

Unit Four

Stewardship for Adults

Stewardship for Adults Session 1

Stewardship: Definition and Mission

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

Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches
- Objects from the natural world (e.g. shells, flowers)

- Pictures and posters of stewardship programs and projects from your congregation
- Cassette or CD recording of sounds from nature
- Cassette player or CD player
- Newsprint
- Markers and tape
- Handout 13, Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association
- Leader Resource 1, Overview
- Collection plate
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnals

Preparation

- Read through this unit in its entirety, as well as Leader Resource 1.
- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.
- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- Put posters and pictures on walls.
- Display the objects from nature on a table.
- Copy Handout 13 for all participants.

Notes to Teacher

The seventh principle of the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes asserts "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." This curriculum

extends this concept to include not only the earth, but also the community and our religious institutions as worthy objects of respect and care. As Leader Resource 1 states, stewardship means taking care of something we value and enabling it to grow. It calls us to take responsibility and to make a contribution of our time, talent, and treasure. This session helps participants explore these concepts and envision what meaningful stewardship of the earth, the congregation, the community, and the larger UU faith tradition might involve.

To prepare for this session, review Leader Resource 1. Bring the four assumptions and our gifts of time, talent, and treasure into your discussions.

Take care to save all newsprint lists generated in this session for use in future weeks.

Session Plan

Centering

15 minutes

1. While participants are arriving, play recordings of natural sounds. Alert them to objects on the display table as they are gathering.
2. When all the participants have arrived, invite them to sit in a circle. Light the chalice and read “Saying Is Believing” by J. Donald Johnson:

There are things we cannot know

until we say them.
no precedent,
no conception
is much use
until it comes to life
in words we use
as though we discovered them.

3. Say something like, “What did you think about when viewing the table as you entered the room?” Take a moment now to look at the things gathered on the table, then shut your eyes and imagine yourself in a place that gives you a feeling of peace. Notice what you are doing there and how the surroundings look.” Invite participants to stay there for a little while. After two minutes, gently ask them to return to this room and circle of friends and open their eyes.
4. Ask participants to share their vision. Go around the circle until each person has had a chance to speak. If there are too many people to do so, break the group into triads and ask participants to share with each other; then, have one member of each small group report to the whole.

Commentary

5 minutes

1. Offer the following reflection or something similar: “ We are all connected to the earth; to the air, water, and soil; to other living creatures; to all other human beings, to the spinning world, moon, stars, planets, and sun. We are part of a web. If part of this web is broken, the whole is diminished. We live in and by our web of loves and relationships, each lending support and strength to the other.”

2. Continue: “ The image of stewardship draws together the many threads of this web: the earth upon which we live, the elements of community we value, and the institutions that forward our values and provide services we think are important. Stewards are caretakers with a forward vision. They hold something in trust. They ensure that it will be there in the future for the benefit of others. Successful stewards not only protect, but help something to improve and grow. Their actions are empowering. This is true regardless of whether we are stewards of the earth, institutions, people, or our Unitarian Universalist faith.” Invite comments

Activity

20 minutes

1. For additional insight into the meaning of stewardship, introduce two assumptions of this curriculum (stated in Leader Resource 1):
 - (1) Stewardship is about taking care of something we value and enabling it to grow. When we become stewards, we take responsibility and contribute our time, talent and treasure.

- (2) Money touches every portion of our lives. When we—children, youth, and adults—learn to use it to meet our needs and support our values, we are empowered. Money is no more or no less important than talent or time; all are related, and all can be shared.

Invite participants' comments.

2. Note that stewardship encompasses much more than financial contributions. Ask participants for examples of how people in their congregation act as stewards. For example:

- Taking care of the church building or grounds
- Working on cleaning up the neighborhood
- Supporting community services
- Serving as a trustee on foundations
- Working as a volunteer to better the community
- Serving as a board or committee member in the church

Record responses on newsprint.

3. Divide participants into three groups. Ask one group to respond to the question, “How might we act as stewards of this congregation, beyond what we already do

here and in other areas of our lives?" Write the group's responses on newsprint. If participants need ideas, suggest the following:

- Volunteer for a needed task
- Join a committee
- Participate in worship
- Provide financial support
- Share musical or speaking talents
- Teach
- Provide child care

Ask the second group to answer the question, "How can we act as stewards of the community?" Record the group's responses. Suggest the following if necessary:

- Work for social justice
- Support music and arts groups
- Speak up at community forums
- Volunteer at teen programs

Finally, ask the third group, "How can we be better stewards of our Unitarian Universalist faith?" Make a newsprint list of their ideas. Examples might include:

- Support a partner church overseas or in a neighboring community

- Support another congregation financially
- Participate in a district or continental project
- Lead a youth group
- Invite other like-minded people to a service
- Support the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations with a fair share contribution
- Help someone become a Unitarian Universalist minister.

