



Soulful Home

Finding the Sacred in Everyday Spaces

Delight

June 2023

Table of Contents

The Welcome Mat: What Does it Mean to be a Family of Delight?

At the Table: Exploring Delight Through Discussion

From the Mailbox: Love Notes & Special Deliveries of Delight

At Play: Jokes, and Floppy Flying Discs

On the Message Board: “How Delightful!”

At the Bedside: Connecting

On the Porch: Twenty Minutes of Delights

The Extra Mile: “I Choose This Day,” and Time Capsule of Delights

Blessing of Delight

The Welcome Mat

What Does it Mean to be a Family of Delight

I subscribe to the free, email newsletter of a popular news magazine that, identifying me as a maybe-someday paying subscriber, regularly advertises access to the magazine’s full content. Their tagline to entice me into ponying up the money is “Be informed. Be delighted.” This strikes me as such a wonderfully UU directive! UUs understand “being informed” as the precursor to doing the justice work that is at the heart of our humanism. We have to know our world and each other in order to be useful and to serve our greater purpose effectively. And being delighted? That is the joy and the fun and the tingly/happy/surprised feeling that we get from being fully present to an immediate, sensorial experience. Being informed and delighted acknowledges the need for a full, human engagement with the world—head, body, and hearth.

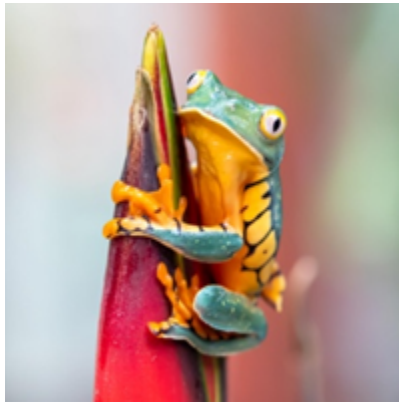
What is delight like, across the body’s senses? For me, if delight had a texture, it might be the bubbles in a glass of freshly popped, cold, root beer. If it had a sound, it might be a chorus of

many species of frogs on a splendid June evening. If delight had a smell, it would be something warm and yeasty emerging from the oven. Or maybe honeysuckle or jasmine blooming full on the vine. Or maybe my dear friend Lisa's homemade lavender-sage perfume. Oh! How about the air outside just after an afternoon rainstorm? You might do the same exercise to prime your mind-body connection around the idea of delight for this month's explorations. Delight is one of the quickest and most effective ways to be fully in the moment, a sensorial shortcut to the here and now.

With that in mind, we're going to focus this month on recognizing delight in our everyday lives, seeking it out in special places and experiences, and setting up the conditions for others to experience it, too. Delight is one of our species' most powerful reminders that being alive is a gift to be savored, one taste, touch, smell, and sound at a time.

Yours in the pleasure of this moment,

Teresa, on behalf of the Soul Matters team



At the Table

Exploring Delight Through Discussions

At the Table questions explore the monthly theme through a discussion for all ages. They are designed for a family gathering - maybe during a Friday night meal, a quiet moment in the living room or before a board game night.

Introducing the Activity

Family members who are readers can alternate who reads the questions. Those who are not readers are invited to share their own impromptu questions. Discussion partners might answer as thoughts come to them or take turns in a circle.

Discussion Questions

1. What's the most delightful thing that babies do? How about puppies or kittens? Worms? Beetles?

2. What weather gives you the most delight?
3. Name a smell that others find delightful, but that you do not like at all.
4. What's something that you delighted in when you were younger, but that you don't do anymore, for one reason or another? (One eight-year-old confessed that he used to sneak into the fridge to eat butter!)
5. Thinking of the famous quote that ["God had an inordinate fondness for beetles."](#) what on earth do you think God, the Creator, or the Spirit of Life has a special fondness for?
6. What songs or artists delight you most when you hear them?
7. What's the best part about hanging out with your best friends?
8. Describe your most delightful experiences with water. This could be swimming in the ocean or lake; taking a fizzy, bubbly, or nice-smelling bath; going to the water park or playing in the hose, etc.
9. What hobby brings you the most delight? What does it feel like when you're really in a flow with this pastime?
10. If someone were to fill a room or a room-sized space outside with things that bring you delight, what would be in that space?
11. What chore doesn't really feel like a chore, because you actually kind of enjoy it?
12. What's more delightful to you, cooking, or having someone cook for you?
13. Some animals—dolphins, rats, crows—play. They experience delight that is not directly related to their survival needs. Do you think what they feel while playing is the same as what you feel? Can you describe it?
14. When you first meet someone, it can be a real delight to be around them. But after a time, some things they do might annoy you, or put you off. How do you know when to stick with someone even when your relationship isn't all roses, and when it's time to move on because you realize they're not the friend for you?

