

Unit One

Stewardship for Primary Children

Stewardship for Primary Children Session 1

What Is Stewardship?

Goals for Participants

- To define stewardship in the context of personal experience and Unitarian Universalist values
- To recognize that stewardship involves sharing time, talent, and treasure
- To gain understanding of stewardship in three settings: congregation, community, and Unitarian Universalist faith

Session Summary

Centering	5 minutes
Commentary	5 minutes
Story/Activity	25 minutes
Contemplation	15 minutes
Commitment/Celebration	10 minutes

Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches

- Wall illustrations (see Preparation)
- Objects from the natural world for display (see Preparation)
- One of the following books to read aloud: *The Tree in the Ancient Forest* by Carol Reed-Jones (Nevada City, CA: Dawn Publications, 1995); *The World That Jack Built* by Rita Brown (New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1991); or *A Rose for Abby* by Donna Guthrie (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988)
- Stewardship Bag with toothbrush, toy, piece of trash, box of cereal, and birthday card (See Story/Activity)
- Boxes with items for the Stewardship Activity (see Contemplation)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Collection basket
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal
- Handout 1, LOUUP Stewardship Tasks

Preparation

- Read through this unit in its entirety, including Leader Resource 1.
- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.
- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- Copy Handout 1 for each child.
- Post pictures or posters of favorite places in nature, such as parks, beaches, gardens, treehouses, lakes, and animals, around the room.

- Collect objects from the natural world—e.g., seashells, flowers, beehives, pine cones—and place them on tables for children to examine as they enter.

Notes to Teacher

Stewardship means taking care of something we value and enabling it to grow.

Stewardship calls us to take responsibility and to make a contribution of our time, talent and treasure. When defining stewardship with children, begin with examples from their own experience: taking care of oneself by brushing teeth and washing hands, helping out around the house by putting toys away. Then, explain that we can be stewards in other areas as well:

1. We are stewards of our *congregation* when we give time to do a needed task, like cleaning up a classroom, or when we share a talent, like singing or playing music.
2. We are stewards in the greater *community* when we take care of other people's needs by collecting food or clothing for them.
3. We are stewards of our *Unitarian Universalist faith* when we give money during a children's chapel or worship service; when we support a partner church in Transylvania; when we help our congregation give its fair share to the UUA.

Young children may also have acted as stewards of the *earth*, by recycling, participating in school ecology programs, or doing community clean-up activities. You may wish to talk about those experiences and how they are related to the three settings of stewardship.

In the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes, the seventh principle acknowledges our respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Unit One will expand this theme to include caring for our institutions, for each other, and for our Unitarian Universalist faith.

Session Plan

Centering

5 minutes

1. Invite the children to form a circle and light the chalice.
2. Lead an opening ritual. Use one of your own favorites or the one below from "Children of the Green Earth Pledge:"

From Our Hearts

With Our Hands (illustrate with hand motions)

For the Earth

All the World Together.

Commentary

5 minutes

1. Say something like, “What did you notice in the room today as you came in? Look around again at the wonderful gifts our mother earth gives us and see if one reminds you of a favorite place you like to visit.” Pause for comments.
2. Invite participants into a guided imagery by saying “Close your eyes and imagine you are in your favorite place outdoors. It may be a special park, or a place by the ocean, or in a tree or garden; maybe it’s on a lake. You probably have more than one, but for today choose just one place. [Pause] See yourself in your favorite place and notice what you’re doing there. [Pause] Now, open your eyes. As I pass this seashell around, tell us about your place.”
3. Invite each child in turn to hold the shell and speak.

Story/Activity

25 minutes

1. Choose one of the following books and read it to your group: *The Tree in the Ancient Forest* by Carol Reed-Jones, *The World that Jack Built* by Ruth Brown, or *A Rose for Abby* by Donna Guthrie.
2. Invite participants’ comments when you have finished.

