

11days OF GLOBAL UNITY

A Season of Interfaith Celebration

Suggestions for Sunday Youth Activities

Background to 11 Days of Global Unity: A Season of Interfaith Celebration

From September 11 (Unity World Day of Prayer) to September 21 (UN International Day of Peace), the Association of Unity Churches International and Unity Village are collaborating with the Association for Global New Thought in focusing on peace and global unity. September 11-21 is an annual promotion of peace, justice and environmental stewardship that communities and organizations take part in around the world. It culminates on September 21st, the U.N. International Day of Peace.

In 2004 We, The World (www.WeTheWorld.org) launched 11 Days of Global Unity as a breakthrough platform for linking local awareness and action campaigns into an inspiring international movement for peace, sustainability and transformation.

Supporters of the launch included Nobel Peace Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu and 11 Days Honorary Co-Chairs Jane Goodall, Deepak Chopra, Irene Khan (Secretary General of Amnesty International), Marianne Williamson, John McConnell (the original Founder of Earth Day) , Hazel Henderson, Ervin Laszlo, Jonathan Granoff, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Robert Thurman, Sally Fisher, Riane Eisler, Lynne Twist, Paul Winter, Nina Meyerhof, and New York City Councilman Alan J. Gerson.

11 Days now annually includes more than 700 concerts, festivals, webcasts, and many other activities, in over 60 countries around the world. By combining artistic presentations, inspiration, consciousness-raising and taking action, 11 Days embodies our strategy of Inspire, Inform and Involve for moving humanity off the path of catastrophe and towards creating a world that works for all.

The U.N. International Day of Peace was started in 1981 as a day to announce and celebrate ceasefires in conflict areas around the world. It began as a moveable date taking place on the opening day of each new Session of the U.N. General Assembly in September. Starting in 2001 the UN decided to permanently fix the International Day of Peace on September 21st.

One of Unity's basic principles tells us that our thoughts and feelings create our world and by having so many people focusing on the same ideas of unity, we are participating in an event that can help to shift the consciousness of our planet.

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In order to have our youth participate in this world wide interfaith movement on unity, your church may choose to use these ideas for Sunday activities on September 7, 14 and 21. These lessons are designed to help align our thoughts, feelings and actions with global unity. For more information and resources visit www.11daysofunity.org. These three lessons are based on the five Unity principles (Adapted for Children and Teens) and the themes for the three Sundays are: **Pray** for Peace, **Play** for Peace and the **Way** of Peace.

1. God is all good and active in everything everywhere. (Global unity)
2. I am naturally good because God's divinity is in me and in everyone. (Everyone is part of God's good)
3. I create my experience by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe. (My thoughts and feelings create my world)
4. Through affirmative prayer and meditation, I connect with God and bring out the good in my life. (Connection through the power of prayer)
5. I do and give my best by living the Truth I know. I make a difference. (Taking action)

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SEPTEMBER 7

Week 1: PRAY FOR PEACE

Purpose: Why pray together for peace?

Unity Principle: Through prayer and meditation, all people seek peace.

Scripture: John 14:27 (NRSV) “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.

Circle Time

Opening Prayer: Dear God, thank you for this day and for the peace that lives within us. As we turn to the love in our hearts, we find the peace that is always there. Amen.

Love Offering: Divine love through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give and all that I receive.

Song: Our Thoughts Are Prayers by Lucille Olson, *Unite with Me in Song* CD, #19.
I love myself so much; From Rickie Byars Beckwith, *Blessed Always Agape Chant Anthology* CD

Class or Whole Group

Sharing the following story can illustrate the power of one person to make a difference. .
(For information on the phenomenon known as the “hundredth monkey principle”, visit www.worldtrans.org/pos/monkey.html.)

Story: A Tale for All Seasons
By Kurt Kauter, *New Fables*

This story can be found at www.storybin.com/sponsor/sponsor141.shtml.

“Tell me the weight of a snowflake,” a coalmouse asked a wild dove.

“Nothing more than nothing,” was the answer.

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“In that case, I must tell you a marvelous story,” the coalmouse said, “I sat on the branch of a fir, close to its trunk, when it began to snow, not heavily, not in a raging blizzard, no, just like a dream, without any violence. Since I didn’t have anything better to do, I counted snowflakes settling on the twigs and needles of my branch. Their number was exactly 3,741,952. When the next snowflake dropped onto the branch – nothing more than nothing, as you say, the branch broke off.”

