

Vision & Values in a Post-9/11 World

A curriculum on

Civil Liberties, Patriotism, and the U.S. Role Abroad

for Unitarian Universalist Congregations



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Thanks!

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Introduction and Facilitator's Guide

Why this curriculum?

While most people in the United States are past the initial trauma of September 11, many continue to have strong feelings about the terrorist acts as well as subsequent events and government actions. Much of the media describes that date as a defining historical moment – at least for the U.S., if not also the world. Is it really? If it is, what has changed? Are U.S. citizens being called to re-examine their commitment to their country? Has the relationship of the U.S. government to the world changed?

This curriculum is designed to provide U.S.-based Unitarian Universalists (UUs) with an opportunity to reflect historically and ethically about such matters as:

- What does it mean to be patriotic?
- What is the state of civil liberties in the U.S.?
- Why do the U.S. government, corporations and/or culture inspire hostility by foreign governments and peoples?
- What kind of healing, transformation and peacemaking is required at this point? Do we have a role in this process? Does our church?

General goals

1. To promote a broader political, historical, philosophical and social perspective on the questions raised by 9/11.
2. To provide safe, respectful, nourishing occasions for people to explore and effectively channel the emotions they have around 9/11 and subsequent events. To use the curriculum as a vehicle for helping people overcome their isolation, fear, anger, or grief, and to nurture their hope, courage, and love.
3. To reflect in community on our principles, values, and how we want to live as Unitarian Universalists in light of 9/11 individually and collectively. To clarify what we believe. To strategize concretely about what this means and next steps.
4. This can be a teaching moment for young people. For congregations who want to do so, the curriculum can be tailored to help young people clarify their values; strategize about how to handle difficult, unfamiliar, or threatening situations related to 9/11; and take advantage of opportunities to express their highest self. (We are suggesting this be done in an intergenerational format. Congregations that piloted modules in an intergenerational setting noted that adults as well as young people found the mix of ages valuable.)

Programming ideas

This curriculum can be modified or adapted to fit different audiences, time frames, and formats. Feel free to use your judgment about what will work best in your situation. Here are some suggestions to give you a sense of possibilities:

Conversations with adults in your congregation. As constructed, the curriculum consists of four 2-hour modules. The format assumes that the same adults attend all four sessions, building trust and depth of common analysis over time. If this will not be the case, then it would

be helpful to elicit participants' expectations each time and perhaps recapitulate some highlights of earlier conversations in order to provide greater continuity.

Some congregations may want to use one or more sessions in an adult Sunday school or religious education class that runs about one hour. In this case, facilitators will need to cut out portions of the curriculum or divide sessions into two parts for consecutive weeks. (In the latter case, the curriculum would last eight weeks.) Facilitators may want to keep newsprint notes from week to week and post them the next session as a way of helping people remember what was discussed previously and making a smoother transition to the next part of the conversation.

Conversations with young people in your congregation. The questions and exercises assume a certain level of awareness and experience. In pilots of the curriculum, the conversations proved to be meaningful for children once they were about age 12. The curriculum is not designed to be used exclusively with youth, however.

Intergenerational conversations in your congregation. Young people enjoy the opportunity and can benefit greatly from hearing the experiences and opinions of adults. Similarly, adults can be energized and enlightened from hearing what young people are experiencing! In fact, young people may experience some of the fall-out from 9/11 more keenly than adults (in school; increased security measures in the community; intensified military recruitment; impact of the news, etc.) Consider gearing one or more sessions to an intergenerational dialogue – explaining that young people are welcome with or without their parents. Be sure to specify what age-range of young people the conversation and activities will be geared to. In such dialogues, make sure that young people are encouraged to share and are given respectful attention from adults. One way to assure that adults don't dominate is to invite the young people to speak first. Also – do not assume that young people (or anyone, really) will always speak up when they do not understand a concept or issue. Facilitators will need to watch for signs that this is occurring.

Community-based conversations.

Consider offering public dialogues based on this curriculum, or asking other faith groups to co-host such an effort. As Unitarian Universalists, our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all humans, as well as our respect for individual conscience and discernment when it comes to matters of faith and life choices, provide a strong foundation for creating welcoming spaces where people of diverse opinions and experiences might begin to find common ground and work for the common good. Some instructions geared towards UUs will need to be re-worked to appeal to an interfaith or secular audience.

Suggested advance preparation

1. Find one or more people to help co-facilitate. Teamwork is more fun and generally more effective! Because some of the material is controversial, you may want to have co-facilitators with different opinions or experiences to model tolerance, keep each other centered, and inspire a range of people to participate.
2. Read through the curriculum completely before the scheduled date of the first session. Flag any instructions that you will want to modify because of the nature of the audience or time limits. Devise a division of labor for facilitators. Discuss facilitation strategies to promote healthy dialogue and an atmosphere that integrates emotions as well as critical thinking.
3. Review with the minister(s) and social justice leaders in your church what is happening in your church and community that relates to this curriculum. Do you want to highlight some of these activities in discussions? Do you want to have handouts related to any

other relevant UU religious education or social justice effort? Do church leaders want to use this curriculum to inspire fresh thinking about your church's vision and mission? Be clear about what your goals are.

4. Go to the Washington Office website at <http://www.uua.org/uuawo/issues/respond>. There are many excellent resources referenced or printed there, such as opening and closing readings, text of handout materials for this class, etc. This electronic library was created to save costs and trees. Use this to develop handouts and prepare each session to reflect the needs and interests of your audience.
5. Prepare the entire course, but focus more heavily on the first couple of sessions. Plan on modifying sessions as you go along, based on the dynamics of the proceeding session and the ideas and feelings that emerged.