3. Play the Stewardship Game. Stand in the circle and show the children your Stewardship Bag. Take one item at a time from the bag and talk about it.

First, take out a piece of *trash* (such as a smashed milk carton, empty soda can, or dirty paper bag). Ask them if they have seen any trash at their favorite place that they talked about earlier. Invite them to tell you what they did with the trash.

Second, take out the *toothbrush*. Ask participants to tell you what it is and how they use it. Ask them why they need a toothbrush.

Third, take out the *box of cereal*. Invite the children to tell you what it is and how they use it. Then ask why they eat cereal.

Fourth, take out the *toy* (such as a jump rope, marbles, or ball). Ask them what it is and how they play with it. Then ask them who they share their toys with and why.

Fifth, take out the *birthday card*. Invite the children to tell you what it is and why they would send or give one away. Ask who they give cards or gifts to and why.

4. Summarize by saying that these five items show how we take care of ourselves, our families and friends, and our environment on earth every day. Say something like, “When you take care of your body, share with others, help family and friends, and

take care of the environment, you deserve a special name—*steward*. A steward is a caregiver and a helper and a person who shares.”

Invite the children to say the word with you—*steward*—and name other ways they are stewards.

Contemplation

15 minutes

1. Ask "What did you discover about yourself as a steward?" After the children have shared, reiterate the ways that we are all stewards every day. Then invite participants to talk about why we are stewards. Summarize their comments and emphasize that we are taking care of very important people, places and things.
2. Begin the Stewardship Activity by breaking into groups of four or six. Give each group a box of objects to stimulate their thinking about what people do as stewards: a UNICEF collection box, a Guest At Your Table box, offering envelopes or collection basket, a broom or paintbrush, a choir collar or robe.

Using ideas from this session’s Notes to Teacher, ask each group to think of ways we are stewards of our congregation, our community, and our Unitarian Universalist faith. Place these words as headings on the newsprint and use illustrations that might help children understand the words (such as a drawing of a church building, a chalice, or the letters UUA).

Invite children to bring items from their boxes to the area corresponding to one of these headings. Then ask participants to name other ways to be stewards of the congregation, community, or Unitarian Universalist faith. Each group's list will be different; here is one example:

Congregation	Community	UU Faith
giving money	food collection	UNICEF
cleaning up	Recycling	GAYT
singing in choir	Gay Pride Walk	hosting a district conference
teaching	soup kitchen	
Habitat project	AIDS ribbons	

Commitment/Celebration

10 minutes

1. Summarize the day's work by saying something like, "Today we learned about being good stewards. As Unitarian Universalists we believe in taking care of the earth and ourselves and our family and friends. We are stewards in our congregation, community and UU faith."

2. Introduce the concept of an offering. Share information from Leader Resource 1 in your explanation. Summarize by saying, “ Helping other people, sharing things we have and taking care of ourselves and our world are the ways of stewardship. We are all Unitarian Universalist stewards.” Ask participants to bring coins to put in the collection basket next time.
3. Give a copy of Handout 1, LOUUP Stewardship Tasks, to each child to take home.
4. Sing “ From You I Receive” from *Singing the Living Tradition* (No. 402). Other songs you might like to try are “ For the Earth Forever Turning” (No. 163) or “ Magic Penny” by Malvina Reynolds.

Reflection and Planning

Reflect on these questions, and discuss them with your co-leaders:

1. What have I learned from the experience of leading this session?
2. What preparation do I need to do for the next session(s)?

Stewardship for Primary Children Session 2

Who Are Our Stewards? What Is Our Legacy?