Return to the Discussion Throughout the Week

Thoughts develop with time. Find opportunities to bring up particularly compelling questions again during the month, maybe on walks, rides home, when tucking your child into bed, etc. If thoughts grew or changed, notice together how we are all evolving beings, opening ourselves to new truths and understandings as we live our lives and connect with others.

From the Mailbox

Our literal mailboxes connect us to the wide world outside, sometimes with messages asking things from us (a donation letter or flyer encouraging us to vote), sometimes with messages offering us gifts (a letter from a friend or a special delivery). Our “From the Mailbox” section applies this metaphor to today’s call for families to engage in the work of dismantling white supremacy culture within the context of climate crisis. And so, we open and accept these “invitations” to join those wise leaders and organizations who are co-creating an anti-racist and environmentally responsible future.

Delight in Life on Earth

Self-described “young climate queer feminist” Maria Alejandra Escalante writes about the centrality of joy and pleasure in her activist work. Escalante describes how focusing on working on issues and in places where one’s “energy rises” adds the powerful qualities of “camaraderie” and “care” to one’s efforts, which make the work not only sustainable, but delightful! Escalante is the Senior Advocacy Officer for Climate and Environmental Justice at [FRIDA, The Young Feminist Fund](#). The fund provides unrestricted funds to emerging young feminist groups all over the world.

Where in your life have you experienced hard work that is also joyful? How could delight amplify your personal or community endeavors for climate justice? Is it time to rejuvenate your own or your community’s commitments with a few of the delights of being alive? What might that look like?

Invitation:

- Of course, you can donate directly to FRIDA and provide resources for young feminists all over the world, and especially in the southern hemisphere. You can also use this as inspiration to find a young feminist group working in your own community.
- In other writing Escalante describes salsa dancing as a way to experience joy in the body. What is that pure-delight experience for you? Put time on your calendar to engage in that activity this month as an important aspect of your advocacy or activism.
- In what ways is it a delight for you to support others? Could you support the work of other climate-concerned groups in these ways—providing childcare, cooking a meal for a meeting, paying for bodywork sessions?



At Play

Playing Games with Delight

At Play activities and questions are a way to joyfully, playfully, and imaginatively experience the theme.

Option A: Jokes for Delightful Delays

Having a few jokes memorized can make any delay more delightful. So the next time you're waiting for something, pull out one of the gems from this handout:

"Easy Jokes to Memorize for Delightful Delays":

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/16MSMlow8M6xcXclpInYP6j8a5mTOTEj7bFdlehBkMgY/e/dit?usp=sharing>

For a fun family challenge, set aside a dinnertime or other gathering time, and before digging in, ask everyone to bring a terrible joke! Vote on your best one.

Option B: Floppy Flying Discs

If you've seen [these](#) before, it may have been in a field at an outdoor music festival, or on the green of a college campus. The flying, crochet disc was embraced by outdoorsy youth from its introduction to the toy market in America in 2010.

But this delightful toy's merit goes beyond the crunchy crowd:

- Its open-ended design lends itself not only to friendly competitive games, but also cooperative games and playful messing around.
- Its soft material is far more inclusive than typical flying discs made of hard plastic. People with all degrees of throwing/catching comfort, age and ability can join in the fun without fear of injury.
- It's inexpensive. The Fair-Trade brand [Bueno Ondo](#) charges \$15 for the indoor version, our favorite choice for its soft but very durable design.

Here's a list of silly, play-anywhere, indoor-and-outdoor [game suggestions](#), but remember there is simple pleasure to be had in casual, cooperative catching and throwing, too!



On the Message Board

A Monthly Reminder

The On the Message Board section lifts up a theme-related mantra, graphic, quote, or gesture for your family to carry with them throughout the month. Think of these “family sayings” or “family signs” as tools for the journey, reminders that help us refocus and steady ourselves and our kids as we navigate through life’s challenges and opportunities. Each month, write this mantra on your family message board, or on a sticky note to put on your bathroom mirror, or the fridge. Make it part of your routine to share the mantra each morning so that it becomes something you all carry with you throughout the day.