Contemplation

10 minutes

1. Invite participants to read and reflect on the seven principles from the UU Principles and Purposes (reprinted in Handout 13). Say, “ Our Unitarian Universalist faith encourages us to be creators and sustainers of all our relationships. In our relationships and sacred partnerships, our task is to *empower*.”
2. Ask participants, “ What does the word *empowerment* mean to you?” After participants respond, say something like, “ Empowering people means providing them with the opportunity for personal growth. When we are empowered, it is usually because someone, some good steward, has cared enough to provide us with this opportunity” . Then ask: “ How does the Unitarian Universalist faith support the notion of empowerment?” Engage participants in conversation in response to this question.

1. Read “Stand by This Faith” (No. 569 in *Singing the Living Tradition*):

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.*

2. Tell participants that the next session will involve learning about some of the good stewards from this congregation’s past.
3. Collect the offering. Say something like, “ Even though we sometimes feel powerless, indifferent, or troubled, even though we can sometimes be wasteful of our lives, we all have a persistent, deeply felt desire to make our lives count in helpful, enduring ways. We want to do something specific and concrete that will give

our lives meaning and affect the future. Let us start today by giving generously to the mission of this congregation.” Pass the collection plate.

4. To close, read “ A Person Will Worship Something” (No. 563) or sing “ Since What We Choose Is What We Are” (No. 374).

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 Adults Session 2

Our Stewards and 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
- Newsprint

- Markers and tape
- Leader Resource 5, UU Timeline
- Large roll of paper for creating timeline
- Historical objects from your congregation's archives, such as an old Bible, collection plates, photos, and vestments
- Collection plate
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal

Preparation

- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.
- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- Prior to this session, gather all available information about the founding of your congregation and those founders or longtime members who remain good supporters.
- Invite some of these people to attend the class as storytellers. Share the questions from Notes to Teacher with them.
- Prepare a timeline of Unitarian Universalist history as follows. Draw a timeline horizontally along a large piece of paper. Using information from Leader Resource 5, mark Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist milestones (dates, people, and events) above the line. Below the line, mark important dates and events for your congregation. Leave space at the end of the timeline for future events.

Notes to Teacher

This session is meant to give participants an understanding of stewardship by looking at the past. We can come to appreciate the gifts we have by learning the stories of those who worked to preserve and enrich our Unitarian Universalist faith. With this perspective, participants will be better able to see what part they might be able to play in the continuing Unitarian Universalist story.

During this session, consider the following questions:

What is the story of our congregation?

How and by whom was it founded?

Who are the people that contributed to making its history?

Who are the people whose names appear on our rooms, hymnals, and plaques?

Are there youth who are working to be better stewards of our religious community?

Who are they and what are they doing?

What stories are significant to the history of our congregation?

Who were the stewards of Unitarian Universalism in our district?

Who were the people who brought Unitarian Universalism to this congregation?

Who were the people who kept our faith alive over the ages?

How are we connected to this past?

Note that the UU Timeline you create in this session will be used again in Session 4 and may also be part of the final intergenerational worship service. Also save newsprint lists from this session for use in Session 4.

Centering

5 minutes

1. Invite people to sit in a circle for the chalice lighting.
2. Read the following opening words by William F. Schulz (*Singing the Living Tradition* No. 429):

Come into this place of peace
and let its silence heal your spirit;
Come into this place of memory
and let its history warm your soul;
Come into this place of prophesy
and power
and let its vision change your heart.

Commentary

10 minutes

1. Display the timeline you have created, and point out the benchmarks of Unitarian Universalist history, paying particular attention to people who contributed to

establishing the Unitarian and Universalist faiths. Name those individuals as stewards of our liberal faith.

2. Now point to some of the objects which represent the congregation's own history and discuss what each has meant in its formation.