Consider enhancing the experience by selecting music to sing or play in the background during appropriate moments. Think about how the process you design can speak to multiple styles of learning. How can music, art, poetry, dance or drama be used? These methods are particularly useful for intergenerational audiences because they can help bridge gaps. Integrating arts and culture in general helps the learning experience be more fun and holistic.

Note: Estimated times are meant to be suggestions. They assume a 2-hour session but sub-components may not add up to 120 minutes exactly. Some time is allowed for giving instructions or other "slippage".

Session One: Patriotism

I. Introduction – Welcome (13-15 minutes)

A. Facilitators introduce themselves (2 minutes)

B. Discuss your church's purpose in offering the curriculum (5 minutes)

Review general outline of all sessions. Review Session #1 goals. [Tip: Print goals and general outline of sessions on newsprint. Post relevant sections each session.]

Overall curriculum goals:

1. To gain some political, historical, philosophical perspectives on 9/11.
2. To explore emotions around 9/11 and subsequent events. To overcome any isolation, fear, anger, or grief we feel now; nurture our hope, courage and love.
3. To reflect in community on our principles, values and how we want to live as UUs in light of 9/11 – individually and collectively. To strategize concretely about what this means and any desired actions.
4. To feel able to live out our values more confidently, joyfully, and powerfully.

Specific goals for Session #1:

We begin by exploring the nature of our individual commitment to our country. What is it? Is it being changed, challenged or strengthened as a result of 9/11? In this session we will attempt:

1. **To discern and clarify our individual understanding of the term patriotism and learn from others' experiences and understandings of that term.**
2. **To explore our concept of patriotism in the context of our values, personal philosophy, and UU principles.**
3. **To consider examples of words and deeds in the past few months that have inspired or challenged us in terms of a commitment to our country.**
4. **To clarify what we consider our commitment to our country to be. Does this differ from our definition of patriotism?**

C. Facilitators offer suggested ground rules for the time together (3 minutes)

- Share from the heart.
- Speak for yourself only, not for others.
- Listen respectfully. We're not here to debate others' experiences or feelings.
- Listen to others attentively, in an affirming silence.
- Take young people's contributions seriously (if this is an intergenerational discussion).
- Share the air. Do not monopolize.
- Honor confidentiality. *(As facilitators, you will need to evaluate the situation in terms of whether and how you might handle the need for offering confidentiality in order to create an atmosphere of safety. You may want to suggest that if someone requests confidentiality in their sharing, the group will honor it.)*
- Any other ground rules participants might want to suggest.

D. Chalice lighting and prayer or reading (3 minutes)

Suggested readings to select from are:

1. *Prayer* by the Rev. A. Powell Davies (available on website).
2. *Litany of Community* by the Rev. Meg Riley (available on website).
3. An excerpt from *Let America Be America Again* by Langston Hughes (available on website).
4. A reading from the UUA hymnal: # 434, 436, 453, 466, 576, 580.

II. Building community. Who are you and why are you here? (30 minutes)

A. Personal introductions (20 minutes)

If the group size is up to 12 people, invite everyone to say her/his name and a sentence about why she/he wants to participate in these conversations. What is a hope or expectation? *[Tip: Newsprint hopes and expectations.]*

If the group is larger than 12, ask people to break into groups of 4 and introduce themselves to the small group. When the large group reconvenes, invite some brief sharing of common hopes or expectations. *[Tip: Newsprint these.]*

At this point as a facilitator, you may want to take a few minutes to briefly review expectations. Which ones are likely to be met by the agenda you outlined above? Which ones not? Does the group want to modify the agenda you proposed or keep it as is? It is important for the group to feel committed to the goals and general outline of the course for the dialogues to succeed. If you feel the need to modify the agenda a bit, but are uncomfortable about reworking it on the spot, you could offer to take the suggestions under advisement and come back with your response in Session #2, promising to review a new game plan with the group at that time.

B. Quick large group introductions (10 minutes)

Invite people to stand up if they can say yes to the question. If they are unable or do not wish to stand, ask them to raise a hand. Reassure people that they do not have to answer any question about which they feel uncomfortable. As a facilitator, you won't be asking people to share specific information. Rather, this is a quick way for all to get a sense of the types of experiences participants bring to this discussion.

1. You have said the *Pledge of Allegiance* within the last month.
2. You have been asked to sing *God Bless America* or *America the Beautiful* or another patriotic hymn recently.
3. You have worn something red, white and blue at least once since 9/11.
4. You display a U.S. flag somewhere in your home now.
5. You usually display a U.S. flag around your home on July 4th.
6. You have been in a situation where the U.S. flag felt personally threatening to you.
7. You serve or have served in the U.S. military.
8. You serve or have served in the Peace Corps or a domestic version such as Americorps.
9. You have been or are an employee of the U.S. government.
10. You have been directly touched by armed conflict (inside or outside the U.S.) – involving the police, military, militia, rebel groups, gangs, etc.
11. You have engaged in some form of public witness about what you believe in (demonstration, civil disobedience, vigils, sit-ins, other acts of solidarity).
12. You have been arrested for engaging in some form of public witness about what you believe.
13. An important part of your identity is connected to one or more countries other than the U.S.