June’s Mantra:

“How delightful!”

This mantra is specifically for the guardians and caregivers to carry throughout the summer, when we are often spending more time than usual with our children.

What does “more” of our children look like? There may be more stream-of-consciousness sharing, more messes, more boundary crossing and resetting, more togetherness. **How delightful, right?** Well...

If we’re being honest, we don’t always feel so. Sometimes our child’s out-loud deep dive into that favorite YouTuber’s newest gag, or the play-by-play description of the cartoon, or the ins and outs of the friend group’s tiff—well, it becomes a bit much, and maybe we check out, or even beg off.

But it might be worth reframing these moments in our minds. In relationship psychology, these attempts at connection are called “bids,” and they’re really important in strengthening bonds and building trust. Someone we care about makes a bid, we accept, and return it. That’s how we grow together in love.

So if summer means *more* of your child than you're accustomed to when you're also trying to do what needs to be done, then let that initial moment of frustration or irk pass, and then greet their bids with these words in mind: "How delightful!"

At the Bedside

At The Bedside activities engage the theme through storytelling. This takes place during the dreamy, almost otherworldly hour or so before children or youth drift off to sleep. Through stories and the questions and realizations that they prompt, we come to understand the nature of and our own place in the cosmos. But also, these selections invite you to remember, shape, and share stories from your own past, using thoughtful narratives to help your child weave the tale of who they are and whose they are.

When I was your age...

What story delighted you most as a child? What read-aloud or audiobook can you still hear in your mind? Can you picture the cover of the book? What was the feeling you had when the book ended?

We're going to use our bedtime story this month to connect with our children through a story or book that we experienced with great delight in our own youths. Get a copy of that story, and enjoy experiencing it all over again, alongside one for whom it is brand new!

For a little inspiration or memory jog, here are 21 authors on their own favorite children's books and stories:

<https://lithub.com/21-writers-on-their-favorite-childrens-books/>

Stretching the Story:

- What part of the story does your mind keep going back to?
- Who do you know who would also really like this story?
- (Caregiver) How did this book or story influence your reading in the years after you read or heard it?

One more thing...

You might set up the above activity with a "Night Walk of Delights." Maybe it makes sense to walk around your neighborhood, but maybe you would drive to another familiar place and walk around looking and listening after dark. Choose a clear night so you can notice stars. See how many animal sounds you can pick out. Notice shadow and light. Notice how the air smells and feels against your skin. As a bridge to the above activity, share a memory of summer nights when you were younger.



On the Porch

Raising a Child of Delight Together

On the Porch supports sharing realizations and hopes around the theme with other supportive adults. Perhaps this happens on a literal porch or front stoop, but it could happen wherever parents and their circle of support gather and talk (online or in person) about soulful parenting. The “A Sip of Something New” section invites you to engage a new idea shared by someone else. The “Spiritual Snacks” section stimulates personal storytelling and the sharing of your own wisdom and experience.

A Sip of Something New:

Box of Delights

In our Soul Matters small group packet for the month, Rev. Scott invites group members to imagine a box of delights to pack ahead for when life gets a little lonely and hard. Take this idea and make it the focus of your On the Porch get-together with your trusted conversation partner. Each of you gets a piece of paper and something to write with, and twenty minutes on the clock. In that time, write down as many delights as you can. When you’re done, read your lists to one another! Take a picture of your own AND your partners with your phones so you have them handy just in case.

For a little inspiration, here were the first five items on my list and my partner’s list:

- The velvety scrunch of our dog’s fur
- Key lime pie
- Packing the picnic cooler for a day at the river
- Waking up to the house smelling like fresh-brewed coffee and pancakes
- CCC cabins at National Parks
- My long-gone, goofy Doberman’s down stance while waiting for me to throw the tennis ball

- My eight-year-old running to the door to jump into my arms when I first get home
- Eating ripe mulberries off the tree in early June
- Jumping in the river on a 90-degree day
- Gravy on dressing the day after Thanksgiving

Spiritual Snacks to Share

Bring these questions with you when the time comes to hang out with your co-parent or buddies. Don't treat the questions as a list to go through one by one. Instead pick the one or two that speak to you the most. Treat the questions less as a quiz and more like doorways inviting you into the world of storytelling and memory.

