in that moment or circumstance.

Allow a moment for reflection. Then, indicate the posted questions and invite participants to take five minutes to respond by drawing, writing, or making notes in their journal before sharing their recollections with a partner. After five minutes, ask participants to turn to a partner and share their story and reflections; say they have ten minutes for partner sharing. Midway through the ten minutes, remind the pairs to switch roles.

Gather the large group and invite comments and observations, asking:

- What are your concerns when you must make an ethical or moral decision without as much information as you wished you had about potential outcomes?
- Does lack of control of the outcome of a particular action make you less likely to take that action?

ACTIVITY 3: AN ETHIC OF RISK (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Sharon Welch and an Ethic of Risk](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Handout 1, Sharon Welch and an Ethic of Risk. Copy it for all participants.
- Write on newsprint, and post (or create a handout with these questions):
 - What have you done in your life to work toward justice? What grounds your work?
 - Have you become discouraged or cynical about the results of justice work? What were/are the circumstances? How do you gauge your current capacity to work toward justice in the world?
 - Welch defines responsible action as that which creates conditions and possibility for further action in resisting structures of oppression. She states that creating possibility for further action can sustain communities in defeat. How do you respond to her definition? Do we risk losing our ability to create a better world if we give up on resisting structures of oppression?
 - What response do you have to Welch's assertion that "a single actor cannot be moral" due to their limited and partial understanding of a given situation?
 - How does an ethic of risk compare to other ethical frameworks explored in this workshop series?

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 1, Sharon Welch and an Ethic of Risk. Allow a few minutes for participants to read it silently. Lead a discussion of an ethic of risk using some or all of the questions you have posted on newsprint.

Including All Participants

Create a large-print handout that includes the discussion questions to assist those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 4: DOLORES HUERTA (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Dolores Huerta](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print the story, "Dolores Huerta." Prepare to read it aloud or prearrange with a volunteer to do so, and give the volunteer the story in advance.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What surprises or intrigues you about Huerta's story?
 - What were the impediments or challenges she faced as a leader for farm workers' rights?
 - Why might she have felt compelled to act, despite such challenges? What was at stake, and why did it matter?
 - How does her work reflect Welch's ethic of risk?
 - How did her actions and those of the farm workers create possibilities for further action?
 - What sustained/sustains Huerta in the face of defeat or failure of a particular action?
- Copy the story for all participants.

Description of Activity

Distribute and then read the story, "Dolores Huerta," aloud or have a volunteer to read it. Invite questions, observations, and comments. Guide a discussion using the questions you have posted on newsprint.

CLOSING (13 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Unlined paper, and a selection of writing and drawing tools, such as calligraphy pens, color pencils, and fine point markers
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Set out materials where all can reach them.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Is it necessary to work against systems of oppression in order to be a moral person?
 - Is it possible to be a moral person without taking risks?
 - Is it possible to be a moral person by oneself—that is, outside a community context?
 - Are there changes you would like to make in your life that would help you choose moral and ethical actions?
- Decide what you will do with participants' creations. Will you invite them to take them home to show to friends and family and continue the conversation? Will you display them in the meeting space or elsewhere in your congregational building? Will you retain them until the final workshop and display them at that time? Identify a display location, if you need one.
- Customize Taking It Home and copy for all participants. You may wish to include this workshop's Faith in Action activity, this workshop's Find Out More section, and/or the Spiritual Preparation section of the workshop that is next in your series.

Description of Activity

Ask participants to reflect on an ethic of risk and the possibilities and challenges it poses to their lives. Invite them into a time of silence to respond to the posted questions, and then to create a word collage, or draw, or create some other visual representation of their thoughts at this moment. Allow ten minutes.

Then, gather the group. Invite participants to share a word or phrase indicating something they are taking away from the workshop. Share a moment of silence together and then extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Research your congregation's social justice projects that involve local community issues. Examples include fair housing, homelessness, environmental justice, and immigration. Choose a project that involves a significant number of people in your congregation.

- Invite someone active in the chosen project to share their experiences. Invite your guest to explain the decision-making strategies used to choose project actions.

