

February 23, 2025

The Practice of Not Leaving Love for Ourselves Out

Theme Angle

We are already halfway through our month of exploring our monthly theme: The Practice of Inclusion. So far, we've looked at people and stories that get left out. Today, we talk about how parts of ourselves sometimes get left out. To explore this, we will get into body positivity as well as the importance of self-love and self-acceptance.

1. Chalice Lighting

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives (hands on heart)

We light this chalice today,

To help us remember to love (make a heart with your hands) every part of ourselves!

2. Wonder Box: mirror

Introduction & Reveal

Does anyone remember what theme we are exploring this month?

Yes, all this month, our church is exploring Inclusion or not leaving things out. So, let's get started and see what clue is in our wonder box today!

It's a mirror!

Question & Wondering

I wonder if anyone here has a mirror in their house?

Where else do we have mirrors?

And I wonder if anyone could tell me what some of the things we might use a mirror for are.

I wonder what a mirror could have to do with our theme of Inclusion. What do you think?

As some of you said, mirrors help us look at things, and this month, we have been looking at things that can get left out. So far, we've looked at people and stories that get left out.

What do you think we look at most with mirrors?

Right, most often, it is ourselves.

Theme Connection & Call to Exploration

Mirrors help us look at things, and this month we have been looking at things that can get left out. So far, we've looked at people and stories that get left out.

Now when it comes to mirrors, most of the time they are used so we can see ourselves.

And today, we are going to explore how parts of ourselves sometimes get left out.

We are going to be taking a good look at ourselves and reminding ourselves of all the things we love about us.
So let's get to it!

3. Story: *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes

Chrysanthemum loves her name, until she starts going to school and the other children make fun of it.

 Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes | Auntie's Bedtime Stories Read Aloud | TOP FAVE

4. Group Discussion

What did you like most about this story? or What was your favorite part of this story?

What surprised you about this story?

Have you ever been teased about something you love about yourself? How did it make you feel?

What lesson do you think the story wants us to remember?

5. Body Practice: Hug Meditation

Leader Note: Soul Matters uses body practices to help kids prepare to move into their bodies, not as a way of centering and calming themselves. The goal is not to have kids go inward but to help them embody the session's theme angle.

Guidance

Let's begin our exploration of not leaving out love for ourselves, a body practice, a hug meditation!

Everyone spread out and sit, stand, or lie down in a comfortable position.

Close your eyes gently and take a deep breath in... and let it out slowly. Let's do that again. Breathe in, hold for a second, and then breathe out slowly.

Now, picture a soft, glowing light surrounding you. This light is warm and full of love, just like a hug. Feel this light fill up your whole body, from your head to your toes. Let it make you feel safe and happy.

Now, let's give ourselves a big hug! Wrap your arms around your body, just like you're hugging yourself. Feel your arms around you, holding you tight. Can you feel the warmth and love in your hug?

As you hold yourself in the hug, say to yourself quietly, "I love you," and feel the love you're sending to yourself. You are special. You are kind. You are important. You are enough, just as you are.

Take another deep breath in... and imagine you are breathing in all the love you've just given yourself. Feel it filling up your heart and making you feel even stronger and calmer.

Now, stay in your hug for a few more moments. If any thoughts pop into your head, that's ok. Just gently remind yourself, "It's ok, I am here for me," and take another deep breath in... and out.

When you're ready, slowly let go of your hug and bring your arms back to your sides. But remember, you can always hug yourself again whenever you need to feel safe, loved, or peaceful.

Before we finish, think of one kind thing you can say to yourself today. Maybe it's, "I'm proud of me," or "I am brave." Let that kindness fill your heart.

When you're ready, gently open your eyes and give yourself a smile. You just gave yourself a hug full of love, and that's something special. Remember, you can always come back to this moment whenever you need a little extra love.

6. Craft: Self Valentine's Day cards

Valentine's Day happened this month. Did any of you give or get Valentine's cards, or do you know someone who got or gave a Valentine's card?

Valentine's cards are one way people show their love, but rarely do we remember to give ourselves Valentine's Day cards as a way to say I Love You to ourselves. So today, even though Valentine's Day has passed, that is exactly what we are going to do!

Directions

Invite kids to think about a Valentine you would give to your best friend and all the nice things they might say about them.

Then, invite them to turn that attention to themselves and think about all the nice things they could say about why they love themselves

Then, make themselves a Valentine's Card with a list of all the things they love about themselves and how proud of themselves they are.

7. Game: The Name Game

If you remember from our story about Chrysanthemum, one of the best ways we can show love to ourselves is by embracing our name! So our next game is the name game.

Directions

Have kids sit in a circle and, one at a time, introduce themselves by saying, "Hi, my name is..."

Then, have the whole group sing the name game song to them. Feel free to get creative with the lyrics and make it more fun by adding silly sounds or gestures!

Example

Sarah: "Sarah, Sarah, bo-bara, bo-na-na-na, fo-fara, fee-fi-mo-mara, Sarah!"

Max: "Max, Max, bo-bax, bo-na-na-na, fo-fax, fee-fi-mo-max, Max!"

8. Chalice Extinguishing

We are Unitarian Universalists (open wide toward each other)

Who put love at the center of our lives (hands on heart)

And as we go out into the world,

Let us remember to help remember to love (make a heart with your hands) ourselves!

Adapted from



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