

The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism

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Special thanks to Meg Green and Louise Ferrell who took the time to carefully copy edit this curriculum workbook. Any mistakes that remain are the responsibility of the authors.

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Every effort has been made to properly acknowledge and reference sources and to trace owners of copyrighted material. We regret any omission and will, upon written notice, make the necessary correction(s) in subsequent editions.

*The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism* was written to help Unitarians and Universalists everywhere gain a broader and deeper understanding of our shared faith. It was written so that Unitarians and Universalists worldwide might recognize the diversity of our faith and also what unites us. It has been our aim not only to inform but to help individuals connect with one another. With this in mind we have included

- exercises that ask participants to reflect on what Unitarian*Universalism means to them and consider what it might mean to other Unitarians and Universalists from other places
- small group worship services in a covenant group format
- additional activities to honor other ways of learning and of connecting with one another and to add variety and fun to group meetings

English is the common language among ICUU member groups and is the native language of the authors so this work is written in American English. It is our hope that it will be translated into other languages in the future. Although we have attempted to write articles from a neutral perspective, cultural biases are difficult to avoid completely as we are all products of our culture. We have tried to use the words of ICUU group members whenever possible. Again, we hope that in the future authors from other cultures will create workbooks and curricula on Unitarianism and Universalism that we may all share.

In our research, we found a great deal of information about some member groups and very little about other member groups. We were able to make personal contact with informants from some member groups but not other member groups. Thus, units in this curriculum workbook vary in length and detail. This does not reflect on the richness and depth of the traditions covered but rather the amount of information we were able to dig up in the amount of time available. As volunteers, we worked on this curriculum in addition to our other work. It has been a labor of love, a gift to our religious community, and we hope as time goes by others will add to the information gathered so far for a fuller picture of international Unitarian*Universalism.

How to Use this Curriculum Workbook

In designing this workbook, we tried to consider many ways, settings and timeframes in which it could be used, including

- by an individual wanting to study international Unitarian and Universalism independently
- by a lay-led congregation for study and for worship services
- as a weekly class for adults for anywhere from 6 weeks to a full year
- by congregations or individuals preparing to visit or host members from their partner church or attend an ICUU-sponsored event
- by individuals designing worship services
- in a retreat or workshop setting where discussion, hands-on activities and worship are interwoven over several days
- as a curriculum for high school-aged groups (ages 14-18) interested in learning more about international Unitarian*Universalism and U*U history
- by covenant groups for use in small group ministry

There are 16 units (subject to change) in this curriculum. The units are presented roughly in order of each tradition's founding. The *Garden of Unitarian*Universalism* has been designed to be used in a variety of settings and timeframes. It is not expected that groups will work their way through the curriculum from Unit 1 to Unit 16, start to finish. Each unit was written to stand independently and units may be studied in any order; however, **we strongly recommend** that all groups begin with Unit 1: *The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism* to get an overview of the ICUU and end with Unit 16: *Tending the Garden* for closure.

Each unit consists of two or three sessions. Each session can stand independently and will take from one to two hours (or more) depending on whether the group chooses to include an additional activity from the list provided in each unit. If groups are not planning to do an additional activity, the material in one session can be covered in about an hour to an hour and a half. For each session, handouts should be distributed in advance of the meeting time so that participants will be able to read and reflect on the material and be ready for discussion and other activities.

Once the facilitator or group has decided on the number of weeks they wish to use the curriculum, they can select which units or sessions they would like to study. Some possible alternatives are:

- Unit 1; a unit about a group with whom your congregation has a partnership; and Unit 16 (approximately 7 sessions).
- Unit 1; a unit about a large member group; a unit about a medium-sized member group; a unit about a small and/or emerging group; and Unit 16 (approximately 10-11 sessions).
- Unit 1; a unit about a member group in Europe; in Asia; in North America; in Africa; and Unit 16 (approximately 15 sessions).
- Unit 1; units about member groups from countries participants have visited or have some connection with; and Unit 16.
- Unit 1; a unit about a member group with a long history; a unit about a member group with a not quite as long history; a unit about a new and/or emerging group; and Unit 16

- only the informational/discussion sessions of selected units omitting the additional activities and the Small Group Worship
- only the Small Group Worship services
- informational/discussion sessions plus additional activities of selected units omitting the Small Group Worship services

The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism includes

- information on the history and context of ICUU member groups
- information on the beliefs and practices of ICUU member groups
- orders of service for small group worship
- a table of contents within each unit
- a list of additional activities for each unit
- a list of resources and references for each unit
- checklists for facilitators preparing to lead a session
- step-by-step directions for facilitating a session
- handouts for participants

Each unit in the curriculum workbook includes the following types of exercises



Tilling

Tilling activities are used as warm-ups to stimulate thinking about topics related to the reading that will follow. Tilling activities are meant to be done by individuals at home before reading the article and later discussed at the group meeting.