Description of Activity

Have your guest share their knowledge and experiences related to a specific congregational social justice project. Invite participants to work with your guest to examine the project using the framework of an ethic of risk. Ask:

- What voices and perspectives have been included in the conversations about the issue and possible actions? What voices and perspectives have helped us to critique past actions and formulate new ones?
- Where have our actions created a matrix of possibility for future action?
- How have we dealt with actions that resulted in failure, setbacks, or unexpected outcomes, either positive or negative? Have we fallen into cynicism and despair, or shown a failure of nerve? Or have we used the experience and insight gained to guide subsequent actions?
- Where have we taken strategic risks to resist systems of oppression?

Invite participants to form triads and, in their small groups, suggest next steps in this project, using Welch's ethic of risk as a guiding ethical framework. Give each triad a piece of newsprint and a marker and ask them to write down two or three possible next actions. After ten minutes, invite each triad to share their thoughts. Continue the conversation with your guest about the ways in which participants commit to involvement in future actions.

Explore ways to engage the entire congregation in broad questions regarding your congregation's place in the community and relationships with people who are marginalized or oppressed:

- How do your congregational programs, activities, and operations impact disadvantaged, oppressed, and indigenous communities in your area? Do local community groups use your facilities for programs that serve these communities?
- What environmental, political, social, or cultural issues in your area affect disadvantaged, oppressed, and indigenous communities? What opportunities exist for collaboration with these communities to work on such issues?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?
- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?
- Where was it easy for you to work together? Where was it difficult? What changes might you make for future workshops?
- Are there questions left over from this workshop that might be addressed in future workshops? If so, how will we address them?

Save the covenant newsprint to post at each workshop. Review and assign tasks for the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

It is possible for there to be a dance with life, a creative response to its intrinsic limits and challenges... — Sharon Welch

Contemplate the visual response you made to workshop questions about what it means to be a moral person. Share your thoughts, questions, doubts, and challenges with a trusted friend or loved one. Consider making concrete changes in your life that reflect a new perspective on moral action. Possibilities include:

- Seek the perspectives of people whose frame of reference, social location, culture, or values differ from your own.
- Guard against the cynicism and despair born of privilege. Find a partner who will help you recognize cynicism and refocus your thinking.
- Recognize times when your choices are guided by a need to control the outcome of a particular action. Reframe your thinking and instead focus on creating the possibility for future action.

Keep a journal record of the changes you are practicing in your life.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: THE MUSIC OF JUSTICE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Music player(s) for sharing cassette tapes, MP-3s, and/or CDs

Preparation for Activity

- Before this workshop, invite participants to bring recordings of music that has inspired them in resisting oppression. Tell the participants which types of music players you will have available and/or encourage them to bring a device for sharing their music.
- Set up the music player(s).
- Optional: Obtain a copy of Unitarian Universalist Jim Scott's song "Nothing We Haven't Seen," from the [Sailing with the Moon](#) CD. [Lyrics](#) for the song can be found on the Jim Scott website.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to share stories of times when music has lent strength and sustenance to a community resisting oppression. The stories can be ones in which participants played a personal role or ones about which they have read or heard. If participants have brought recordings of the particular songs, play them. Ask: "Why do music and resistance frequently go hand in hand?"

If you have time, close the activity by playing "Nothing We Haven't Seen" and inviting reflection on its words.

STORY: DOLORES HUERTA

In September 1965, Filipino grape workers in Delano, California, went on strike for more pay and better working conditions. A week later, the predominantly Mexican American National Farm Workers' Association joined the strike. Within a year, the two groups merged to form the United Farm Workers of America (UFW), a group that used a variety of nonviolent resistance strategies to push for higher wages and humane working conditions for grape workers. From 1969 to 1970, after a lengthy consumer boycott of California table grapes, the UFW won historic contracts with many growers. The union was a strong force behind the 1975 passage of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act, which protected the rights of farm workers to organize and negotiate with their employers.

Behind much of the UFW's success were its two leaders—the charismatic President Cesar Chavez and the tireless, brilliant, and fearless leader who was the union's principal organizer, Vice President Dolores Huerta.

Dolores Huerta was born in 1930 in Dawson, New Mexico, where her father was a miner and union activist, who sometimes worked on local farms. After her parents divorced when she was three, her mother moved with Huerta and her four siblings to a farm worker community in Stockton, California, which is in the San Joaquin Valley. Her mother worked hard, and eventually bought a restaurant and a hotel. A community and union activist, she taught her children to work hard and to care for others.