Goals for Participants

- To gain understanding of their congregation's legacy of stewardship
- To honor congregational and institutional stewards, and to appreciate the gifts they have inherited
- To increase awareness of their responsibility to further the growth of Unitarian Universalism

Session Summary

Centering	5 minutes
Commentary	10 minutes
Story/Activity	30 minutes
Contemplation	5 minutes
Commitment/Celebration	10 minutes

Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches
- Historical objects from your congregation's archives, such as an old Bible, collection plates, photos, vestments, pictures of children in church school who are now grownups
- Materials needed for an activity of your design (see Story/Activity)

- Leader Resource 2, Stories of UU Stewards: John Haynes Holmes; Leader Resource 3: Stories of UU Stewards: Gwendolyn Willis; Leader Resource 4: Stories of UU Stewards: Whitney Young
- Collection basket
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal

Preparation

- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.
- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- Recruit a guest speaker from your congregation who relates well to children and can tell an interesting story he/she remembers about your congregation. Ask him/her to bring a photo album or object(s) to illustrate the story.
- Design an activity to complement the guest speaker's presentation (see Story/Activity).
- Familiarize yourself with Leader Resources 2, 3, and 4.

Notes to Teacher

This session aims to give children an understanding of stewardship by looking at their past.

Learning the stories of those who have worked to preserve and cultivate our Unitarian

Universalist faith and institutions helps us appreciate what we have. Through this

perspective, children become aware of how they, too, will become a part of history when they become stewards of their congregations, their communities, and their faith.

Each congregation will have many stories to tell. Invite a guest or elder from your congregation to visit your class and share some living history. Or, tell the story of a congregational or Unitarian Universalist hero/heroine. Some questions to be addressed include: Who founded this congregation? What were some important turning points and leaders in our congregation's history? Who are some notable personalities in our community? Who were the important stewards of Unitarian Universalism in our district? Who were the people who kept our UU faith alive?

When participants learn the stories of other stewards, they will be better able to appreciate the gifts they have and to act as stewards of their own congregations, communities, and faith.

Session Plan

Centering

5 minutes

1. Invite children to form a circle and light the chalice.
2. Lead participants in an opening ritual, or use last week's choice:

model with clay or other medium.

If the speaker's contribution is not easy to translate into an art activity, have portraits of famous Unitarian Universalists that you've photocopied and cut into puzzle pieces. Ask children to put the puzzle together; then glue to a piece of construction paper or 8 1/2" x 11" sheet and ask children to decorate the border or frame. Adult helpers or children who can write should add the person's name and why they were good stewards (e.g. John Haynes Holmes – modern day Unitarian Universalist prophet).

3. If you choose not to have a guest, tell one or two of the stories from Leader Resources 2, 3, and 4.

Contemplation

5 minutes

In a large group, have children identify and describe the objects they have made.

Commitment/Celebration

10 minutes

1. Summarize the session by saying, " Today we enjoyed learning from one of our congregation's stewards, (name), about how we take care of our congregation and each other. As Unitarian Universalists we feel it is important to be good stewards."

2. Pass the collection plate as described in the previous session.
3. Sing No. 402, "From You I Receive," from *Singing the Living Tradition*:

From you I receive

To you I give

Together we share

From this we live

Alternatively, sing this "Hymn of Thanks" :

Give thanks for love we all may share

Give thanks for beauty everywhere

Give thanks for hope of good to be

Give thanks for truth that makes us free

Reflection and Planning

Reflect on these questions, and discuss them with your co-leaders:

1. What have I learned from the experience of leading this session?
2. What preparation do I need to do for the next session(s)?

Stewardship for Primary Children Session 3

How Can We Be of Service?

Goals for Participants

- To identify, design, and plan a stewardship project
- To affirm individual contributions of time, talent, and resources to the project
- To experience a sense of accomplishment for what they have done, and for making a difference in the lives of people in the congregation, community, or faith

Session Summary

Centering	10 minutes
Commentary	5 minutes
Story/Activity	20 minutes
Contemplation	15 minutes
Commitment/Celebration	10 minutes

Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches
- Building blocks (wood, cardboard, or plastic), two or three sets

- Scissors
- Tape or glue
- Newsprint
- Crayons and markers
- Handout 2, Family Stewardship Letter; Handout 3, Children, Money and Values: Ten Principles; Handout 4, Helping Children with Allowances and Savings; and Handout 5, Stewardship Box
- Collection basket
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal

Preparation

- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.
- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- If you wish, make arrangements with children, or their family members, who have musical gifts to share them during the offering. Such participation offers them a way to be stewards to your class, and gives the closing ceremony more variety.
- Copy Handouts 2, 3, and 4 for each child.
- Copy Handout 5 onto card stock for each child. Make a few Stewardship Box samples.