After you have taken the poll, you may want to take 5-10 minutes to analyze with the group what they learned from this exercise, e.g. who's in the room and who's not; what type of experience is missing; whether any of the questions felt intrusive; which part of their identity people found easiest to share; did they feel proud about any of their answers, etc.

III. Dialogue and discernment (60 minutes)

A. Paired discussion. (15 minutes) Participants are asked to pair with someone they do not know or do not know well. They are invited to spend 15 minutes in a special listening time together. One person will speak for 6 minutes. The partner will listen attentively, affirmingly. The partner will not share her/his opinions, experiences or ask questions. This is one-way time. If there is some silence, that is OK. After 6 minutes, the facilitator will ask people to switch, and the silent partner will now have 6 minutes to share. Afterwards, people will be invited to share highlights of the paired sharing.

The following questions are meant as jumping off points:

[Tip: List questions on newsprint, and post for all to see.]

1. What is your most inspired, most thoughtful definition of *patriotism*? Have you witnessed actions or spoken words arising from that type of definition since 9/11? If so, can you give an example?
2. How does this definition reflect your own deep values?
3. Have you gotten any strong messages about what it means to be patriotic from family, friends, neighbors, school, work, or the media? If so, what are these messages? Do they differ from your definition of patriotism?
4. Have you been “patriotic” since 9/11, and if so, how? How did that feel? Were you acting “patriotic” out of your own definition or someone else’s?
5. Do you feel 9/11 and subsequent events have altered your commitment to your country in any way?

B. Large group discussion. (45 minutes)

1. Reflecting on questions **1** and **2**. (10-15 minutes)

Facilitator asks if there is some insight or highlight participants would like to share from their discussion on questions 1 and 2. Invite people to speak for themselves, not their partner. Put key words from participants’ inspiring definitions of patriotism on newsprint for future reference. You may want to include examples of actions on this list. Create a separate newsprint list of what values or principles inform these inspired definitions of patriotism. Compare this with a list of UU principles that are posted for all to see.

2. Reflecting on questions **3** and **4**. (10-15 minutes)

Facilitator invites similar sharing as above. Make notes on newsprint of other definitions of patriotism. Listen to see if there are any examples of strong messages coming from a source in the community that one or more persons feels is significantly different from her/his values. Ask the person if she/he feels the need for support from the group in any way. Or, consider using it as a teaching moment where the person shares how she/he handled the situation. If there are young people in the group, encourage them to share their experiences and feelings about school (assemblies; school policy about Pledge of Allegiance; how civics is taught; 9/11-related incidents involving youth of color; etc.). Has the discussion surfaced any ongoing public situation where group action is called for? If so, take some time to discuss and strategize about this.

3. Post some dictionary definitions of *patriotism*, *patriot*, and *nationalism* on newsprint for all to see. Compare dictionary with group definitions. Any important differences to note? Gaps to fill in? (5 minutes)
4. Re: question **5**. (10 minutes)

How have people defined their commitment to their country? Is this the same as patriotic duty? Has their commitment been affected in any way since 9/11? If it has, how and why has it been affected?

[Tip: If time is running short, save this discussion for next session when it can be done in a more relaxed and full way.]

IV. Closing (15 minutes)

A. Thank everyone for coming. Remind them when the next session is. Announce topics of next discussion: Is patriotism “out-of-date” in today’s world? What can we learn from our UU history about our commitment to country, conscience, and humankind? What is our country’s commitment to us? How have Unitarians and Universalists shaped this commitment? *[Distribute any “homework” assignment here.]* (2 minutes)

B. Closing circle. Invite each participant to be quiet for a moment and think about the following question. If you had the opportunity to deliver a message to all the people living in the U.S., what would it be? OR What is something concrete you would like to do in the next week to express your highest aspirations for our country? Give everyone a few minutes to silently ponder this. (10-15 minutes).

OR

Ask everyone to look at the newsprint with the inspired definitions of patriotism and silently review it. Invite the youngest person in the group to be a sculptor. This person stands in the middle of the group and selects another participant to sculpt. Without talking, the sculptor physically positions each person. Props are allowed. The sculptor can use as many people as she/he wants to depict an inspiring definition of patriotism. There is no talking or coaching from the group or facilitator. Group quietly, attentively witnesses the creative process. *If you have some inspiring background music, play it softly now. It should contribute to a meditative process. Invite people to meditate on the sculpture for a few moments after it is constructed, until the music ends.*

C. Either exercise above may be sufficient closing. If you want something else too, consider offering a brief prayer, benediction, or reading. (See website for ideas)

Session Two: Patriotism and Faith

I. Welcome and introduction. (14 minutes)

- A. Facilitators introduce themselves if there are new participants. Quickly review goals of the overall curriculum, focus on outlining the goals for this session. Check if the group wants to modify the goals in any way. (3-5 minutes)

Session # 2 goals:

1. To learn some denominational history: What lessons can we draw from how UUs have lived out their duty to faith, country, and humankind?
 2. To re-examine our definition of patriotism in light of current realities: Is patriotism out of date in the 21st century?
 3. To begin first part of discussion of: political, theological, and cultural influence of Unitarians and Universalists in the political life of US. How does this shape our collective understanding of what our country owes its citizens? How does this history shape the political practices of our congregations? Does anything need to change in light of 9/11?
- B. **Recap highlights of Session # 1 discussion**, particularly the elements of inspired definitions of patriotism, and the values or principles embodied in those definitions. (3-5 minutes)
- C. **If there are new people in the group, do a quick round of introductions.** Invite the new people to briefly share a hope or expectation they bring. (Time needed depends on number of new people.)
- D. **Chalice lighting and/or opening meditation (4 minutes)**
Suggestions: Quotes on patriotism; or a few selected letters from *Children's Letters To God*. (Texts of all on website.)