Having said that, the coalmouse ran away.

The dove, since Noah’s time an authority on the matter, thought about the story for a while and finally said to herself: “Perhaps there is only one person’s voice lacking for peace to come about in the world.”

During the next three weeks, we will be looking at how we can be the one – through interfaith prayer, cooperative games and loving action as pathways to peace.

Discussion:

- What did the coalmouse and wild dove talk about?
- What does the story tell us about the importance of one voice? One action?
- What is the power of prayer?
- How can many people praying make a difference for peace?
- How does prayer help our thoughts and actions?

Option For Uniteens and YOU

Everything is interdependent.

Everything is interconnected.

So my interest is linked to everyone’s interests.

Our survival and future are linked.

Therefore the destruction of your so-called enemy

Is actually the destruction of your self.

Dalai Lama

Discussion

- What is this statement telling us?
- Who is your so-called enemy?
- How does a hurricane like Katrina affect you when you are many miles away?
- How does something that happens at school like a fight affect everyone?
- How can prayer make a difference for you? For the entire world?

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Heart Meditation: Have the children and teens find a quiet spot to sit and close your eyes. Say: I Invite you to place your hand on your heart and feel your breath as it moves into the heart space. Imagine breathing right into your heart. As you continue breathing, imagine someone or something you deeply love – it could be your grandparent, parent, best friend or pet. As you think of the person or pet, feel the love and appreciation you have for them and let it begin to grow in your heart. Continue breathing into the heart and let it grow and fill your body. Feel the love move down your arms to your hands, down your body, through your legs to your feet and up through the neck to your head. Your whole body is filled with appreciation and love. Now send that love to your family and friends and to people in other countries. Imagine the whole planet earth surrounded with our love and blessing. This is how we can have peace on earth. Our hearts hold the key. And in the name of the love that we are, we give thanks. AMEN.

Creative Experience

Set up stations in your youth department that the children can rotate through in order for them to experience different types of prayer. Here are some suggestions to choose from:

Buddhist: Creating Prayer Flags: Using different colored fabric in one-yard lengths, cut strips 3” wide. Using permanent markers, have children write their prayer for peace on the cloth. Outside, find a place to string a rope and tie the end of their flag on the rope.

Christian: Finger Labyrinth (see attached pattern from Celebrating My God Self, Book 1) - Copy the pattern for each child, cut yarn lengths for children to glue onto pattern.

Using attached hand out, copy the Prayer of Faith onto cardstock, and cut it into strips. Hide the strips around the room, and after listening to Myrtle Fillmore reading the Prayer of Faith, from the CD entitled “The Fillmore Prayers” (available from Unity Village Bookstore) have the children find and assemble the lines from the prayer.

Hinduism: By visiting www.himalayanacademy.com/audio/chants, you can have the children listen to the Hindu peace chant on line while making prayer beads (see attached instructions – thanks to Francie Potter)

Islam: Invite the children to participate in Dances of Universal Peace (Sufi dancing). Audio files can be found at www.dancesofuniversalpeace.org/na. For creative expression, the children can also weave prayer mats.

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Making the paper loom

1. With a ruler and pencil measure a 2-inch border on both ends of a 12" x 18" sheet of colored construction paper.
2. Fold the paper in half so that you can see the pencil marks.
3. Measure and cut 1/2-inch lines from the fold to the pencil marks.
4. Cut out every other line to the edge of the 2-inch border.

Weaving into the paper loom

1. Using contrasting colors, cut a variety of 12-inch strips (to weave into the paper loom). For variety cut some narrow and some medium widths. For additional variety, cut some curved, pointed, or torn strips.
2. Weave the strips into the loom. Row 1 will be *under one, over one*. Row 2 will reverse and be *over one, under one*. Repeat rows 1 and 2 until the loom is full. When finished weaving, carefully glue every other strip edge to the edge of the loom (on both sides).

Judaism: Western Wall (Wailing Wall) Create a wall by drawing brick shapes on cardboard. Use post it notes to attach prayers to the wall.