Huerta married right out of high school and soon had two children. The marriage did not last, and after the divorce, she earned a teaching degree. Her career in the classroom was brief, however, as she explains, "I couldn't stand seeing kids come to class hungry and needing shoes. I thought I could do more by organizing farm workers than by trying to teach their hungry children." Huerta joined the Community Service Organization, which worked on grassroots organizing of Mexican American farm workers. During her five years with the Community Service Organization, she learned many of the organizing skills she would use to great effect throughout her life. She spoke Spanish as she worked on voter registration drives, and English as she lobbied at the state capital for improved public services and voting access for Mexican Americans. In those years, she married for a second time, giving birth to five more children. And she met Cesar Chavez.

While working for the Community Service Organization, Huerta paid attention to the needs of the farm workers she was organizing. Whole families, including children, worked in the fields for low wages. There were no sanitary facilities and no drinking water provided for the

agricultural workers. They were continually exposed to the effects of high doses of pesticides used to increase the growers' yields. It became clear to her that the workers needed more than the right to vote in elections. They needed a union. When in 1962 the Community Service Organization decided not to become involved in union organizing, she and Chavez resigned and formed the National Farm Workers' Association, a union that would four years later join with the Filipino union to become the UFW. In the years leading up to the grape workers' strike, Chavez and Huerta joined the workers picking grapes in the field as a way to earn money to finance the union efforts. There they experienced the inhumane conditions firsthand as they recruited many workers to join their fledgling union.

During the five-year-long grape workers' strike, Huerta proved a formidable organizer and advocate. She fully supported Chavez's principled commitment to nonviolent action and, with him, decided to launch a table grape boycott that raised awareness of conditions for farm workers and gave people across the country an opportunity to do something in support of the UFW. She mentored many people, men and women alike, in leadership roles within the union, knowing just how far to stretch them with each action, so that they grew in skill without being overwhelmed. She was a firm believer in involving entire families in union actions, marches, and pickets, noting that women and children had long worked in the fields, and should be full participants in actions to improve their working conditions. In addition, the presence of women and children helped to keep the union movement nonviolent. It helped to win over public opinion, as Huerta began negotiations with organizers by focusing on what she called "motherhood kinds of things, like clean water and toilets" as well as the risk of pesticides to the children in the field. She said:

Excluding women, protecting them, keeping women at home, that's the middle class way. Poor people's movements have always had whole families on the line, ready to move at a moment's notice, with more courage because that's all we had. It's a class not an ethnic thing. (Mario Garcia, *A Dolores Huerta Reader* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2008))

By the time the contracts were signed with growers, a first for migrant farm workers, Dolores Huerta had a firmly established reputation as an organizer.

Throughout that time, and in the decades that followed, she faced enormous criticism about her personal life. She divorced her second husband and began a relationship with Cesar Chavez's brother, Richard, with whom she had four more children. She took very little pay for her work, and her family often survived on donations. She brought her children along on her organizing trips if they were small enough to be nursing

or old enough to help; those in between were often cared for by relatives or neighbors. Many of her children, now well into adulthood, continue to work for the union.

In 1988, while demonstrating in San Francisco outside of an event that featured presidential candidate George H. W. Bush, Huerta was clubbed and beaten severely by police officers, who broke six of her ribs and damaged her spleen so badly that it had to be surgically removed. A videotape of the beating proved so damaging that the city settled with Huerta out of court for \$825,000. She

used that money to set up the Dolores Huerta Foundation, whose mission is "to inspire and motivate people to organize sustainable communities to attain social justice." She serves on the board of the foundation as she continues her life's work—educating, agitating, organizing, advocating, and motivating at the grassroots to help immigrants and other economically marginalized people act to better their communities and the conditions under which they live and work.