II. Developing an historical and theological perspective on patriotism

A. Timeline (30 minutes)

[Suggested process: Write each item below on a separate piece of paper and distribute them to different members of the class to present. Prior to the class, make a long paper time line out of newsprint and post it. This would involve drawing a long horizontal line on the paper but nothing else. In chronological order, invite different people to present their bit of history to the group, telling it in their own words, if possible. Then, add a vertical line with the date and a headline about the person or issue involved to the timeline. After the formal presentations, ask people to contribute to the timeline with any other relevant examples they know.]

Where noted, historical citations were taken from these sources:

Clarence R. Skinner: Prophet of a New Universalism, edited by Charles A. Howe, Skinner House Books, Boston, 1999.

Congregational Polity: A Historical Survey of Unitarian and Universalist Practice, by Conrad Wright, Skinner House Books, Boston, 1997.

Unitarian Universalism: A Narrative History, by David E. Bumbaugh, Meadville Lombard Press, Chicago, 2000.

Washington Unitarianism, by Laurence C. Staples, All Souls Church, Unitarian, Washington, DC, 1970.

Unitarians and Universalists in the United States have wrestled with their duty to country and their conscience for well over 200 years. Many times this put them in conflict with fellow congregants or the leadership of the denomination. Some struggles have made it to the public arena and been moments that have shaped our nation's history.

- **1770s:** The theology of early Universalist minister, John Murray, was considered suspect. Some of the residents of Gloucester, Massachusetts, where he preached had him charged with being a British agent “seeking to fasten the yoke of the Anglican Church firmly about the neck of the rebellious colonists.” This charge did not hold. (Bumbaugh, p. 148.)
- **1780:** Some members of the First Universalist church in the American colonies, dedicated in Gloucester, Massachusetts, in 1780, refused to pay mandatory taxes that supported the primary church in town. This led to the town seizing the property of members of the church and later a lawsuit brought by the Universalists. These actions launched a long process “by which Universalists would seek the total separation of church and state in Massachusetts.” (Bumbaugh, pp. 148-49.)
- **1850:** “When the Fugitive Slave Laws — requiring the return of escaped slaves to their owners — were passed, various individuals and Universalist State Conventions called for civil disobedience as a response to laws judged to be immoral and unacceptable.” (Bumbaugh, p. 165.)
- **1850s-1860s:** Unitarian John C. Calhoun was elected Vice President twice, serving under Unitarian President John Quincy Adams and then Andrew Jackson. A strong proponent of state’s rights, Calhoun eventually resigned his office as his sympathy with the South drew him into conflict with his elected position requiring him to defend the Union. Unitarian Daniel Webster, an ardent supporter of the Union, was a strong public opponent of Calhoun. Ironically, several decades earlier, Adams and Calhoun both helped to found the First Unitarian church in Washington, D.C. Their contrary opinions about slavery and government were dramatized in the major motion picture, *Amistad*.
- **1862:** The Trustees of the First Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C., voted to convert the church into a hospital for wounded Union soldiers. Members of the church volunteered to help tend the wounded. In gratitude, the U.S. Senate invited the church to use Senate chambers for Sunday worship. (Staples, pp. 47-48.)
- **1917:** The United States officially entered WWI. Clarence Skinner, a noted Universalist minister of his day, became one of a few Universalist ministers willing to take a public pacifist stance. As a professor at Tufts College, Skinner found himself in a distinct minority. “The overwhelming majority of his colleagues were active supporters of the war effort; so too were the administration and faculty of Tufts College. [In fact,] the faculties of the theological school were taken over by the military.” He found himself shunned by colleagues who called for his dismissal, and he was even pelted with rotten eggs during a speech. Skinner was eventually forced to resign his part-time ministry at a nearby church because of his views on the war. For similar reasons, the local district attorney asked the Tufts administration to investigate him, but that request was rejected. (Howe, p. 34.)
- **1918:** The American Unitarian Association imposed on ministers what could be considered a loyalty oath. The AUA Board voted that “any society which engages a minister who is not a willing, earnest, and outspoken supporter of the United States in the vigorous and resolute prosecution of the war cannot be considered eligible for aid from the Association. Several ministers were forced or felt obliged to leave their pulpits in consequence.” One of the pacifists was the Reverend John Haynes Holmes who withdrew from Fellowship with the Association, although he continued as a minister of his church in New York. Holmes got into a public confrontation about this issue with

former U.S. President William Howard Taft, a Unitarian, when Taft presided over sessions of the Unitarian Conference. “The vote was recognized in a later and more sober time as an egregious violation of the right of the local church to choose its own leadership without control or coercion from denominational authorities. In 1936, the annual meeting by formal resolution repudiated the earlier action.” Eventually when the war was over, and the AUA apologized for its transgression, Holmes rejoined the denomination. (Bumbaugh, pp. 136-7; Wright, pp. 124-5.)