Native American: Using either of the following patterns, have the children create drums or a rattle in order to participate in a native drumming circle. To see and hear a drum circle in process, you can visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=_f3zipjZLvQ&eurl=http://technorati.com/videos/youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D_f3zipjZLvQ

Drum



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- Mod Podge
- Craft tissue
- Acrylic paint, your choice of colors

- Wood beads, 2
- Paintbrush
- Scissors
- Ruler

- Round paper maché box, 3-inch
- Tear or cut one 6-inch square and two 12-inch x 3-inch strips from tissue paper.
- Brush the tissue strips with Mod Podge. Roll and twist each strip into a rope. Let dry.
- Remove the lid from the box. Use Paper Mod Podge to apply the 6-inch square of tissue paper to the top of the lid only; the tissue paper should hang down around the sides as shown. Tear strips of colored and ivory tissue paper and apply to the sides of the box with Paper Mod Podge. Let dry.
- Paint designs on the lid and sides of the box as shown. Let dry.
- Place the lid on the box. Wrap one tissue paper rope around the lid and twist the ends together. Dab the ends with some Mod Podge.
- Dip the ends of the remaining paper rope in Mod Podge then insert each end into a bead. Cut the rope in half to make two drumsticks.

Drum

empty oatmeal box with cover
yarn
pen
2 pencils
2 spools
construction paper
crayons

Before beginning, you can decorate the oatmeal box with construction paper and/or crayons for a colorful effect.

Place the cover on the box. Use a pen to make a hole in the center of the cover and in the center of the bottom of the box. Through these holes, pull a piece of yarn long enough to hang around child's neck and down to their waist. For the drumsticks, place the spools at the ends of the pencils, secure with glue if necessary.

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Rattle

Supplies needed:

- A y-shaped twig
- Yarn
- Scissors
- Tape
- Feathers, beads, buttons, washers, spools, and/or shells with holes in them.

Wind yarn around a y-shaped twig, covering it entirely. Start and end the winding with knots (or tape, if the children cannot make knots). Along the way, wind in a few decorative objects, like feathers or beads. Tie a short piece of yarn to one arm of the "y." Thread a few beads, washers, spools, or other small objects onto the yarn. Tie the other end of the yarn onto the other arm of the twig.

Closing

Affirmation: I find peace within my heart.

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SEPTEMBER 14

Week 2: PLAY FOR PEACE

Purpose: Week 2 focuses on providing activities designed to create feelings of cooperation and unity.

Unity Principle: I create my experience by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Scripture: Ps. 133:1 (NRSV) “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred (family) live together in unity!”

Circle Time

Opening Prayer: Dear God, thank you for this day and for our friends. Thank you for the love among us all. Amen.

Love Offering: Divine love through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give and all that I receive.

Song: We are One in the Spirit. Words are available at www.welcomehome.org/rainbow/songs/palu/weareon.html

Class or Whole Group

Story: *The Zax* by Dr. Seuss

After reading the story, *The Zax* by Dr. Seuss, ask the following questions:

- What happened in this story?
- How did the two characters in the story act toward each other when they found themselves in each other’s way?
- When have you experienced this with another person – friends at school? Members of your family?
- How might the story have been different if they had cooperated with one another?
- How does it feel to be the one who “gives the right of way” instead of needing to be right?

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- What can we learn from this story about how to get along in our families? In our schools? Between countries?

Meditation – Feel the Peace

Have the children and teens find a quiet place to sit for a time of meditation. Invite them to relax and begin paying attention to their breathing. Say: Pay close attention and feel the air you are breathing as it moves in and out. Now imagine that the air you are breathing is peace. Breathe in the peace and let it touch your heart and flow through your body to your arms and hands and to your legs and feet. Breathe in peace, breathe out peace. With each breath, you are helping the world to become more and more peaceful. Now relax and staying in this peaceful place, when you are ready, return your attention to this room and open your eyes.

Creative Expression:

Today, we want to experience cooperation by playing some games where we need to work together with one another in order to reach the goal.

Set up stations, and choose age appropriate cooperative games. Here are some possible suggestions to choose from:

Cooperative Musical Chairs – This is played the same way as the traditional musical chairs, except when the music stops, everyone still has to fit onto the remaining chairs. It gets very interesting when you get down to one!

Family Square - Using masking tape, create a one-foot square on the floor. The entire group has to fit inside the square and hold for 5 seconds without falling. How did it feel to be a part of the group? What did they have to do in order to be successful?

Hug Tag – To play Hug Tag, you need to designate a “huggit”. As music plays, participants move around the room and hug each other, but can only hug for 2 seconds and then must move on to someone else. They are safe only when being hugged. But as long as the music plays, you must keep moving and can’t just stay in one long hug. The “huggit” roams through the group waiting for the music to stop. When it stops, everyone must quickly find someone to hug. Anyone not hugging someone is liable to be hugged by the “huggit”. Then *that* person becomes the huggit and the game continues. No one is ever “out”. Our hearts open the longer we play this game.