Planting

The “Planting” articles in this curriculum workbook are meant to inform and stimulate individuals to reflect on the diversity of international Unitarian*Universalism.



Hoeing

Hoeing activities offer opportunities for further reflection on information covered in the article and for connecting what was learned to our own lives, thoughts and feelings. Most of the Hoeing activities are meant to be done by the individual at home after reading the article and then shared at the group meeting.



Harvesting

Harvesting activities are those additional activities designed for more informal ways of learning and connecting with one another, and to add variety and fun to the group gatherings. These give further insight into the culture and history of member groups and may be especially useful if you are planning to host or visit a U*U group from another country.



The Tool Shed

The Tool Shed is a handout of references and resources, including many online resources, for those who wish to delve deeper into a study of international Unitarian*Universalism on their own.



Small Group Worship

The Small Group Worship consists of two parts: a brief explanation, and sometimes additional reading, to prepare for the Small Group Worship service and a separate file which contains an Order of Service for the Small Group Worship service, <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>.

Many of the hymns, and readings in the Orders of Service are from *Singing the Living Tradition* published by the Unitarian Universalist Association. The authors of this workbook are not yet very familiar with the hymnals and worship materials used by Unitarians and Universalists around the world. Naturally, if you have access to worship materials and hymns from other U*U traditions, we encourage you to use them in place of what we have suggested.



Sermon

Some units include a sermon to be used at the Small Group Worship service by the facilitator.



Story

Some units include a story.

* The asterisk used in this curriculum in Unitarian*Universalism stands for “and/or” to include Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist groups that are part of our international movement. The flower shape of the asterisk helps remind us that we are part of an ever-changing garden.

List of Units (subject to change)

Each unit consists of two files. One file contains the background information with accompanying exercises and instructions for preparing and facilitating the group meetings, including the Small Group Worship. The other file contains an Order of Service for Small Group Worship.

Unit 1. The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism: The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU)

Session 1: History and Context/Principles and Purposes

Session 2: Small Group Worship

Order of Service: Unitarians and Universalists Around the World
(Your Own UU Journey)

Unit 2. Unitarianism in Transylvania: The Oak Tree

Session 1: History and Context

Session 2: Beliefs and Practices

Session 3: Small Group Worship

Order of Service: Transylvania (What is God?)

Unit 3. Unitarianism in Hungary: A Sister Oak and Tulip

Session 1: History and Context

Session 2: Beliefs and Practices

Session 3: Small Group Worship

Order of Service: Hungary (A Hungarian Communion Service)

Unit 4. Unitarianism in Poland: The Corn Poppy

Session 1: History and Context

Session 2: Beliefs and Practices

Session 3: Small Group Worship

Order of Service: Poland (What is Truth?)

Unit 5. Unitarianism in the United Kingdom

Session 1: History and Context

Session 2: Beliefs and Practices

Session 3: Small Group Worship

Order of Service: United Kingdom

Unit 6. Unitarian Universalism in the USA: The Trillium

Session 1: History and Context

Session 2: Beliefs and Practices

Session 3: Small Group Worship

Order of Service: USA (Teach Your Children Well)

Unit 7. Unitarianism in Canada

Session 1: History and Context
Session 2: Beliefs and Practices
Session 3: Small Group Worship
Order of Service: Canada

Unit 8. Unitarian*Universalism in Australia, New Zealand and parts of Asia: Gentiana

(Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Japan and Indonesia)
Session 1: History and Context/Beliefs and Practices
Session 2: Small Group Worship
Order of Service: Austral-Asia (Nature and Religion)

Unit 9. Unitarianism in India: The Orchid

Session 1: History and Context/Beliefs and Practices
Session 2: Small Group Worship
Order of Service: India (The “life blood and soul” of your Life)

Unit 10. Unitarianism*Universalism in Western and Central Europe

(The Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, EEU)
Session 1: History and Context/Beliefs and Practices
Session 2: Small Group Worship
Order of Service: Western and Central Europe

Unit 11. Unitarianism in Pakistan: Fountain Grass

Session 1: History and Context/Beliefs and Practices
Session 2: Small Group Worship
Order of Service: Pakistan (Bringing Comfort and Gladness)

Unit 12. Unitarian Universalism in the Philippines

Session 1: History and Context/Beliefs and Practices
Session 2: Small Group Worship
Order of Service: Negros, Philippines

Unit 13. Unitarian*Universalism in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe: Angelica

(Russia, Latvia, Finland, Norway, Iceland)
Session 1: History and Context/Beliefs and Practices
Session 2: Small Group Worship
Order of Service: Scandinavia & Eastern Europe (What is religion?)