Notes to Teacher

In Session 3, children and teachers think about the skills they have to offer and define a project or make a commitment to take action. Session 4 will be used to carry out your project. Choose a project that is significant to your congregation. Coordinate it with your congregation's social action committee and with the other groups doing this curriculum. Make your project fit into the final session, the Intergenerational Worship or Children's Chapel celebration. The sample Celebration of Commitments provided include a suggested format, but we encourage you to be creative.

When defining your project, consider these guiding questions:

What am I capable of doing?

What *talents* can I share?

What resources (*treasure*) do I have to offer?

How much *time* can we give to this project?

As you talk and plan the project with the children, consider carefully the following points:

- The success of the project will depend on the children's commitment to participate, your commitment to plan, arrange, and follow up, and the commitment of the people recruited from your congregation and the chosen social service agency to work with your group.
- The kind of project that children of this age are most able to complete successfully is a service project involving either collecting and donating goods and/or donating time and effort to help or serve in a particular way.

- Choose a project that can be begun and completed in a single morning.

Your project or actions can be in one or all of the three stewardship settings. For example, your students could decide to be Sunday greeters, participate in the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Guest at Your Table program, or bake cookies and take them to shut-ins. The possibilities are almost endless. An important attitude to nurture in Sessions 3 and 4 is affirmation of individual gifts. People can learn to be generous. You provide an opportunity for your children to make a meaningful gift. The reward comes as the children see they have made a difference.

Some financial commitment to the congregation and larger Unitarian Universalist Association is an important part of the project. We are most likely to experience the joy of giving when we sort through our priorities and find a time and place for it in our lives. By educating participants about the value of stewardship, and by encouraging them to make giving to our communities, congregations, and other Unitarian Universalist institutions a part of our religious life, we challenge our congregation and Unitarian Universalist institutions to integrate young people into the full life of our religious communities. Empowerment and joy are the key words.

Session Plan

Centering

10 minutes

1. As children arrive, invite them to play with the blocks, either on the floor or at a table. Encourage them to build real or imaginary structures.
2. After the children have built structures with blocks, invite them into a circle. Light the chalice and say your opening words.

Commentary

5 minutes

1. Comment on the structures that the children have built and how some worked together and some built alone. State that this is similar to how we build stewardship in our congregation, our community, and the world. Sometimes we do things as individuals, like collecting for UNICEF; at other times, we do things in groups, like building a house for Habitat for Humanity.
2. Show them the sample Stewardship Boxes you have made. Discuss the six sides and items you've written or drawn on each side.

Story/Activity

20 minutes

1. Tell the story of a congregational stewardship project in which you have participated, such as Guest At Your Table, a Habitat for Humanity project, visits to hospital patients or the elderly, or a capital campaign fund drive.

2. Invite the children to the activity table. Distribute to each child a Stewardship Box pattern that you have copied onto card stock. Demonstrate how to create their own by doing one for yourself, as follows:

A. On each side of the box, draw a symbol to represent:

1. your name
2. your grade
3. a way you help at home
4. a way you are a steward in congregation
5. a way you are a steward in your community
6. a way you can be a steward for the UUA or the world