HANDOUT 1: SHARON WELCH AND AN ETHIC OF RISK

Sharon Welch was raised in a small farming community in West Texas, the daughter of two social gospel ministers. She writes of her parents:

They lived lives of service but with no sense of guilt, duty, or sacrifice. They acknowledged defeat, but with no sense of fallenness or original sin. They focused on the direction of the Spirit, the ways in which they were being led to new horizons of creativity and service. ... The heart of their life and work was clear: building the kingdom of God on earth. (After Empire)

Welch, a Unitarian Universalist, taught theology and religion and society at Harvard from 1982 to 1991. She taught religious studies and women's and gender studies at the University of Missouri from 1991 until 2007, when she became Provost of Meadville Lombard Theological School. She is the author of several books, including the ground-breaking *Toward a Feminist Ethic of Risk* (1990). Her book, *After Empire: The Art and Ethos of Enduring Peace* (2004), reflects her long-standing work in developing a philosophy of peacemaking. She was one of the members of the core team that crafted the "Creating Peace" Statement of Conscience passed by the 2010 General Assembly, and continues to serve as a core member of the Peace Ministry Network.

Welch's "feminist ethic of risk" was born of her experiences in the feminist movement and her observation that those who engage in justice struggles always do so from a position of incomplete understanding and limited perspective. In the feminist movement she learned that it is impossible to control or guarantee the outcome or success of a particular action. She asked: "How does a movement persist in the face of partial victories and continued defeats?"

She answered that one must take "responsible action within the limits of bounded power ... and name the resources that evoke persistent defiance and resistance in the face of repeated defeats"—an ethic of risk.

Welch states that the complexity of social problems and the inability to perceive how they might be resolved often results in a middle-class failure of nerve, defined as "the inability to persist in resistance when the problems are seen in their full magnitude." The resulting cynicism and despair is a privilege of the affluent, who can detach from the day-to-day issues of oppression. She writes:

It is easier to give up on long-term social change when one is comfortable in the present—when it is possible to have challenging work, excellent health care and housing, and access to fine arts. When the good life is present or within reach, it is tempting to despair of its ever being in reach for others and resort merely to enjoying it for oneself and one's family.

Welch learned from the stories and literature of oppressed people, particularly women of color, as she pondered the ability of oppressed communities to continue to resist generation after generation. She writes:

The ethic of risk is characterized by three elements, each of which is essential to maintain resistance in the face of overwhelming odds: a redefinition of responsible action, grounding in community, and strategic risk-taking.

She continues: "Responsible action does not mean the certain achievement of desired ends but the creation of a matrix in which further actions are possible, the creation of the conditions of possibility for desired changes." It is found in taking steps toward a desired goal, and focusing on possibilities, rather than outcomes, choosing "to care and to act although there are no guarantees of success."

Welch's ethic of risk is firmly grounded in community—not just present community, but also the communities of memory and hope represented by the stories a community tells about its past and its future. She says quite simply that we cannot be moral alone because all perspectives are partial and that we must seek engagement and interaction with other communities in order both to determine the what actions we choose and also to sustain us through inevitable failure and defeat. She writes:

Material interactions between multiple communities with divergent principles, norms, and mores [are] essential for foundational moral critique. ... Morally transformative interaction requires far more than conversation between different groups and peoples ... "genuine" conversation presupposes prior material interaction, either political conflict or coalition, or life-sustaining work.

She goes on to say:

Pluralism is required, not for its own sake, but for the sake of enlarging our moral vision.

The third element of Welch's ethic of risk is interwoven with the first two. She argues that we must choose acts of resistance to oppression based on a social critique which is grounded in communities where multiple perspectives are named, expressed, and respected. Such communities of resistance are themselves born in acts of resistance—in effect, a circular process of critique to action and back to critique that strengthens and sustains in the struggle for liberation. In *Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work* (1999), she describes the moral strength found in "the courage and humor of a community that continues to learn, to love, to acknowledge our capacity for harm—and from that acknowledgement, to find together the balm for the journey, presence and witness to the struggles and joys of life."

