

## **Unit Two**

### **Stewardship for Intermediate Children**

## Stewardship for Intermediate 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	15 minutes
Contemplation	25 minutes
Commitment/Celebration	10 minutes

#### Materials

- Wall illustrations (see Preparation)

- Objects from the natural world for display (see Preparation)
- Chalice, candle, and matches
- Ball of yarn for each child (see Story/Activity)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- For banners, felt rectangles (9" x 12" ) for each participant in a variety of colors, or three larger pieces
- Many small pieces of felt to decorate banners
- Pens or markers to draw on banners
- A dowel, 1/8" or 1/4" wide and 9 1/2" long, for each banner
- Scissors
- Glue
- Stapler
- Tongue depressors (to carry banners)
- Collection basket
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal
- Handout 1, LOUUP Stewardship Tasks, and Handout 7, Intermediate Grade Participant Letter
- Leader Resource 1, Overview

## **Preparation**

- Read through this unit in its entirety, as well as Leader Resource 1. Note that Session 2 and Session 3 call for guest speakers, necessitating advance planning.

- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.
- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- One week before class, mail Handout 7, which invites children to bring an earth treasure from home to share with the class, to each participant.
- Prepare felt pieces for banners. You may choose to make either three large banners or one for each child. Fold over one end of the fabric, staple it, and insert a dowel. Leave enough space at the center to insert each of the tongue depressors.
- Copy Handout 1, LOUUP Stewardship Tasks, for each participant..
- 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.

Participants 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.

## **Session Plan**

Centering

5 minutes

1. Invite participants to form a circle, bringing an earth treasure—either one they brought from home or one from the display table—along.

2. Light the chalice and recite your favorite chalice-lighting words, and/or choose one of these selections:

From Our Hearts	Flame of fire, spark of the universe
With Our Hands	that warmed our ancestral hearth—
For the Earth	agent of life and death,
All the World Together	symbol of truth and freedom.
(Children of the Green Earth)	We strive to understand ourselves and our earthly home.

(No. 451 *Singing the Living Tradition*)

Commentary

5 minutes

1. Say something like, “ Everyone has a favorite place we like to visit outside. The earth treasures that you are holding can help us remember those places. We’d like to hear about your special place as you put your treasure on our worship table.” Invite each child to say his/her name as well.
2. When everyone has spoken, ask participants to come to the table, pick up another person’s earth object, then return to their seats. Invite each child to share what this new item reminds them of or means to him or her.

Story/Activity

15 minutes

1. Ask the group to stand and form a circle. Say something like, “ As Unitarian Universalists, we respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. All of the places you mentioned depend on so many things to keep them healthy and beautiful. The Web Game we are about to play can help us see how we are connected to plants, animals, people, and every other part of our world and earth.”
2. Give each child a ball of yarn.
3. Ask the children to tell you what four things most forms of life need to survive (water, air, soil, and sun). When the four things are named, ask for four volunteers to act as these things and to sit in the center of the circle. Have other children portray different forms of life: grass, tree, insect, frog, mouse, snake, hawk, chicken, cow, person. Then begin the game by naming each of these living things in turn. Invite each child to tie yarn around her/himself and around the people representing everything else that his/her form of life needs to survive (air, water, soil, sun).
4. As the game continues, a web will take shape. (You may need to explain the interdependencies, if they are not obvious.) Here is one possible list of players and their ties:
  - grass tied to air, water, soil, sun

- mouse tied to grass, air, water, soil, sun
- insect tied to grass, air, water, soil, sun
- frog tied to insect, air, water, soil, sun
- snake tied to mouse, frog, air, water, soil, sun
- hawk tied to mouse, snake, air, water, soil, sun
- cow tied to grass, air, water, soil, sun
- person tied to cow, grass, air, water, soil, sun

5. When everyone is part of the web, experiment with what happens when one piece is missing. Try several to make the point that every part of the web is dependent on other parts. Then gather the yarn and return to a sitting circle.

Contemplation

25 minutes

1. Say something like, “ Humans fit into the web of life, but we also can change the web.” Engage participants in conversation with the following questions:

Do you know what the environment was like here before any Europeans came to settle? Before people had cars?

What do you think the world will be like when you are grown up?

2. Then say, “ We are all stewards of the earth, and we all have a responsibility to take care of our environment. Stewardship also means taking care of each other and of the places where we come together.”

Introduce the concept of stewardship, using this session’s Notes to Teacher as a resource. Ask participants to respond based on their experiences or the experiences of people they know.

3. Begin the Stewardship Brainstorm Activity. Invite children to produce a list of ways they act as stewards of the earth. Encourage them to think of personal actions as well as group and family projects: not littering, recycling, cleaning the yard, planting trees or flowers. Affirm all responses.

Then, ask participants to think of ways that people can be stewards of the congregation, the community, and the Unitarian Universalist movement. Write these words as headings on the newsprint, then record participants’ suggestions.