Story/Activity

30 minutes

1. Introduce the guests. Ask the invited members to add their memories to the discussion, and insert relevant achievements and dates into the timeline. Ask anyone in the group for important dates to include in the timeline and write in those as well.
2. Say something like, "We can see that we have a rich history and that people who came before us, some of whom paid with their very lives, have made it possible for us to be here today. These people are the great stewards of our free faith. Some of these people are in our district, some in our greater Association, some are with us today. (If you have no guests present, be sure to have pictures and artifacts of these stewards to reference.) Invite guests to share stories of stewardship.
3. Invite the group to identify the accomplishments of past Unitarian Universalist and community stewards. Ask:

- What important turning points have occurred in our history? Who were the leaders at those times?
 - How has this congregation contributed in this community?
 - Who are the important people after whom the buildings, parks, and streets of this community are named? Why are they important to us?
4. Invite participants to place the acts of stewardship listed below into one of three categories: congregation, community, or Unitarian Universalist movement. Add items referencing the history of your congregation, the history of your district, and your congregation's relationship with the Unitarian Universalist Association to the list.

Defended liberal thought.

Was branded and pilloried (1684, Joseph Gatchell of Marblehead, MA for stating "All men should be saved").

Fought for separation of church and state.

Publication of Hosea Ballou's Treatise on Atonement

Association for the protection of civil rights for Unitarians in 1819.

Layman's League formed in 1919.

Caroline Soule was voted first President of Association of Church Women in 1905.

Clara Barton birthplace secured in 1921.

Formation of the Universalist Service Committee in 1945. (This organization merged with the Unitarian Service Committee soon after the two denominations merged in 1961.)

Contemplation

5 minutes

1. Summarize the session by saying, “ Today we learned something of our great heritage and the sacrifices many made in securing the future which we enjoy today. These people were and are the stewards of our faith. In the coming weeks, we will discuss and discover how we can become better stewards in all of these contexts (point to the three categories.) Through this process of discovery, we will expand our understanding of how to care for our congregation, our faith, and each other.”
2. Invite comments.

Commitment/Celebration

10 minutes

1. Read responsively “ A Common Destiny” by David H. Eaton (*Singing the Living Tradition* No. 557):

All living substance, all substance
of energy, being, and purpose,
are united and share the same

destiny.

*All people,
those we love and those we
know not of, are united and
share the same destiny.*

Birth-to-death
we share this unity with
the sun,
earth,

*our brothers and sisters,
strangers*

flowers of the field,
snow flakes,
volcanoes and moon beams.

Birth-Life-Death

Unknown-Known-unknown

Our destiny: from unknown to unknown.

*May we have the faith to
accept this mystery and build
upon its everlasting truth.*

2. Collect the offering.
3. Sing No. 402, "From You I Receive"

From you I receive
To you I give
Together we share
From this we live.

4. Extinguish the chalice with these words of Albert Schweitzer (No. 447)

At times our own light goes out and
is rekindled by a spark from another
person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those
who have lighted the flame within us.

Reflection and Planning

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

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

Stewardship for Adults Session 3

Time, Talent, and Treasure

Goals for Participants

- To identify a stewardship project
- To affirm individual contributions of time, talent, and resources to the project
- To understand that stewardship actions make a difference in the lives of people in the congregation and community

Session Summary

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

Materials

- Pictures showing examples of affluence, poverty, work, retirement, church, and community
- Chalice, candle, and matches

- Leader Resource 12, Coyote Wants to Know What Money Will Buy
- Newsprint and markers
- Donuts for participants to snack on.
- Small round stickers, preferably green
- Collection plate
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnals

Preparation

- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.
- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- At least a week in advance, recruit three people to do a reading from "Coyote Wants To Know About What Money Will Buy" (Leader Resource 12). Copy the reading for each person.
- Post the pictures on the walls of your meeting room.

Notes to Teacher

In this session, we will explore the question of money in our lives. How important is it? What is our attitude toward it? How can we use it well?

Save the newsprint lists you create in this session for use in Session 4.

Session Plan

Centering

5 minutes

1. Gather the group in a circle for the chalice lighting. Read No. 434 (anonymous) from *Singing the Living Tradition*:

May we be reminded here of our highest aspirations, and inspired to bring our gifts of love and service to the altar of humanity.

May we know once again that we are not isolated beings but connected in mystery and miracle, to the universe, to this community and to each other.

Light the chalice.

2. Sing “Enter, Rejoice, and Come In” (No. 361)

Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Today will be a joyful day;

enter, rejoice and come in.