FIND OUT MORE

By Sharon D. Welch

A Feminist Ethic of Risk (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990)

Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work (New York: Routledge, 1999)

"[The Machiavellian Dilemma: Paradoxes and Perils of Democratic Governance](#)," *Tikkun Magazine*, May/June 2010

About Dolores Huerta

[Biography](#) on the website of the Dolores Huerta Foundation

Garcia, Mario T., ed. *A Dolores Huerta Reader*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008)

WORKSHOP 10: LOCUS OF MORAL AUTHORITY REVISITED

INTRODUCTION

The first step in the evolution of ethics is a sense of solidarity with other human beings. — Albert Schweitzer

As we make behavioral choices in our day-to-day lives, we hold a sense of what is right and what is wrong, even if we are not always able to articulate the framework from which that emerges. This program explored several different frameworks and approaches to ethics that undergird debates over what is right, ethical, or moral in our society, our communities, our families, even within ourselves. Participants reflected on ways our networks of community, including our faith community, shape our moral and ethical values and give them life. We do not make behavioral choices and decisions in isolation, but rather as social beings, products of personal and communal experiences, stories, and structures that influence our understanding of right and wrong.

This workshop revisits the question posed in Workshop 1: What is the locus of moral authority? This workshop invites participants to name the ethical frameworks and approaches that guide their moral and ethical decision making, asking them to consider ways in which the program itself has changed their approach or clarified ethical or moral choices they are currently facing. Finally, the workshop invites participants to create skits to express their new understandings of ethics while enjoying and appreciating one another's company.

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters found in the Introduction.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Guide participants to articulate the ethical values, frameworks, and decision-making processes that guide their behavioral choices
- Lift up ways moral or ethical reasoning evolves, through drawing out this program's effects on ethical or moral choices participants are currently facing
- Affirm that participants have built a base of knowledge and understanding from which to continue exploring personal ethics
- Strengthen connections among participants.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Reflect on how their moral thinking has evolved and may continue to evolve
- Identify the ethical framework(s) and approach(es) that guide their moral and ethical decision making
- Apply a variety of ethical frameworks to consider the moral dilemma in a common Aesop's fable and to current moral/ethical dilemmas in their lives
- Have fun!

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	7
Activity 1: The Boy Who Cried Wolf	20
Activity 2: Ethical Statements	20
Activity 3: Ethical Skits	40
Faith in Action: Progress on Faith in Action Commitments	
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Reflection and Conversation	20
Alternate Activity 2: Ethical Guidelines	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time for journaling, reflection, prayer, and/or meditation, using these focus questions:

- Recall a time in your life when your ethical or moral understandings at the time seemed inadequate? What issue or situation challenged you?
- How did you adapt to the situation? What new understanding or framework emerged? What behavioral choice(s) did you make?
- What about you changed as a result of this encounter?

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Sign-in sheet and pen or pencil
- Pocket folder, pen/pencil, and paper for each participant
- Name tags, single-use or durable
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Refreshments

Preparation for Activity

- Using the Workshop-at-a-Glance as a guide, create and post the agenda on newsprint.
- Post group covenant, created in Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Welcome all participants. Offer them a folder and ask them to create a name tag.

OPENING (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Worship table or designated space
- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle
- Optional: Musical accompaniment for "I Would Be True," Hymn 559 in *Hymns of the Spirit*, the maroon Unitarian Universalist hymnal last published in 1958. The hymn is sung or played on a number of YouTube clips as well

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the worship table or designated space.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
I would be friend, of all, the foe, the friendless
I would be giving, and forget the gift;
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;
I would look up, and laugh, and love, and lift.
I would look up, and laugh, and love, and lift.

Description of Activity

Share the posted lyrics from the 1917 hymn "I Would Be True" as you or a volunteer lights the chalice. Invite participants to sing the hymn. Tell participants this hymn was included in *Hymns of the Spirit*, the hymnal used by

Unitarians and Universalists well into the 1960s. Ask if any participants recall singing this hymn, perhaps as children. Ask: "Do the lyrics make sense to you as a moral framework? Are there ways in which they do not?"

ACTIVITY 1: THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Boy Who Cried Wolf](#)" (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Print the story. Familiarize yourself so you will be able to read or tell it.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What moral reasoning did the villagers employ to decide whether or not to aid the boy when he called for help? Do you agree with them?
 - Was their moral reasoning consistent even though they changed their behavior from one instance to the next?
 - What part did the villagers play in the destruction of the flock of sheep?
 - What might be the back story for the boy? For the villagers? What social structures led him to be on his own caring for the village's sheep?
 - What community values does Aesop lift up in this story?
 - What personal values or virtues does Aesop lift up in this story?
 - Where is the locus of moral authority in this story? The individual? The community? God or the divine? Some other source?
 - Is this a story of moral consistency or inconsistency?
 - Have you experienced a situation that resembles or reminds you of this one? Have you ever invoked this tale in explaining your actions to another person?