Possibilities include:

<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>UU Movement</b>
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

4. Begin the Banner-Making Activity. Have the children gather at a table with felt rectangles and supplies. Explain that they will be making banners celebrating stewardship and Unitarian Universalist stewards. Invite each child to choose a felt rectangle to work on—either one for each child, or one of three large felt banners named “congregation,” “community,” and “Unitarian Universalist faith.” On smaller pieces of felt, have them draw and cut out designs or patterns symbolizing stewardship—time, talent, treasure—and/or a Unitarian Universalist steward they want to celebrate. Glue the small felt designs onto the banners.

Explain to the children that they will continue work on their banners next week. Plan to use these banners in the final intergenerational worship service.

Commitment/Celebration

10 minutes

1. Invite the children into a circle. Summarize the session by saying, “Today we learned about being good stewards. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe in taking care of the earth and the web of life of which we are all a part. We are stewards of our congregation, community, and Unitarian Universalist faith.”

2. Introduce the concept of an offering, including 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.” Pass the collection basket.
3. Sing “ From You I Receive” from *Singing the Living Tradition* (No. 402). Another possibility is “ For the Earth Forever Turning” (No. 163).
4. Give each participant a copy of Handout 1, LOUUP Stewardship Tasks, to talk about at home.

### **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 Intermediate 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	5 minutes
Story/Activity	25 minutes
Contemplation	15 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
- *A Stream of Living Souls* by Denise Tracy and/or *These Live Tomorrow: Twenty Unitarian Universalist Lives* by Clinton Lee Scott (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1987) (see Preparation)
- Objects that represent stewardship projects and events from your church, community and the larger world. For example: a special banner, chalice, mosaic, or carving; small house or doll house to represent a Habitat for Humanity or other building project; a tree or photo of one to represent a tree-planting trip; a poster from a peace march or other rally; pink triangle buttons and arm bands for a Gay Pride Walk; other Walk-a-thon T shirts; UNICEF and Guest at Your Table boxes; books and photos of a local library or college that your church helped found; Humane Society posters; Nature Conservancy brochures; AIDS advocacy or hospice material (see Contemplation)
- Banner-making supplies from Session 2
- Collection plate
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnals

## **Preparation**

- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.

- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- Recruit two or three guest speakers from your congregation. Ideally, find individuals with a talent for acting are willing to dress up in period costumes and play the roles of past stewards of your church. Otherwise, recruit current living members who have interesting stories to tell about their contributions to your congregation. Ask such speakers to bring photo albums and/or other objects to illustrate their stories.
- Provide any guests playing the roles of historical figures with materials from your archives, such as a written history and a few artifacts, to allow them to prepare.
- For the second part of Story/Activity, prepare a UU faith story to share with your class, using the books in the Materials list as resources.
- Display the objects representing stewardship projects and events on a table for participants to examine.

### **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 were 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 to protect what they value.

## **Session Plan**

Centering

5 minutes

Invite children into a circle, and light the chalice. Use the following opening words: "Let us light a candle of understanding and appreciation in our hearts, so that we may understand how people who came before us took responsibility for caring for our congregation and Unitarian Universalist faith."

Commentary

5 minutes

1. Show one or two objects from your congregation's archives. Explain why they are important and what relationship your guest speaker has to them.

2. Introduce your guests as stewards of the congregation.

Story/Activity

25 minutes

1. Invite each guest speaker to tell the children about his/her connection to the congregation, and to show the objects she/he has brought. Leave time for questions from children. Express appreciation to your guests.
2. Complement your speakers' presentations with a UU faith story of a person known and celebrated in your district or community.

Contemplation

15 minutes

1. Invite participants to the display table. Ask the group to help you determine where each of the objects representing stewardship projects or events belongs as you and/or guests tell about these objects.

For example,

Congregation

Community

UU Movement

Decorative banner

Cans or boxes of food

Peace banner

Art object

Poster of local rally

UNICEF

Chalice	Buttons, T shirts	Guest at Your Table
Photo of new church building	House for Habitat project	Nature Conservancy poster
	AIDS ribbons	Notice for district workshop

2. Finish the banners you began working on last time, so that they are ready for display or for use in the final worship service.

Commitment/Celebration 10 minutes

1. Gather participants in a closing circle. Summarize the session by saying something like, "Today we enjoyed learning from our congregation's stewards, \_\_\_\_\_, about how we take care of our congregation and each other. As Unitarian Universalists we feel it is important to be good stewards and to honor those who have come before us."
2. Pass the collection basket as described in last week's 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 Intermediate 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

#### Session Summary

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

#### Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches
- Scissors
- Tape or glue

- Newsprint and markers
- Pencils or pens
- Handout 2, Family Stewardship Letter; Handout 3, Children, Money and Values: Ten Principles; Handout 4, Helping Children with Allowances and Savings; Handout 5, Stewardship Box; Handout 8, Questions for Interviewers; Handout 9, Questions for Guests
- Collection basket
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal

## **Preparation**

- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.
- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- At least three or four weeks before this session, invite one or several members of your congregation's social responsibility committee to present their favorite service project to your class. Ask them to bring any posters, banners, T shirts, photos, handouts or other visuals to enhance their presentation, which should be no more than five minutes long. Be sure to tell them they will be presenting fifteen or twenty minutes after your class begins. Give each guest a copy of Handout 9 to prepare their presentation.
- 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.