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Lap Game – (for teens) Have students sit in a circle with no empty chairs. As you read each statement, if they agree, they move one seat to the right. If they disagree with the statement, they remain in their seat and end up with someone on their lap! As this game progresses, it is not unusual to have several people on your lap.

If you:

Had cereal for breakfast this morning

Didn't get enough sleep last night

Flossed today

Like eating ice cream

Got a speeding ticket in the last year

Like classical music

Have a pierced body part

Play a musical instrument

Have a pet

Like the Beatles

Color your hair

Have a part time job

Are a vegetarian

Meditate in the morning

Like watching movies

Own an IPOD

Like pizza

Have been to Unity village

Like baths better than showers

Have black socks on

Have a Facebook account

Support the Green Party

Have a tattoo

Like Jackie Chan movies

Believe that God is within you

Lap Sit - Have group form a circle and stand shoulder to shoulder. Each person turns to the right and moves closer to the center so that they are in a very tight circle. Now carefully, each one sits on the lap of the person behind them. Point out that each person in the group is an integral part of our human chair, both supporting and being supported by every member.

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Pattern Ball - You will need a dozen or so bean bags for this activity. Other options are “koosh balls” (available at dollar stores) or “hacky sacks”. You want any kind of small ball that is easy to throw and easy to catch. Ask students not to hurl it or throw it hard, but to gently toss it with the goal in mind that the person on the other end will catch it.

Form a circle and include yourself. Explain that the object is to toss the bean bag around the circle, person to person until everyone has had a turn throwing and catching once. This will create a pattern to be repeated. Each person must remember who threw the ball to them and who they threw it to. Stress that is all they will have to remember.

The first time around, have each person hold one hand up in the air until they have been thrown the beanbag. When they have caught it once, they bring their hand down. (Their hand is raised just to signal that they have not yet had the bean bag thrown to them.) Each person chooses to throw the bean bag only to someone whose hand is still in the air. That way, no one gets the ball twice in the pattern.

When the last person receives the ball, they throw it to you, thus completing the pattern. Now try it again with all hands down, to see if each one can remember who threw it to them and who they threw it to, and complete the pattern once more. After the second time through, now the fun begins. Start again and this time, after you throw the first bean bag and begin the pattern, now throw a second one. Once it gets into play, add another. Continue until you have 10 to 12 beanbags in play at once. The result is an “ordered chaos” that is hilarious to create.

People Machine - The group sits in a circle, have one person go the center and make a repetitive movement and sound. The next person connects in some way, adding their unique movement and sound. One by one, all members of the group join the “people machine”. Every person in the group has his or her unique contribution to share.

Untying Knots - Begin by having students experience being “tied up in knots”. Everyone stands in a circle shoulder to shoulder. Extend your left hand to the middle of the circle and take someone’s hand who is not standing next to you. Do the same thing with the right, making sure not to grab the hand of the person whose hand you are already holding or either person beside you. Now, untie the knot without letting go of anyone’s hands.

Web of Connection – Using a ball of yarn, have students sit in a circle. Throw the ball of yarn to one student while holding onto the end of the yarn. (This way, you stay connected as the yarn is thrown). When it is caught, tell that student one positive thing that you love about them. Have them hold onto the yarn that has unraveled and throw the

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ball to someone else, telling that person something positive they love about them. One by one, each person catches the yarn, receives a positive affirmation and then throws it to someone who has not caught the yarn yet until everyone has had a turn. In this way, you create a web. When everyone has had a turn, the last person throws it back to you, completing the web. We are all part of the web of life and connected.

Wind in the Willows – (for teens and pre-teens only) Have one person stand in the middle of the circle and everyone else stand closely around, shoulder to shoulder. The person in the middle folds their arms and keeping their body rigid (very important), falls slowly in any direction. The people in the circle catch this person and gently move them around and across the circle. It is important that the person in the middle feel very safe. They must be able to trust the circle. Encourage everyone to take a turn in the center but honor the right to pass.

Discussion: How did it feel to work together cooperatively?
How can these activities show us how to have harmony in our families and our world?

Closing

Affirmation: I am one with God and one with all of life.