Unit 14. Unitarian*Universalism in Africa

Session 1: History and Context/Practices and Beliefs
Session 2: Small Group Worship
Order of Service: Africa

Unit 15. Unitarian*Universalism in Latin America

Session 1: History and Context/Beliefs and Practices
Session 2: Small Group Worship
Order of Service: Small and Emerging Groups and Latin America

Unit 16. **Tending the Garden: Concluding Unit**

Session 1: ICUU: Common Ground

Session 2: Small Group Worship

Order of Service: One Garden, Many Flowers (Thoughts on the Garden)

Countries where Unitarian and Universalist Groups Exist
(roughly in order of their founding)

- 1568 Transylvania/Hungary
- mid 16th century Poland
- mid 17th century Ireland/England (as non-conformists)
- 1774 United Kingdom
- late 18th century USA
- 1795 Madras, India
- 1842 Canada
- mid 19th century Australia
- 1867 South Africa
- late 19th century New Zealand
- late 19th century Japan
- 1876 Germany (as Free Protestants; legally changed named to Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft in 1950)
- 1887 Khasi Hills, India
- 1900 Denmark
- 1919 Nigeria
- 1930 Czech Republic
- 1954 Philippines
- 1960s Mexico (mostly from the United States)
- 1982 European Unitarian Universalists
- 1991 Pakistan
- 1992 Sri Lanka
- 1993 Latvia
- 1994 Russia
- 1995 ICUU founded
- 1996 Finland
- 1997 Argentina
- 1997 Brazil
- 2000 Spain
- 2000 Bolivia
- 2003* Burundi, Indonesia, Norway, others
- 2004* Puerto Rico, Cuba
- 2005* Croatia, Estonia

*date of contact with the ICUU

ICUU Groups by Size (as of 2002)

Large Groups (4000+ members)

USA (160,000)
Transylvania (80,000)
Hungary (25,000)
Indian Council of Unitarian Churches (10,000)
United Kingdom (7800): England (4000)/ Scotland (300)/ Wales (1500)/ Ireland (2000)
Canada (5000+)

Medium-sized Groups (100-1600 members)

Germany (1600)
Philippines (1000)
Czech Republic (600)
Australia (400) and New Zealand (100)
Denmark (170)
European Unitarian Universalists (120) from 4 congregations: Belgium, Paris, Germany, Netherlands; and members-at-large from Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Spain, France, etc.
South Africa (100)

Small and/or Emerging Groups (<100)

Poland (80)
Russia (15)
Latvia (15-20)
Finland (22)
Mexico (25, mostly from the United States)
Argentina (20)
Spain (55)
Nigeria (unknown)
Pakistan (unknown)
Japan (unknown)
Sri Lanka (unknown)
Brazil (unknown)
Bolivia (unknown)
Burundi (unknown)
Indonesia (unknown)
Norway (unknown)
Puerto Rico (unknown)

Numbers are from Hill, A., J. McAllister, and C. Reed (eds). (2002). *A Global Conversation: Unitarian/Universalism at the Dawn of the 21st Century*. Prague: International Council of Unitarians and Universalists and from the ICUU website www.icuu.net retrieved August 2004.

Recommended Resources

Following are useful resources for doing some of the Additional Activities listed in each unit in the workbook and for creating Small Group Worship services.

***Credo International: Voices of Religious Liberalism from Around the World* by Don McEvoy (2003). Del Mar, CA: Humanity Press.**

This book presents personal stories of 61 founders and leaders of Unitarian and Universalist movements around the world. These engaging stories are written in the first person and offer great opportunities for dramatization or illustration. The book is available from Humanity Press, 703 Stratford Court #11, Del Mar, CA 92014, USA. You can also contact the author at Donmitzamac@aol.com The book is available in quantity at special discounts for your group or organization by contacting the author. And there are “No Rights Reserved. Believing that knowledge and information belong to the entire human family, you are authorized to reproduce the contents of this in any form or means of your choosing with no further permission from the author.”

***A Global Conversation: Unitarian/Universalism at the Dawn of the 21st Century.* Edited by Andrew Hill, Jill McAllister, and Cliff Reed. (2002). Prague: International Council of Unitarians and Universalists www.icuu.net**

Much of the information in this workbook came from this source which contains speeches given by ICUU members about their history and traditions. Naturally, there is more information in the book than we could possibly include in this workbook.

***One and Universal: Prayers and Meditations from Around the World.* Edited by John Midgley. (2002). Boston: Skinner House Books www.uua.org/skinner**

This little book is full of chalice lightings, prayers, readings and meditations from U*U traditions around the world. A nice source for developing worship services.

***Singing the Living Tradition.* Edited and published by the Unitarian Universalist Association, USA (1993). Boston: Beacon Press.**

We (the authors of this workbook, *The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism*), are not yet very familiar with the hymnals and worship materials used by Unitarians and Universalists around the world, but we have found that for American Unitarian Universalists this is a wonderful resource for hymns, readings, chalice lightings and prayers. Others may also find it useful. Naturally, if you have access to worship materials and hymns from other U*U traditions, we encourage you to use them in place of what we have suggested.

Partner Church Council website at <http://www.uua.org/uupcc/>

From the Partner Church Council website, you can get a great deal of information about Unitarians and Universalists around the world, and also download their Partner games, designed for kids but enjoyable and informative for all.