- Make a sample Stewardship Box.
- Prepare newsprint instructions for constructing a Stewardship Box.
- Copy Handouts 2, 3, 4, and 8 for each child.
- Copy Handout 5 onto card stock for each child.
- Copy Handout 9 for each guest.

### **Notes to Teacher**

In Session 3, participants 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. Coordinating with your church's social responsibility committee and with the other groups doing this curriculum will ensure that your project will fit into the final session, the Intergenerational Worship or Children's Chapel celebration. Session 5 provides a suggested format, but we encourage you to be creative.

When defining your project, have your group 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 work with your students to choose and plan the project, 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 from 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. It is better to undertake and complete a simple project than to start a more challenging one and not be able to finish it successfully.

Community projects might include collecting food, clothing, toys, or books and donating them to an appropriate agency; helping to prepare and serve a meal at a food-related agency; or cleaning up a playground or small park. To expand your options about possible projects in your community, talk with the chairperson of your congregation's social responsibility committee, your minister(s), and/or a staff person at your local United Way or

other umbrella agency. Be sure to ask for help from others—your religious educator, social responsibility committee members, parents—when you need it.

The project could also focus on the congregation. 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**

1. As the children arrive, invite them to come to the activity table. Have the Stewardship Box patterns and written instructions set out, along with a finished box you have made in advance.

2. Help the children assemble their own boxes as follows:

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

1. your name
2. your grade
3. a way you help at home
4. a way you are a steward in the congregation
5. a way you are (or can be) a steward in your neighborhood or community
6. a way you can be a steward of the UUA, your District, or the world

If participants need ideas about being stewards of the congregation the community, or the Unitarian Universalist movement, refer to the newsprint brainstorming from the previous session.

B. Cut out the box on the solid outside line.

C. Fold in on all the dotted lines.

D. Put glue on the flaps and glue them to the inside walls forming a box.

3. Ask children to bring finished boxes to the circle. Begin with a chalice lighting, using your favorite opening reading or one from a previous session.

Commentary

10 minutes

1. Invite children to share one side of their Stewardship Box as they place them on your worship table. Encourage them to build a structure as they add their box.
2. As participants share how they can be stewards of the congregation, the community, or the Unitarian Universalist faith, list a few of their ideas on a sheet of newsprint that might be workable projects for your group. Include your ideas as well. As you are recording ideas, place them in one of three columns: congregation, community, Unitarian Universalist Association/Faith. If participants need ideas or have trouble categorizing them, remind them of the projects and objects discussed in the last session, such as the cans or boxes of food, AIDS ribbons, UNICEF box, and peace banner.

Story/Activity

25 minutes

1. Invite children into a sharing circle. Distribute copies of Handout 8, Questions for Interviewers, and pens or pencils. Go over the questions with the children and encourage them to add their own questions. If you have more than one guest, decide which questions will be directed to each guest.
2. Introduce guests from the social responsibility committee and have them present their favorite project first. Then invite the children to ask their interview questions. Pay attention to the time, so each guest has roughly equal time.
3. To conclude this time with your guests, invite each guest to share a final thought, idea, or feeling. If you plan to participate in a project with one or all of your guests, confirm that understanding with them. Thank your guests.

#### Contemplation

10 minutes

1. Invite the class to decide on a project that will begin during the next session. Explain that the project can be a one-week exercise, such as cleaning up or planting flower beds on the church or meeting house grounds. Alternatively, it can be a longer or ongoing effort such as collecting food or clothing for the community.
2. Discuss the pros and cons of each of the four or five ideas you've posted on newsprint. Then take a vote to decide on the one your group will undertake. Point

out that the use of the democratic process is one of our UU purposes and principles.

Commitment/Celebration

5 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 the contents briefly. 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 our congregation, in the community, and in the larger Unitarian Universalist Association and faith tradition. 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 children or family members accompany the singing if you have arranged to do so.
4. Mail Handouts 2, 3, and 4 to families whose child(ren) may have been absent for today's session.

## 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 Intermediate Children Session 4

### Doing an Act of Stewardship

#### Goals for Participants

- To plan and successfully complete 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/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 Parents.
- 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**

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

Class time will be spent working on the project you chose in Session 3. Be sure to allow some time at the close of your session to review how your class will be involved in the final week's celebration. 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 who are present.

Activity

35–40 minutes

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

Affirm each child's participation.

Commitment/Celebration

15 minutes

1. Gather children for a brief summary of how your project went today.
2. Tell participants 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 song. Use the songs from previous sessions or one of your favorite closing rituals to conclude this session.

### **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 and project?

2. What preparation do I need to do for the final intergenerational celebration?

## **Stewardship for Intermediate 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.