- **1944:** In the midst of WWII, A. Powell Davies, a prominent Unitarian minister, proclaimed five principles of modern Unitarianism having a strong democratic and internationalist flavor. They were: “Individual freedom of belief. Discipleship to advancing truth. Democratic process in human relations. Universal brotherhood, undivided by nations, race or creed. Allegiance to the cause of a United World Community.” (Bumbaugh, p. 140.)
- **1972:** Beacon Press published *The Pentagon Papers*, a secret Pentagon study that documented the involvement of the U.S. in the Vietnam War. “Immediately the Association found itself in a fierce confrontation with the federal government, which sought access to the Association’s financial records, in an effort to determine who was identified as a supporter of the UUA.” By 1974, the U.S. Justice Department backed off its demand to see the denomination’s bank records. This incident further fueled the controversy that raged among members about the UUA’s opposition to the war. (Bumbaugh, p. 193.)

Questions for discussion:

1. Were you particularly surprised by any of these examples? If so, which ones and why?
2. What lessons do you draw from these examples regarding how some prominent Unitarians and Universalists have viewed their duty to their country?
3. ...to their own conscience, principles, and values?
4. ...to the world or humankind in general?

B. Is patriotism out of date for the 21st century? (70 minutes)

Facilitator reads Skinner quotes, if she/he hasn’t done so previously. For clarity and emphasis also paraphrase them, focusing on Skinner’s assertions that there is a strong connection between people’s images of God and the state of their government and society. What kind of commitments to country and humankind and what kind of Unitarian Universalism do we need for the 21st century? These are the questions we’ll start to address in this section.

Break the class into 3 small groups. Give each group an historical period to assess:

- Colonial US/Revolutionary War;
- Civil War and industrialization of the 1800s;
- World War II and 1940s.

Ask each group to discuss: *[Tip: Copy these questions as handouts so people can refer to them while working in small groups.]*

- a) What kind of government existed in the U.S. during this time? How would you describe the relation of the U.S. government to the rest of the world at this time?
- b) How do you think patriotism was defined in the U.S. at this time? What was going on politically, militarily, socially, or economically that might have influenced how

patriotism got defined? Who among the people living in this country at that time might identify with that definition? Who might not?

- c) Can you think of any connection between the religious life of the nation and how people viewed the U.S. government or important political issues of the day?
- d) Did mainstream religious people and institutions in the U.S. have any major social concerns directed outside of the U.S. at this time? If so, what were they? How did they act upon them? Would this pose any potential conflicts between how they interpreted their duty to country and being loyal to the government?
- e) Are there any major religious or political images or ideas from this time period that are part of our U.S. culture today? Our UU culture and institutions today? Of these holdovers, are any life-enhancing and liberating? Are any outdated, destructive?

1. Each group has 25 minutes to discuss these questions and to prepare a 5-minute presentation to the large group. Group members only have to answer the first 4 questions in their presentation. Hold their ideas on question 5 for the full group discussion later. They can write on the time line key concepts and answers to those questions, perhaps color coding them (e.g. all answers to question (i) in red, all answers to (ii) in blue, etc.). They can draw pictures on the time line to represent their answers. They can sing songs summing up key concepts, etc. Creativity in presenting is welcome.

2. Small group presentations (15 minutes)

3. Large group synthesis (25-30 minutes)

As facilitator, your job is to help the large group compare answers to the questions over the time periods. What has changed over the course of time? What is staying the same? Turn to life in the 21st century. As a large group, go through the set of questions again for this new century. Review the small groups' findings for the last question in terms of holdover images and ideas.

As the group reflects upon the 21st century, here are some ideas to test:

- What is the relationship between wars, violence, militarism, and definitions of patriotism in these different historical periods? Patriotism has often been seen in terms of what someone is willing to die for. Some feminists, pacifists, and internationalists, among others, are suggesting a new definition: what someone is willing to live for.
- We now live in a highly economically interdependent world compared with our ancestors. How does this affect how we understand and live out our Unitarian Universalist principles?
- What is the relative importance and role of international institutions and laws vs. our national governments and laws in assuring the common good in the 21st century?
- Does the global nature of the political and economic interdependencies we experience today affect what kind of commitments we want to make as citizens of the U.S. and citizens of the world?
- Have your answers to the above questions changed as a result of 9/11?

[Tip: These are meaty questions. You may not be able to do them justice in the time allotted. You may want to make them into handouts for people to think about in between sessions. Consider weaving more discussion of them into Session #4.]

III. Closing (6-12 minutes)

A. Thank everyone for coming. Remind people of next session date and time. If you are giving people reading or other homework to do, handle it here. Briefly mention theme of next session: civil liberties – or what kind of commitment does our country have to us, its citizens and residents? (2 minutes)

B. Closing poem/meditation. Extinguish the chalice. (3-10 minutes)

Some other options are:

1) Do the closing exercise suggested for Session #1 that you didn't do.

2) Give everyone paper and crayons, pencils, markers. Ask all participants to draw how they are feeling now. Or, ask them to draw a life-affirming *very concrete* commitment they have made or are willing to make as a way of living out their UU principles. You might want to have music softly playing in the background as they draw. At the end, have people stand in a circle and show their image. Do not ask for explanations or commentary. Close with a short prayer, poem or benediction. (See suggested closing selections on website.)

3) Closing circle: Invite everyone to offer a brief highlight, learning, or idea she/he will take with her/him as a result of this session.