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SEPTEMBER 21

Week 3: WAY OF PEACE

Purpose: What can we do to recognize our oneness with our planet and help heal our world?

Unity Principle: I do and give my best by living the Truth I know. I make a difference.

Scripture: Matt. 5:9 (KJV) “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.”

Circle Time

Opening Prayer: Dear God, make me an instrument of your peace. Thank You for the opportunity to make the difference in our world. AMEN

Love Offering: Divine love through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give and all that I receive.

Song: Peace Like a River, traditional, *Unite With Me in Song* CD, #4 (for words, Google title)

Class or Whole Group

Discussion: (give everyone a copy of prayer)
“Make me an Instrument of your peace” prayer (Available at www.prayerguide.org.uk/stfrancis.htm)

- How can you be an instrument of peace according to the poem?
- What are some specific ways you can do this?
- What is the second part of the prayer telling us?
- How does the world benefit if I try to understand you before I try to explain myself?
- What are some words we could use when trying to understand?
- How do you personally benefit if you forgive others even if they are unwilling to forgive you?

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Today is the United Nations International Day of Peace. In honor of this worldwide day of peace, let us examine how we can be an instrument of peace and contribute to global unity through our actions. One common teaching in the many different faith traditions is the golden rule.

You can download resources for the Golden Rule in all faith traditions by visiting http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/meditation_workshop_index.php

You can also find the “Green Golden Rules” at <http://www.faith-commongood.net/rule/index.asp>

After reading different versions of the Golden Rule, ask the following questions:

- What is the message of the Golden Rule?
- Why do you think we find this message in all of the faith traditions?
- Think of a time when you treated someone in the spirit of the Golden Rule.
- Who was involved? What did you do? How did it feel?
- What could things be like if everyone behaved according to the Golden Rule?
- How could the Golden Rule bring peace in our families?
- In our communities? Between countries?

Peace Symbol - The Peace Symbol turned 50 this year! It was introduced on April 4, 1958 at a British ban the bomb event. Using the peace symbol pattern, have the children write their favorite version of the golden rule around the circle and decorate (with glitter, tissue paper, etc.)

By following the golden rule, we become peacemakers. One way to do that is by participating in Random Acts of Kindness. The book, *Because Brian Hugged His Mother*, written by David Rice, illustrates how a random act of kindness can make a difference.

Loving Kindness Meditation

Have the children and teens find a quiet spot to sit and invite them to close their eyes and participate in a loving kindness meditation. Say: we can practice the Golden Rule by blessing others in our meditation time. Just as Brian’s hug made a big difference in many people’s lives, our time of blessing can also make a difference. Imagine the people in your life, your parents, your family members, your grandparents, your relatives - and say silently to them in your mind, “May you be happy, may you be free, may you be at peace.” Now imagine your friends at school, your teachers, your classmates and in your mind, silently say, “May you be happy, may you be free, may you be at peace.” In your mind, see all of your neighbors and silently say, “May you be happy, may you be free,

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may you be at peace.” Now for all people in the world, silently say, “May you be happy, may you be free, may you be at peace.” May all beings be at peace.

Creative Expression

Blessing Coupons - Using the “blessing coupons” attached, invite the children to brainstorm ways they can bless their families with their actions following the golden rule. Have them fill in their coupons and decorate to give out to their families.

What does Peace look like? Using various media – paints, markers, crayons, construction paper, glue, glitter, modeling clay, etc. have the children and teens create an illustration of what peace looks like to them. Invite them to share their peace creations with the group.

Anonymous Shoulder Massage - Divide the group in half. Group A sits on chairs facing inward in a circle with their eyes closed. Each member of Group B silently moves behind a member of Group A and lovingly gives a shoulder massage. Time about 5 minutes, then instruct Group A to keep their eyes closed while Group B returns to where they were originally standing. Have the two groups switch and repeat. No one knows who gave them this delightful treat. How did it feel to give a gift anonymously?

Sidewalk of Peace - As a random act of kindness to the church members, using sidewalk chalk, have the children create a “Sidewalk of Peace” filling the sidewalk with words of love, blessing and peace.

Random Acts of Kindness - Attached is a list of ideas for Random Acts of Kindness for teens. Create Random Acts of Kindness cards to give out to the teens to leave behind when they perform an anonymous act of kindness. On the front of the card, it reads “YOU HAVE JUST BEEN HIT BY A RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS.” On the back, it reads, “Pay it forward”.

Closing

Affirmation: I am a peacemaker.