Open your ears to the song.

Open your hearts everyone.

Don't be afraid of some change.

Enter rejoice, and come in.

Commentary

5 minutes

1. Place the plate of donuts in the center of your circle. Say, " These donuts are given this morning in honor of God's Dog, Coyote. Webster Kitchell, a Unitarian Universalist minister, has written a book about Coyote, that spiritual cynic from whom we will learn more today." Then begin the reading.

" I need to talk to you." I said [to Coyote]. " The people at my church are concerned about money. I need to come up with a good rationale for mentioning the unmentionable in church."

" Don' t ask me! I don't have pockets. I wait for you to buy the donuts," [said Coyote].

" I don't know much about money either. But I'm talking about money as a spiritual issue, an emotional issue. You being spiritual, I thought you might have some ideas."

Story/Activity

20 minutes

1. Invite the readers to read (tell) the story while participants enjoy the donuts. Say, "Now you know what Coyote would buy if he had money."
2. Explain that another book, *Money and the Meaning of Life*, can also help us understand the relationship between spirituality and money. Continue, "According to philosopher Jacob Needleman, *Money is the most important thing in our lives*. It costs us our time, health, prestige, and power. Yet, it is the last thing we want to discuss. It has been said that people will talk about almost anything rather than money."
3. Ask participants to think about the worst experience they have had with money. After a minute, ask them to share. Examples might include being robbed, being swindled, not having enough money for basic needs, being embarrassed in front of friends or colleagues, or gambling.
4. Ask participants to identify their most satisfying experience with money. Allow them to think for a minute, then ask each to speak in turn. Examples might include giving to a favorite cause or supporting a student, minister, congregation, or parent.
5. Conclude by saying, "We can see that our worst experiences are those that make us feel cheated or diminished. Our best experiences are those that make us feel we have contributed to the greater good. When we give as stewards, we feel the best and do the greatest good."

Contemplation

20 minutes

1. Engage participants in a conversation about generosity and the congregation. Ask: “Is talking about money a problem in this congregation? What is the history of talking about money in this congregation?”
2. Summarize the discussion by listing the congregation’s “challenges to generosity” on newsprint.
3. Ask participants to brainstorm a list of ways to help the congregation think and talk differently about money. Strive for at least twenty-five suggestions and record them on newsprint.
4. Say something like, “We see that we have a lot to do if we are to become a congregation of good stewards. Which of these items can we do right now? Who would be involved in helping this change? How do we start the process? What can we accomplish this year?” Engage participants in realistic discussion.
5. Pass out colored stickers and ask participants to vote for their favorite two suggestions by placing a sticker next to each.

Commitment/Celebration

10 minutes

1. Name the one or two ideas that received the most votes, and explain that, in the next session, the group will design a plan for carrying out these ideas.
2. Continue by saying, “ Since we do not have Coyote here to contribute towards the donut purchase, let us have the offering.” Take the collection. Read these words by Fia B. Scheyer:

Take joy in your giving
You not only enrich your soul,
you also enrich all of creation.

Giving is a simple act
that becomes a great occasion
for the benefits are incalculable.

3. Sing “ ‘Tis a Gift to Be Simple” (No. 16 in *Singing the Living Tradition*):

‘Tis a gift to be simple
‘Tis a gift to be free,
‘Tis a gift to come down
where we ought to be,
and when we find ourselves

in the place just right,
'twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained,
to bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed.
To turn, turn, will be our delight,
'til by turning, turning we come 'round right.

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 Adults Session 4

Stewardship, Skills, and Action

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 transformation in their thinking from scarcity to abundance

Session Summary

Centering	5 minutes
Commentary	30 minutes
Activity	15 minutes
Contemplation	5 minutes
Commitment/Celebration	5 minutes

Materials

- Wall illustrations from previous sessions
- Newsprint lists from previous sessions
- UU Timeline created in Session 2
- Chalice, candle, and matches

- Newsprint and markers
- Congregational and regular calendars, for planning
- Handout 13, Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association, for reference
- Grape juice and cups
- Collection basket
- *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnals
- Donuts for everyone

Preparation

- Read this session and decide who will lead each activity.
- Collect needed resources and supplies.
- Display the UU Timeline in a prominent place.
- Arrange all the pictures from the previous weeks into a collage.
- Arrange to have the project timeline, which you will devise during the session, copied for participants before they leave.
- Put a sign behind the donuts reading, "a contribution from Coyote."