Session Three: Civil Liberties

I. Welcome and Introduction (8 minutes)

A. Explain the goals of the session. Check if group wants to make any revisions.

Discussions of 9/11 and subsequent events inevitably touch upon the notions of freedom, rights, and democracy. One focus of public attention has been the lack of democracy and civil rights in Afghanistan. Another focus has been the alleged erosion of civil rights as a result of new rules and actions undertaken by the U.S. government in the name of domestic security. A third layer involves examining U.S. foreign policy and the impact of the U.S. government, culture, and corporations on the rights and freedoms of people in other countries as many in the U.S. try to come to grips with the question “Why do they hate us?”

The first two sessions of this curriculum explored what kind of commitment as individuals we feel we have to our nation and to humanity. In these next two sessions, we explore what kind of commitment we feel our government has to its citizens and residents as well as to the rest of the world. Has our view changed as a result of 9/11? We will talk about these commitments using the language of civil rights, liberties, and human rights through the lens of our Unitarian and Universalist principles.

Goals

1. To remind ourselves of the distinctions between civil liberties, civil rights, and human rights.
2. To review what rights we have as citizens or residents of the U.S.
3. To review what rights everyone has under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.
4. To explore the status of civil rights in the U.S. today using two post-9/11 case studies (U.S. Patriot Act; detentions).
5. To put the concern around civil rights in the U.S. in a broader context.

[Tip: Write goals on newsprint and post them for all to see. You may want to acknowledge that talking about rights can be a very emotional issue and controversial. You may want to alert people how you will be handling this in order to diffuse any immediate tension some may feel.]

B. Chalice lighting and opening meditation.

Consider a reading from the UUA hymnal: # 434, 436, 453, 466, 576, 580 or the *Litany of Community*. (See website.)

II. Warm-up/Community building time (15-20 minutes)

A. Continuum/spectrum exercise (8-10 minutes) Visually with your hands or with a sign on the wall, demarcate a continuum of opinion in the space of the room. Have one side be the place where people who strongly agree with a certain statement stand. Indicate the other side, where people who strongly disagree stand, and the middle where people who don't have an opinion or who are perfectly ambivalent stand. (People can stand anywhere along the spectrum.) Announce that you will read a statement, and ask people to quickly move to the place on the imaginary spectrum that reflects their current feelings. Make sure everyone is in place, has noticed where the group's range of opinion lies, and has taken that in before you read the next statement.

1. I believe the U.S. government (FBI, local police, military) can and will ensure my physical safety.

2. I feel my civil rights are adequately protected at this time.
3. The U.S. does a good job of ensuring people's human rights in the U.S. and around the world.
4. I believe that the U.S. government will fully return our rights to privacy IF they have to be diminished now in the name of ensuring public safety.
5. If you are not doing anything wrong, why should you care if the FBI or other security force monitors your phone calls or e-mail?
6. I believe stronger gun control laws in the U.S. would help curb terrorism.
7. I think some sort of racial/ethnic profiling for airport security and immigration measures is acceptable at this time.

B. Paired sharing. (10-12 minutes) Have people pair up with someone they do not know or do not know well. Invite them to take turns. Each person has 4 minutes to talk uninterrupted while the partner listens quietly, but with aware, affirming attention. Facilitator will alert people when to switch. Invite people to share:

- Did any of the questions prompt a strong feeling?
- Were you surprised by others' answers?
- Did you feel hesitant to answer any question?
- What biases or assumptions do you bring to this conversation about rights?

[Tip: Post questions on newsprint for all to refer to while talking.]

III. Setting the context for a discussion of rights (30 minutes)

A. What's the job of the US government? (5 minutes)

Facilitator reviews sections of Declaration of Independence and Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. (See website for texts.) These documents explain what we collectively believe our government's commitment to its citizens should be. *[Tip: Write key government functions from the Constitution on newsprint for people to refer to, e.g. establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, etc.]*

[Tip: You may want to remind people of prominence of Unitarians and Universalists in shaping both documents and fighting for independence – people like Thomas Paine, Ethan Allan... signers of the Declaration of Independence: John Adams, Sam Adams, Josiah Bartlett, William Ellery, Robert Treat Paine. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were not official members of any church but had theological positions that are sympathetic to Unitarianism and Universalism.]

B. Define: civil liberties; civil rights; human rights (5-7 minutes)

(Definitions below are derived from the American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd College Edition, and Amnesty International.)

Civil rights: Rights belonging to a person by virtue of his/her status as a citizen or member of society.

Civil liberties: Legal guarantee to an individual related to the rights of free speech, thought, and action, limited only insofar as their use does not interfere with the rights of others.

Human rights: Basic rights understood to be accorded to all by virtue of being alive. That is, they are seen as universal. Human rights also are thought of as indivisible, i.e. they are considered to be interconnected — the enjoyment of one right is dependent upon the enjoyment of another right. The world standard or world definition of these rights is spelled out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights crafted in 1948.

The Declaration spells out civil, political, cultural, social, and economic rights. (See website for link).

Human rights are broader than civil liberties and civil rights; and are not necessarily enforceable internationally or nationally due to lack of enforcement mechanisms and/or specific legal guarantees. The strongest international mechanism for protecting human rights currently available applies to war crimes/genocide.

