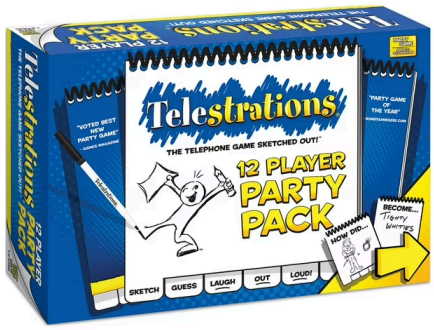
Games to Build Community



By Kathy E. Smith, CRE, 2022

Telestrations

Theme Angle

To explore the importance of good communication and the importance of speaking directly and honestly with each other.

UU Teachings:

- We value the worth and dignity of every person.
- We value justice, equity, and compassion in human relationships. Clear communication plays a vital role in this.
- Miscommunication is one source of conflict. One way to resolve conflict is to check and see that everyone is using the same language (literally and metaphorically).

Materials needed:

Name tag inserts and holders
Markers/crayons
Chalice/candle
Chimes
Joys and Sorrows bowl
Game: Telestrations

Set-up:

Have some chairs around one table for making name tags and posters. On the other side of the room, have the chalice and joys & concerns bowl in the center with chairs in a circle around it. Keep in mind to leave space between chairs. Set out mask-making supplies and Legos.

Arrival Time

The Leader sits by the door to greet the children (and parents) as they arrive. Ask each young person how they are feeling today and acknowledge this.

Have children go to one of the tables with the Assistant. Ask parents of younger children to sign in their child(ren) on the sheet on the table by the door. Older children (grades 3-5) can sign in themselves. Let parents know they can wait in room 6 and chat with other parents until they pick up their child(ren) at 12p.

The Assistant greets children as they sit at a table and gives them a name tag insert. Ask them to write their name in a dark color (or write for them if need be). Invite them to draw 2 things they like on it, and then place it in the name tag holder. If they wish to put a sticker on their name tag holder to show consent for touching/hugs, let them do so.

As the children finish their name tags, invite them to sit in a circle on the floor or in a chair around the chalice table.

When everyone is seated, ring the chime. Invite them to listen carefully to the sound and when it ends.

Welcome!

Welcome everyone to “Heads, Hearts, and Hands”. Introduce yourselves. Let the group know we’ll have some fun and get to know each other better.
Take attendance. Invite the young people to help with lighting the chalice, extinguishing the chalice, turning off/on the lights, and ringing the chimes as you go through the morning.

Check-in

Tell us your name, your pronouns (if you would like to share them), and answer our check-in question.

“What are some word pairs that are easy to confuse with each other?” Examples: pair/pare/pear, too/two/to, hare/hear, poll/pole.

Centering

Unitarian Universalists hold a high value on accepting one another and honoring other people’s point of views. Oftentimes, we misunderstand what the other person is saying. This could be because of words that sound the same but have different meanings. Or perhaps it could be that a person has an accent that is unfamiliar, or speaks a totally different language.
What other ways make communication hard? (Invite responses)
Tell us about a time when you misunderstood someone or a time when they misunderstood you. (Invite responses)

When conversation dwindles, let the group know that today they’ll play a game about communication that combines the games of telephone and pictionary.

Light It!

Children can sit or stand in the circle. Note that the group often likes to turn off the lights to see the chalice better, and we ask everyone if it’s okay to do so first. There are also strings of lights to plug in so that the room isn’t completely dark. As Unitarian Universalists, we light a flaming chalice as a way to center ourselves when we gather. Here in Faith Formation, we light our chalice with our own special words and motions:

We light this chalice (invite someone to turn on the candle or pretend to strike a match)

To celebrate Unitarian (make a U with one hand) Universalism (make a U with the other hand)

With open minds (touch hands to head, then open outward)

With loving hearts (cross hands over heart)

With helping hands (hold hands in front, palms up)

Together we care for our planet Earth (hold hands as if holding a large ball)

And for each other. (hold hands towards another person, or hold the person's hand)

(Review the covenant and ask for any additions)

Joys and Sorrows

Explain to the children that we take time to share our joys and sorrows when we are together. We want to know all the happy and sad things that are happening to them.

Pass the bowl around the circle and invite each child to take a stone. Explain that we'll take turns and go around the circle. When it's your turn, say your name, and one thing you are sad or happy about today. Then put your stone into the bowl. If you don't want to share, just say "pass" and put your stone in the bowl. When everyone has gone, put in a stone and say, "This is for the joys and sorrows that were not spoken, but are in our hearts."

Explore It!

Game – *Telestration*

Invite the group to gather around a table. If the group is large, slide the tables together to make a larger circle. Up to 12 people can play.

Video explanation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N7QL6np5KQ

Playing the Game

Setup:

1. Place card box, sand timer, clean-up cloths & die in the center of the group.
2. Decide as a group which cards everyone will be using, "THIS SIDE" or "THAT SIDE".
3. Each player selects a sketch book, one marker & one card.
4. Write your name in the front of your sketch book and remember the color of your coil.
5. Select a player to roll the die to start the round. Match the number rolled to the word on your card. Secretly write it in your book. Don't say it loud or show it to anyone! Note: If there is a blank space on your card that matches the number rolled, you get to make up any word(s) you want. If you see an underlined category, such as "TV SHOW", you get to make up any word(_) in that category.



If you see me on the bottom of your card you get to pick any word you want from the card!

6. How many players are there? If an even number, Turn to 'SKETCH IT" page 1. If an odd number, Turn to "SKETCH IT" page 1 and then…PASS BOOK TO PLAYER ON LEFT!

Sketching

7. Everyone should now be on "SKETCH IT" page 1.
8. Flip the timer. You have 60 seconds to secretly draw the word. When time's up, take a couple seconds to finish up. Don't leave it blank! Turn to page 2 to hide your sketch & pass an open book to the player on your left.
9. Now everyone should be on "GUESS IT" page 2.
10. Flip back to the previous page & take a few seconds to secretly look at the sketch. Then return to page 2 to write your guess. No letters or numbers allowed! Flip forward to the next page & pass the open book to the player on your left.
11. Flip the 60 second timer... everyone continues to sketch, pass & guess until players get their own book back. Note the color of your sketchbook coil to ensure it is your book.

The Big Reveal

12. Now that everyone has their own book back, it's time for the Big Reveal! Take turns flipping through & sharing the SKETCHIN & GUESSIN' outcomes in your book!

Play one round and then invite conversation using these questions:

- Have you ever had a situation when you told a friend something, then they tell someone, and then they tell someone, and by the time it gets back to you, the story is different? How did that make you feel? Were you able to trust that friend again?
- What can happen when people don't talk directly with those they are in conflict with?
- What can happen when you do talk directly?
- How can you communicate when you might have a good reason to not talk to someone directly? (write a letter, talk to a trusted adult, etc.)

If time allows, play another round of the game.

Closing Circle

Have the group help clean up the game. For the last 5 minutes: Ring the chime to gather in a circle. If you have a snack, pass it out. Invite them to sit/stand in a circle. Share thoughts to the following questions:

- **Why should we care about this here at church?**
- **Give a thumbs up or down to show how you're feeling about our time together.**

If you wish to hold hands, you can. Go around the circle and invite each child to share what they liked about their time in Heads, Hearts, and Hands. To make this go faster, you can suggest hand signals: thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs sideways.

Extinguish the chalice with these words posted on the bulletin board:

Let's take our chalice light with us,
to guide us through the week,
and bring it back to shine again
for all of us who seek.

Thank each child for sharing and being here today. Sing *This Little Light of Mine.*

Leader Notes - What worked well? What could be better?

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