Notes to Teacher

This session will focus on *how* we can serve. In it, your group will choose a project to work on and develop a manageable, achievable plan for carrying it out. You will then include the project in the UU timeline to show good stewardship for the future. The sample

Intergenerational Worship Service provided in this book offers suggestions for using this timeline as part of a congregational celebration of stewardship.

It is important to make a commitment to take some action. We are most likely to experience the joy of giving when we make a specific time and place for it in our lives. Participating in a project will start the cycle—of giving and receiving, making a difference and making meaning—in motion.

Kennon Callahan writes, "Remember those in your own life who shared the gift of their generosity with you and others around them. The room lit up when they walked in. Their quiet radiance was felt by all. Their easy manner calmed the confusion. Their gentle laughter reassured those around them. They were 'someone to whom you would go'! They were, simply, generous people."

That is the transformation required of all of us: to live our lives and put our faith in action as generous people. A generous person lives with a sense of trust and abundance, a willingness to forgive, and the ability to inspire service in others. We all need practice in learning and living generosity. This session will help participants get in touch with their generous spirit and then to act on that generosity as a group.

Session Plan

Centering

5 minutes

1. Invite people to stand around the table. Light the chalice.
2. Open by reading “ Causes, Yes; People, No!” by Vilma Harrington:

Give me causes, Oh God, to theorize,
argue, talk about. Let me think
of problems far away.

Let me go to luncheons, dinners,
for tired celebrities, with long
speeches, speeches about causes.

Let me raise money, money to support
big offices with large staffs
to do a little good for someone,
someone far away.

Give me causes, Oh God,

Causes to forget

the miseries that are too close
to hide,

but don't, Oh God, don't let me be
involved

with people. People are too near.

People may enter my home, may cry

before my eyes.

People can be hungry, ragged, even
dirty.

They may ask me to give—to give
without publicity.

People may be rude.

They may ask me to identify with them
intimately, when all I want is not
to be involved.

I want to be interested, God, yes
interested. Causes help me to be
interested.

And informed. People get me
involved.

So give me causes, Oh God, to theorize,
argue talk about. Let me think
of problems far away.

Alternatively, sing *Where Is Our Holy Church?* (No. 113 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)

Where is our holy church?

Where race and class unite

as equal persons in the search for beauty, truth, and right.

Where is our holy writ?

Where'er a human heart

a sacred torch of truth has lit, by inspiration taught.

Where is this holy land?

Within the human soul,

wherever free minds truly seek

with character the goal.

Where is our paradise?

in aspiration's sight,

wherein we hope to see arise

ten thousand years of right.

Commentary

30 minutes

1. Invite participants to reflect quietly on the following questions:
 - (1) What does generosity mean to me?
 - (2) What am I doing now that makes me feel generous?
 - (3) What keeps me from being more generous with my life, and how can I move beyond these blocks?

2. After ten minutes, encourage participants to reflect further by completing these sentences.
 - (1) If I were more generous, then
 - (2) If I could nurture more generosity in others, then
3. Ask each participant to find a partner and share some of their reflections.
4. After five minutes, bring the group together again. Invite participants to volunteer some shared insights.

Activity

15 minutes

1. Invite participants to reread the UU Timeline you created in Session 2. Then say something like, “ This timeline represents our heritage, but it only goes as far as today. Now we need to decide how we will bring it in to the future. Last week we identified ways we could practice good stewardship. (Point to the brainstorming list.) We even identified things we could do right now, to bring us into the future. Let’s agree on what we can do first.”
2. Remind participants of last week’s discussion and voting. Identify the project that received the most votes.

3. Work with the group to decide how, when, and where participants will complete this project. Draw up a project timeline and have copies made for all.

Contemplation

5 minutes

Invite participants to name the Unitarian Universalist principles that they will affirm and promote by carrying out the project they have chosen. Refer to Handout 13, Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association, if necessary.

Commitment/Celebration

5 minutes

1. Pour some grape juice into small cups and toast your accomplishments.
2. Take the offering.
3. Close with these words by Edward Everett Hale (*Singing the Living Tradition* No. 457)

I am only one

But still I am one.

I cannot do everything,

But still I can do something.

And because I cannot do

everything

I will not refuse to do the
something that I can do.

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 Adults 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 in which your class will participate.