C. Review: What rights do we have in the U.S.? (20 minutes)

1. Ask the group to brainstorm some of the most basic rights U.S. citizens have. This does not have to be an exhaustive list. (See website for link to ACLU pamphlet) *Start to make a list on newsprint with two columns: "civil rights" and "human rights." Write their answers under the column "civil rights."*
2. Ask the group if they know what rights non-citizens have. (See website for link to ACLU Pamphlet) *Put a star or asterisk by those rights also enjoyed by non-citizens.*
3. Ask the group to brainstorm a few historical or current examples of how UUs have worked to broaden the definition of those rights or extend those rights to other people. Has your church ever engaged in such efforts? *Limit this to no more than 3-5 minutes.*
4. Using a handout on the U.N. Declaration, ask the group to make a quick laundry list of key human rights. *Note this under the "human rights" column. Check if people are surprised by the scope or content of these rights. Are all of these rights recognized and guaranteed in the U.S.? (This list does not have to be complete, just enough to get the conversation going.)*

IV. Assessing civil rights in the U.S. post-9/11. Has anything changed? (40 minutes)

Invite people to divide into 2 small groups (or more, depending on size of total group). Select two examples of controversial government actions relating to civil liberties for the groups to analyze and prepare to report to the large group. Give one case study per group. Examples include the U.S.A. Patriot Act, the long-term detention and pending deportation of Arab-Americans and other suspected immigrants, and the easing of FBI surveillance restrictions. Give each group 15-20 minutes to read relevant handouts on the topic and prepare to share their findings with the large group.

During the report-backs to the larger group, take time to identify potential actions that can be taken. How relevant is this case study to your community? Are there other more relevant examples of possible civil rights violations in your community related to 9/11? Does your church have experience dealing with civil liberties and civil rights? If so, what are lessons for the current situation? If not, under what conditions might your church or some members be mobilized? Does this group want to take any actions or make recommendations to church leaders?

V. Putting civil rights questions into a broader context (7-8 minutes)

Many Unitarian Universalists lead very privileged lives. Often times, our racial-ethnic identity or our social or economic status, our gender, or where we live, protects us from feeling many of the daily indignities and threats that people with less privilege do. Our experience colors our perception of which rights are important, what kind of trade-offs we are willing for our government to make in the name of security, and perhaps, whether we think there is something to work on here. As we assess what the long-term significance of 9/11 will be and whether anything has changed as a result of those attacks, we're going to take a few minutes to step into the shoes of people who aren't the demographically "average" Unitarian Universalist and see the situation through their eyes.

Invite the group to close their eyes and relax, to be in a meditative mode. They are going to hear a short excerpt from an Amnesty International Report on the U.S. in between two women's voices, describing their lives in the U.S. (Invite 3 participants to dramatically read the following material:

"I am a little frustrated with the mainstreaming and sudden, popular interest in public safety, in the sense of vulnerability. That is really a middle class phenomenon. To suddenly have a call for safety is a slap in the face. I have been terrorized for years. Two days after September 11, a 14-year-old kid got shot and killed on his bike. My partner is coming home, is he going to get shot? This stuff doesn't stop for us and it makes me angry." Kai Lumumba Barrow

2 paragraphs from Chapter 1 of Amnesty International's 1998 report "USA: Rights for All," pp. 1-2. (Text on website.)

Excerpt from the section of the essay where UU minister Parisa Parsa describes what life was like when she moved with her family from Iran to the U.S. and more recent encounters in UU congregations. (Text on website.)

[Tip: Leave time for a few moments of silence between each statement. If there is time, you can invite some discussion, otherwise just let it soak in.]

VI. Evaluation & Closing meditation/blessing (12 minutes)

- A. Thank everyone for coming.** Remind people when the next session is. Distribute readings ("Creating A Whole Identity," "The Algebra of Infinite Justice," "Sharing the Burden & Possibilities of Crisis," and Ch. 7 & 8 of the Amnesty International report. See website.) Reading more than one essay is optional. Next session, people will work in small groups according to the essay they read, so as a facilitator, ensure a fairly even distribution of who will read which essay.
- B.** In a large group, ask everyone to say in one sentence a highlight or learning she/he had as a result of the time together and how she/he is feeling.
- C.** Select one: Reading #456, 464, 683, 694, 695, 713 (from the UUA Hymnal).
- D.** Extinguish the chalice.

Session Four: The U.S. Role Abroad

I. Introduction and welcome (5 minutes)

A. Welcome participants and review goals for this session. Modify with group, if necessary.

In this last session, we will explore how the world views the U.S. – in general, and in light of the events of 9/11 using some provocative essays. This could be an entire curriculum in itself. If people are interested, facilitators could plan more sessions examining this in depth. The purpose will be to open up the question of what do we in the U.S., through our government, “owe” the rest of the world (if anything)? What kind of international relationships and foreign policies do we want? Have our perceptions of this changed since 9/11? The session will conclude with evaluating possible action steps and the impact of this curriculum on participants.

Session #4 goals:

1. To learn how some people in other countries view life in the U.S. and the U.S. government – knowing that these perspectives are controversial and that all viewpoints are not represented.
2. To discuss what kinds of international relationships and policies we want our government to have. Have they or do they need to change since 9/11?
3. To evaluate what we have learned from the Vision & Values dialogues with an eye to determining whether this has implications for our lives or our church.

B. Light the chalice and offer a reading. **Selections to consider are: segment from Maya Angelou’s “On the Pulse of Morning”, Cesar Chavez’s “Prayer of the Farm Workers’ Struggle” or Thomas Mikelson’s “Wake, Now, My Senses.”**

II. Warm-up and community building (20 minutes)

A. Invite a quick go-round with everyone sharing how she/he is feeling at the beginning of this session. Is anyone coming into it with burning questions or ideas?

