

Family Worship Guide On Renewal

In addition to engaging our monthly theme of Renewal, this worship helps you assemble the core pieces of your chalice home through ritual. So start with a blank space then place each element in the Chalice Home using the guidance below. As always, treat the script as inspiration not rigid instructions. Adapt and enhance as best fits your family!

A Personal Story to Start Things Off

Instead of jumping right into family worship and formal ritual, we suggest that parents begin by telling a personal story related to the monthly theme. This helps put the worship into context and reminds your children that this family worship is connected to the wider theme exploration that your entire church is doing this month. Keep it simple. Just start out by explaining that “Everyone from our church is talking about the idea of renewal this month” and then transition by saying something like, “When I think of renewal, I remember a time when...” You can invite others to share a bit about what renewal means to them, or you can simply transition into the worship service.

Centering Sound

Move from “regular time” to “sacred time” by sounding your bell, chimes, ringing bowl or ringing glass.

Optional words to go with your centering sound:

“To this quiet place of beauty, we come from busy things
Pausing for a moment for the thoughts that quiet brings.”

Blessing and Building Ritual

Use this blessing to name and structure the steps of building your chalice home. Consider dividing up each line of the blessing so each family member has a chance to read and add an item to the space.

We begin with a breath of gratitude, for each other, for the Spirit of Life and Love that surrounds and sustains us and for the many other families who are on this journey with us. (PAUSE AND INVITE FAMILY MEMBERS TO CENTER THEMSELVES WITH A COUPLE OF DEEP BREATHS)

We gaze at this space that will be our Chalice Home. May we fill the space with our tender love for each other.

We place this cloth. May our lives be as textured as the cloth.

We add this bell. May it lead us into sacred space and help us find our center.

We set the chalice and candle in its Chalice Home. May it remind us of the wider UU community of which we are a part.

We include this Giving Bowl. May it connect us to those in need.

We place these rocks and water. May they hold the many joys and sorrows of our lives.

We gaze at this space which is now our Chalice Home. May this space expand with our tender and sacred love for all beings in the world. Blessed be. Amen

Centering Music

We recommend you use easy, interactive and fun songs with your children and youth. Here are two of our favorites. Both speak to the joyful renewal we feel when we sing together as a family:

- Let's Sing Together! - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIPfq4ZDank&t=292s>
- Finger Dance (by Jim Gill) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ic-Qs508Nbo>

Here are a few other options:

- STLT #188 Come Come Whoever You Are - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhDCXX5OUUc&feature=youtu.be>
- Peace Like a River - <https://vimeo.com/415943314>

Chalice Lighting

As we light this chalice,

May its warmth help us feel the love we share for each other.

May its light help us remember all the people that guide us on our way.

May the chalice that holds the candle make us think about our church community that makes room for us and celebrates everyone.

Light your chalice.

The Giving Bowl

Remember that money is not the only way we are generous to others. So in addition to or instead of money, consider writing down on small pieces of paper ways you can support others or special organizations this month. Be sure to bring in the monthly theme by talking about how the organization you are supporting helps to renew the spirits and lives of others.

Ritual words:

“We drop our coins (papers) in and fill the bowl. Serving others makes us whole.”

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Invite each family member to pick up a rock and share something they are thankful for about the past week while dropping the rock into the bowl of water. The aim here is to make room to notice the good things all around us even though times are hard.

After this first round of joys and concerns, have each family member choose another rock and share something or someone they have a concern for - someone or something they are holding in their hearts and prayers. This is a way to bring the struggles of others into our hearts, maybe a grandparent who is in danger of getting sick or hospital workers who are putting their health at risk for the sake of the rest of us or a group of people around the world who are also getting sick from the Covid-19 virus.

And don't forget the rocks love being used in this ritual and they can be pulled out of the water and used as “double rocks” if there are more joys and concerns. :-)

Ritual Words:

“We listen to each other; it is a holy act.

To share our joys and sorrows, with grace it flows on back.”