Description of Activity

Read the story aloud. Then, invite participants to examine the moral reasoning and behavioral choices of the villagers using the posted questions to guide a discussion.

Including All Participants

Create a large-print handout that includes the discussion questions to assist those who are visually impaired.

ACTIVITY 2: ETHICAL STATEMENTS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Ethical Statements](#) (included in this document)
- Pen or pencil for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Ethical Statements, for all participants.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with words like these:

We have explored a number of different ethical and moral frameworks and approaches during this program. This workshop offers a chance to name what guides your ethical and moral decision making.

Distribute the handout and invite participants to reflect on each of the statements. Are there statements with which they strongly agree? Ones with which they strongly disagree? For each statement, invite them to write the word "always, sometimes, or never" which best describes their ethical perspective. Then, invite them to mark the three or four statements which are most closely aligned with the approach they use when making a moral or ethical decision. After five minutes, invite them to share reflections and observations based on this exercise. Ask: "How easy was it to make your determinations?" Invite each person, if they wish, to share the three or four statements that best describe their ethical perspective. Is there broad agreement in your group or a diversity of perspective?

Suggest it may be that our ethical and moral decisions are guided by more than one of the approaches presented in this program, and that we may sometimes change our approach to adapt to circumstances or to new information or perspective.

Ask:

- As we think about our ongoing moral growth, how important is it that we aim to be consistent in our ethical approach, operating from the same general framework or perspective as we make behavior choices?
- When is it okay to be inconsistent in our ethical approach, adapting to each situation or challenge?

ACTIVITY 3: ETHICAL SKITS (40 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A selection of props for skits, such as small toys, natural objects, kitchen utensils, silk flowers, ping pong balls, etc.
- Hats, swaths of fabric, and other items for simple costumes
- Assorted construction paper, drawing paper, and markers

Preparation for Activity

- Set out supplies where all can reach them.
- Arrange for separate spaces for small groups to work without disturbing or overhearing others.

Description of Activity

Have participants move into small groups and create skits that feature a real-life ethical dilemma. Invite groups to choose a situation that has more than one possible ethical choice, depending on one's perspective and ethical framework. Ask them to make the ending of their skit clear. Invite them to use prop and costume supplies as they wish.

Allow 20 minutes for skit creation. Then, invite each group in turn to present their skit. After each presentation, invite the large group to suggest alternate endings. Groups may wish to act out the suggested alternate endings or simply to identify them. Invite comments and observations about the experience of creating and watching the skits.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Re-post the newsprint with hymn lyrics from the Opening.
- Customize Taking It Home and copy for all participants. You may wish to include the Faith in Action section.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Read the lyrics to the second verse of "I Would Be True" as you extinguish the chalice. Thank participants and invite them to "love and laugh and lift" in the days ahead.

FAITH IN ACTION: PROGRESS ON FAITH IN ACTION COMMITMENTS

Description of Activity

Take stock of your progress on Faith in Action initiatives based on the workshops in this program. What projects or initiatives emerged? What agreements were reached about how those projects or initiatives would be pursued? What is ongoing or still needs to be done? Develop a group plan of action to fulfill any outstanding commitments and agreements, including establishing a timeline for actions and decisions about who in the group is responsible for particular pieces of work. Agree on how your group will communicate and/or meet in the days/weeks ahead in support of your Faith in Action initiatives.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Consider these questions as you review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Which parts of the workshop most engaged participants? Why?
- Were there parts that did not work as well? What could we have done differently?

TAKING IT HOME

The first step in the evolution of ethics is a sense of solidarity with other human beings. — Albert Schweitzer

Find a family member, a friend, or another trusted conversation partner and share your reflections on what you learned in this program and the evolution of your own moral decision making.