B. Art project. Before class, set up a table with art supplies – crayons, markers, pencils, glue, scissors, construction paper, magazines that can be cut up, etc. Give everyone a piece of paper. Ask everyone to think about the essay she/he read as homework. What kind of image of the U.S. does this portray? Can participants depict how the author sees life in the U.S. or U.S. policies? Encourage people to be visually graphic and powerful with a drawing, collage – any form is fine. Encourage them to do it quickly -- try not to belabor it.

III. Small group discussions (20-25 minutes)

Have people convene in small groups according to the essay they read. (You may want to have one small group for Amnesty Chapter 7 and another for Chapter 8.) Suggest that participants briefly show their picture in their small group and explain their impression of how the author depicted the U.S. or U.S. policies. Then suggest they discuss the following questions:

- Who is the author? What experiences have formed the author’s viewpoint?
- If a U.S. journalist asked the author “Why do “they” hate us?” what would the author say? Who would the author presume is “they” in that question?
- Does the author make any recommendations for how people or the U.S. government should change?
- Do you find anything enlightening or surprising in the reading?

- Does the author believe anything is different in the world since 9/11 or should be different in terms of U.S. policies or how people in the U.S. live their lives? Does the author believe any other changes are necessary (by other governments, institutions, people, etc.)?

Ask the small groups to choose a spokesperson to report back to the large group.

IV. Large group discussion (25-30 minutes)

A. Ask the spokespeople to report on:

- What are the main criticisms raised in the essay they read?
- Did these criticisms exist before 9/11? Does the author have any recommendations about desired changes in government policies, behavior of people in the U.S., institutional change, etc.?
- If the criticisms existed before 9/11, has 9/11 affected the author's thinking about what U.S. policy or actions need to be?
- Does the author make any other important observations?

B. Invite open sharing on:

- Does anyone think any of these criticisms has validity?
- Does anyone have other ideas about how governmental policies, behavior of U.S. citizens, or corporations need to change?
- Are there national or international campaigns/projects/ or social movements promoting healing or transformation that participants find inspiring and hopeful at this time?
- Is there anything you would like to learn more about, study more, or take action on personally or through church related to these issues?

V. Review and synthesis (25 minutes)

Many have drawn parallels between 9/11 and WWII. The 1940s were a time of enormous transformation in the world – a time of genocide, the carnage of war, of the unleashing of humans' ability to destroy the world with a new type of weapon. It was also a time of great promise, when nations came together to express their highest hopes in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, in the founding of international institutions that people felt would bind up the human community and advance freedom and progress (e.g. the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade [GATT]). These dreams were expressed by FDR in a January 1941 speech:

“...We look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms....Freedom of speech and expression...Freedom of every person to worship God in his own way... Freedom from want....Freedom from fear...Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere.” Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Complete text on website.)

This group has spent several weeks pondering the issue of rights, responsibilities, freedom, and dreams for the future in the context of a great tragedy. Many of the institutions birthed in the 1940s – from the UN, to the World Bank and IMF, and the World Trade Organization that now administers the GATT – are under attack, from a variety of critics. Is it time for new institutions, new policies, new personal behaviors... or renewed commitments to existing institutions and existing principles that guide our lives and country....or something else?

A. Invite people to take time for personal reflection upon the following sets of questions. Give people 10-12 minutes to think about these questions on their own. *[Tip: Make handouts with these questions on them. If you want some kind of written evaluation, some of these questions might be appropriate for getting deeper feedback.]*

- Child/children in your personal lives: What messages do they need to hear about what it means to be an “American”? What role can you play in modeling for them the values you want them to embody? What is one concrete thing you can do in the next month to model this? What is one concrete thing you can do in the next 12 months?
- Children at church: What messages do they need to hear about what it means to be an “American” and a UU? Are they getting these messages and lessons through RE or other means at church? If not, what might need to change? Do you have energy to help make this change?
- Civil liberties/civil rights: How would you rate your knowledge of conditions in your community? In the nation? How would you rate your congregation’s general knowledge of civil rights conditions in your community? How would you describe your congregation’s willingness and ability to address any problems related to civil rights or civil liberties? Is this an area where you feel personally motivated to do something individually or collectively through your church or another organization? If so, what concretely do you want to do? What kind of support would you like from individuals in this group or church?
- Healing and transformation. Has this curriculum surfaced or solidified any fears, dreams, discontent, hopes, prejudices? How might you move forward in addressing them? Is there some way individuals in the group or your church might support you? 9/11 was yet another reminder that we don’t live forever and that life is precious. Is there someone in your life that you need to say something to? Where do you need to express greater courage or compassion? How might you take a step forward in more boldly and joyfully living out your values and principles at this time? What is one concrete goal you can set for yourself in the next month and next 12 months concerning living your values? What might get in the way of you accomplishing this goal? How can you overcome that?

B. Paired sharing. Invite people to find a partner they do not know well. Give them 5 minutes each way to discuss their feelings around one set of questions (children in their lives; children at church; civil rights; healing and transformation). The partner just listens intently, affirmatively. Partner does not ask questions or comment on what she/he is hearing. Facilitator probably will want to suggest that all comments are treated as confidential. Facilitator will signal when it is time to switch.

VI. Closing and evaluation (15-20 minutes)

A. Gather in the large group for closing circle. Invite people to reflect on:

- a highlight of the dialogues
- a commitment they are making to themselves
- an action or next step they will take (if different from commitment)
- any support they would like from the group to help them move forward personally.
- a hope they have for their church

B. Finish with a poem, reading, or prayer. You may want to use one of the selections suggested for the opening.