Celebrating Renewal - The Renewal of Family

Each month we will use our monthly theme to direct us to a symbolic object/token to add to our chalice home. This month we invite you to honor the way our families are sources of renewal.

Reflect: Start by having a family discussion about the things you love to do together as a family. Things that bring you joy and renew your spirits. Family game night. Cooking together. A special trip you took. The time you all went to the shelter to pick out your family dog or cat.

Turn it into a Symbol: Then pick one or two of your favorite ideas/memories and figure out an object that best represents it. The simplest thing is to print out a picture of your family doing that favorite activity together. The advantage of this option is that you right away place your family

into your chalice home. But maybe a picture isn't available. That's ok. Just find an object that symbolizes it. Grab a token/player piece from that Monopoly game you love. Go to the garage and pull out a pair of ski goggles. Open the kitchen drawer and grab a mixing spoon.

Bless Your Object(s):

Serious Version: "Thanks for this family that brings us joy. Thanks for the gift of getting to journey through life together. Thanks for this activity that keeps us connected and reminds us how special each of us are."

Playful Version: "Roses are red. Violets are blue. I am me. Only because of all of you!"

Optional Ritual for a 2nd Worship to Honor Loss

This time of Covid-19 has brought on a lot of loss. There are so many things that once renewed us that we no longer can do. Go to movies. Visit family. Cool off at the water park. Play the sports we love. Our faith tells us that it is important to honor these losses. We need to grieve. Rituals help us do that.

So, in addition to the family renewal ritual above, consider adding this grief ritual to your family worship this month. It may be too much to do this ritual on top of the family renewal ritual above, so consider having two family worship services this month with this ritual at the center of your second one. Use all of the same components that are in this script, simply substitute this ritual for the Celebrating Family Renewal component above.

Reflect: Start by having a family discussion about the things you miss being able to do. Allow space for talking about how that feels and why those things meant so much.

Symbolize the Grief: Pick one of those things and find an object to represent it. Name that it symbolizes not just that particular loss but all the losses you shared. Then take that object and place it into a brown paper grocery bag (or a box of some kind) and place it to the side or underneath your chalice home, to symbolize the loss missing from your life.

Blessing of Loss: Use these words to honor its importance and express the hope of looking forward to a time when it's possible to do that activity again:

"We will miss you while you are away. We look forward to the day we can welcome you back. Until then, may the memory of you hold us in hope."

Reflect: Then turn to a discussion of new things you can do to bring you joy and fun during Covid-19. Remind your family that our faith tells us that bad and sad things are never so strong as to completely shut out all the good and joyful things. So what new activity or adventure might

you family do to fill the void of those activities now unavailable to you? There are plenty of Covid-safe family traditions you can start: reading a book out loud together for a month. Writing letters to loved ones (Who doesn't love the long-lost gift of getting an old-school hand-written letter in the mail!) Or when was the last time you built a blanket fort in the middle of your house!

Turn it into a Symbol: Keep the items related to your new activity on your chalice home, as a reminder to do it and to be able to look back at the end of the year and remember how fun it was to do.

Bless it:

"Roses are red. Violets are blue. Now I'm happy that I have you to do!"

Setting an Intention

As you bring your family worship to a close, pause for a moment to think ahead about the coming weeks and make a renewal-related intention/promise for how you want to act, what you want to remember or how you want to treat others.

Here's the intention/promise statement, for everyone to say. Each person states their intention, one at a time.

"In the coming weeks, I will help renew myself or someone I like/love by"

Extinguishing the Chalice

"We gather the warmth of love,
the light of truth, and the energy of action into our hearts.
As we turn back into the world of do and say,
May we carry it forward into the dawning day.
Go Now in Peace, Amen."

Instructions: Use your hands in a gather/cupping gesture and bring them to your heart. Repeat after the "warmth of love," "the light of truth," and the "energy of action." View Katie's YouTube video demonstrating how to add gesture to these words: <https://youtu.be/GEF4Hdm08oM>