B. Cut out the box on the solid outside line. (For younger children, cut them ahead of time.)

C. Fold in on all the dotted lines.

D. Glue/tape the flaps and glue/tape them to the inside walls to form a box.

2. Help children make their own Stewardship Boxes, completing the six sides with their individual pictures and words.

Contemplation

15 minutes

1. Invite children to bring their Stewardship Boxes and gather in a circle. Ask each child to share one side as you build a structure together with the boxes. Encourage participants to explain how they are or can be good stewards at home, in the congregation, in the community, or in the world.
2. On a sheet of newsprint or the chalkboard, list four or five ideas from the boxes (including your own) that would be practical projects for your class to undertake for Session 4. The project might last only a week—e.g., baking cookies for shut-ins—or it might be a longer, ongoing project such as recycling or cleanup.
3. Discuss the pros and cons of the four or five choices. Then have the children vote on which project they will pursue. Point out that the use of the democratic process is one of our UU Principles and Purposes.

Commitment/Celebration

10 minutes

1. Distribute Handouts 2, 3, and 4. Explain that these handouts have ideas that participants will want to talk about with their families; review them briefly with the children. Return each child's Stewardship Box and encourage each to share it with his/her parents.
2. Summarize the session by saying, "Today we shared how we can be good stewards at home, in the congregation, in the community, and in the world. We

decided to _____ next Sunday to help care
for _____.”

3. Pass the collection basket and sing “ We’ve Got the Whole World in Our Hands.”
Have family members accompany the singing if you have arranged for it.
4. Mail Handouts 2, 3, and 4 to families whose child(ren) may have been absent for
today’s session.

Reflection and Planning

Reflect upon these questions, and discuss them with your co-leaders:

1. What have I learned from the experience of leading this session?
2. What preparation do I need to do for the next session(s)?

Stewardship for Primary Children Session 4

Doing an Act of Stewardship

Goals for Participants

- To successfully complete a stewardship project

- To affirm individual contributions of time, talent, and resources to the project
- To experience a sense of accomplishment for their stewardship actions and for making a difference in the lives of people in the congregation, community, or faith.

Session Summary

Centering and Commentary	5–10 minutes
Activity	35–40 minutes
Commitment/Celebration	15 minutes

Materials and Preparation

- Before the session, copy, complete, and mail Handout 6, Letter to Child and Family.
- Gather the materials for opening and closing: chalice, candle, matches, collection basket, and *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal.
- Gather the materials you will need for your project. Plan the work so that every child can participate.
- Consider recruiting members of your social responsibility committee to be adult helpers.

Notes to Teacher

1. Review the Session 3 Notes to Teacher. Emphasize the three T's of time, talent, and treasure in your conversations throughout the session.

2. Most of Session 4 will be devoted to the project you chose in Session 3. It is an important learning experience for the children. Name some of the values—respect, responsibility, cooperation, reciprocity, reverence—as you work together. Talk about being Unitarian Universalist stewards as you complete the project.

3. Reserve some time at the close of your session to review how your class will be involved in the Session 5 worship service. Refer to Session 5 for suggestions on how your class might contribute.

Session Plan

Centering/Commentary

5–10 minutes

1. Begin with a brief chalice lighting and review last week's decision to be stewards for your project.

2. Describe how to proceed with the project. Introduce any special helpers present.

Activity

35–40 minutes

Complete the project your class has chosen, or begin it if will take more than one week.

Affirm each child's participation.

Commitment/Celebration

15 minutes

1. Gather children for a brief summary of the day's activity.
2. Tell the children that the next session will be a congregational celebration of stewardship involving the whole congregation (or whole church school). Explain how they will be included.
3. Conclude with an offering and a closing. Use the songs from previous sessions or one of your favorite closing rituals.

Reflection and Planning

Reflect on these questions, and discuss them with your co-leaders:

1. What have I learned from the experience of leading this session?
2. What preparation do I need to do for the final intergenerational celebration?

Stewardship for Primary Children Session 5

A Celebration of Commitment

Turn to the section of this book entitled “ All Units: Session Five Celebrations of Commitment” to plan the Intergenerational Worship Service or Children’s Chapel Service in which your class will participate.