Questions

1. With the beloved [Khalil Gibran quote](#) in mind, when was the last time you delighted the earth with your bare feet? Relished in the wind playing with your hair?
2. What delight do you share with your friend group now that you didn't know you'd enjoy so much?
3. What delighted the elders of your youth? When do you remember seeing them laughing and smiling?
4. What role did the landscape you grew up in play in your experience of delight outdoors?
5. What is your glee at this point in your life?
6. What suffering or struggle in your past is most connected to the delights you're awake to today?
7. In your experience, what's the balance of delight and pleasure with work and responsibility?
8. How does your child experience delight similar to and differently from the way you did at their age?
9. What annoyance or frustration in your child's younger years would you now delight in getting to re-experience? (When I asked this of a friend whose children are 18 and 21, he replied, "Tying and tying and retying little shoes.")
10. What do you do when your openness to the delights of the world is running low, when you've stopped noticing the beauty, surprise, and opportunities for joy all around you?

The Extra Mile

The Extra Mile section is for families who want to continue exploring the theme of the month through larger adventures, more complex projects or simply through additional modalities not otherwise included in the packets. The Extra Mile suggestions often surpass what is considered an “everyday moment” in a family, and may involve more preparation, planning, or time to accomplish. A bit more effort, but well worth it!

Choose This Day

This Extra Mile hardly feels extra at all. Once you listen to longtime Soul Matters friend Lea Morris’s song, [“I Choose This Day.”](#) its delightful tune and uplifting message will stay with you for the whole month!

Listen to the song a few times by yourself first, enough that you can sing along with the chorus, at least. Then queue up the song when you’re in the car together with your child, or wherever else you listen to music together. Let your child hear you sing along, and let that moment be enough; the subtle message that today’s delights are our surest path to Love will permeate the air around you through your voices.

Time Capsule of Delights for Your Child

Thinking back to our Soul Matters small group packet, from which we’re borrowing an activity—the box of delights (see the On the Porch section for more) --we’re going to make a future-message or time capsule of sorts. The idea is to cast our minds forward to the someday when our children are adults. What delights do we hope they will have experienced? What small, daily pleasures do we hope they get to enjoy during their time on this earth?

On a piece of sturdier paper titled, “Delights I Hope You Get to Experience,” write down 10, 20, 50, 100 of these delights. Remember that a delight is a relatively small, simple, sensory pleasure; these aren’t life plans or sweeping experiences or peak moments. Once you have your list of delights, put them in a box, and put the box away.

Think of the time you’d like to give this list to your child. Maybe it would be on their next birthday. Maybe it would be when they have their Coming of Age at your UU church. Maybe it would be when they turn 18. Maybe when they leave home for the first time. Wherever you give your child the list, tell them how much delight they have brought to your life, and how you hope their lives are filled with the same.



Blessing of Delight

May you recognize the small pleasures of inhabiting a human body on this earth here, today, now, as proof of life—your life, the only one you get, the only one you have to share. May you take in these delights as evidence that for all our struggles and suffering, we are never abandoned by Love.

Connect with more Inspiration for your family, and for you!

Parents can Join our Facebook and Instagram pages for
daily inspiration on our themes:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/?ref=settings>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/soul_matters_circle/

Parents and youth will want to check out our [YouTube](#) music playlist on the monthly theme.

Credits

Soulful Home packets are prepared by Teresa Youngblood,

Our Soul Matters [Family Ministry Coordinator](#)

You are free to use any of this material verbatim in worship, newsletters
or similar contexts, with attribute to Teresa Youngblood.

Soul Matters receives no financial benefit from any linked
or recommended products, and seeks especially to promote
fair compensation for work by people from marginalized identities.

Connect with more Inspiration for your family, and for you!

Parents can Join our Facebook and Instagram pages for
daily inspiration on our themes:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/?ref=settings>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/soul_matters_circle/

Parents and youth will want to check out our [YouTube](#) music playlist on the monthly theme.

Credits

Soulful Home packets are prepared by

Teresa Youngblood,

Our Soul Matters [Family Ministry Coordinator](#)

You are free to use any of this material verbatim in worship, newsletters
or similar contexts, with attribute to Teresa Youngblood.

Soul Matters receives no financial benefit from any linked or recommended products, and seeks especially to promote fair compensation for work by people from marginalized identities.

© 2022-2023 Soul Matters ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Packets are for use only by member congregations of and individual subscribers to the Soul Matters Sharing Circle.

Learn more about subscribing to these monthly resource packets on our website:

<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/soulful-home.html>