Pay attention to ethical dilemmas that surface in your personal, work, and community life, your congregation and the broader world. Consider how the decisions and choices under discussion raise moral or ethical arguments. Frame your responses to these dilemmas using your own ethical framework, and try:

- Explaining to your children, your friends, or your partner or spouse the moral reasoning behind a decision you make.
- Writing a letter to the editor or a blog post, using moral reasoning to make your point.
- Working with your congregation's Social Justice, Membership, Partner Church, Safe Congregation, or other congregational committee to which you belong to articulate the moral or ethical framework that supports the group's choices and actions.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Journals or notebooks, one for each participant
- Writing and drawing materials, such as pens, pencils, fine point color markers, and color pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Set out writing and drawing materials so all can reach them.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Recall and describe a time in your life when you struggled with a dilemma where your ethical or moral understandings seemed inadequate to address the circumstances.
 - How did you resolve your struggle? How did you adapt to the situation? What new understanding or framework emerged? What behavioral choice did you make?
 - What about you changed as a result of this encounter? What skills did you learn that were/are helpful for other moral struggles and dilemmas?

Description of Activity

Invite participants to respond to and reflect on the posted questions, and to draw, write, or make notations in their journal. After ten minutes, invite participants to create groups of two or three and share their reflections.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: ETHICAL GUIDELINES (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Covenant created in the first workshop
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post the covenant created in the Workshop 1.
- Write these questions on newsprint, and post:
 - How did we honor the agreements made in our covenant?
 - Did our behavior ever fall short of honoring the agreements? If it did, how did our group respond?
 - What does our response say about the way in which we hold the values expressed in the covenant?

- Did the group have any occasion to make explicit reference to the covenant as workshops unfolded? Why or why not?
- From your point of view, is making our ethical agreements explicit through creating a covenant together a helpful process for a group such as this one?

Description of Activity

Invite participants to look at the group covenant and identify the statements of ethical and moral values that are stated or explicit. Invite participants to move into groups of three and respond to the posted questions. Allow ten minutes for triads to share.

Re-gather the large group and invite people to share reflections and observations based on their discussions. Share your own reflections as the program facilitator(s).

STORY: THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF

Attributed to Aesop, Greek fabulist, c. 620-564 BCE.

A shepherd boy, watching a flock of sheep near his village, grew lonely. He devised a way to get some attention and companionship by playing a trick on the villagers. One morning he yelled: "Wolf! Wolf!" When his neighbors ran to help save their flock and livelihood, they found the sheep placidly cropping grass. The boy laughed and laughed. The villagers were angry at the boy and warned him not to call them if there was no danger. And yet the next day he did it again. "Wolf! Wolf!" he shouted. The villagers came running. When they found the boy had tricked them again, they were even angrier than the day before. Warning him not to lie again, they went back to their work. The next day as the shepherd boy lay watching the sheep on the hillside a wolf came out of the woods. The boy shouted in terror: "Help me! The wolf is killing the sheep!" But no one paid any attention to his cries and no villager came to help. The wolf destroyed the whole flock. The moral of the story is: There is no believing a liar, even when he speaks the truth.

HANDOUT 1: ETHICAL STATEMENTS

- There are moral sources and/or authorities that inform or guide my ethical behavior.
- I have firm moral convictions.
- Each person is entitled to their view of what is right and wrong.
- Truth exists and our understanding of it becomes clearer over time.
- We must always do the maximum good for the maximum number of people.
- Being the best person I can be helps keep me morally grounded.
- I believe that there are rights to which everyone is entitled by virtue of being human.
- My morality is informed by my experiences in the world.
- It is through meaningful relationship with one another that we can determine what is best and most true.
- Ethical beliefs are irrelevant if they are not accompanied by action.
- Moral decisions must be grounded in compassion.
- People cannot be ethical by themselves; ethical behavior is enacted in a community context.
- It takes courage to live out our Unitarian Universalist values.

FIND OUT MORE

Look for ethical dilemmas in film. Many universities have an "Ethics in Film" course with an online syllabus which will give you ideas for viewing. Here are some websites to get you started:

[Food, Inc](http://www.foodincmovie.com/) (at www.foodincmovie.com/)

[Minority Report](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0181689/) (at www.imdb.com/title/tt0181689/)

[MASH](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066026/) (at www.imdb.com/title/tt0066026/)

[Crash](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0375679/) (at www.imdb.com/title/tt0375679/)