

The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism



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* 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.

The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism
The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU)

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*Please note that if you are accessing The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism from the Internet, the Small Group Worship Order of Service is a separate document and must be downloaded separately, <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>.*

The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists: Preparing for this Unit

This unit is divided into two sessions. Session 1 covers the history and context and the principles and purposes of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) as well as providing a list of ICUU member groups and a description of the ICUU logo. Session 2 is a Small Group Worship service in a covenant group format in honor of the ICUU and Unitarians and Universalists everywhere.

Facilitators should look over the entire unit to be prepared and comfortable with the material and the flow of the unit and to decide which session(s), or parts of a session they want to cover, which activities to do, and how long to spend on each part.

For each session, facilitators should make copies of the readings and accompanying questions and hand them out in advance of the meeting time, or ask group members to access the material online at <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>. This gives participants time to read and reflect on the material before sharing with the group.

The group or facilitator may choose one or more activities from the list under Harvesting (p. 14) to do as a group after discussing the readings. These activities have been designed to honor other ways of learning, to create informal ways to make connections with one another and to add variety to the group meetings.

Some groups may prefer to cover this unit in one meeting to discuss the readings first and then move on to participate in a Small Group Worship, depending on their time frame, how the class is set up (whether it is a weekly class, a workshop or a retreat) and the interests of the group. The group may include an additional Harvesting activity between the discussion and the Small Group Worship service, or after the Small Group Worship service, or at a separate meeting time. Some groups may prefer not to do the additional activities and just do the readings and accompanying questions for reflection and discussion. We have tried to allow for flexibility.

The ICUU

I. HISTORY AND CONTEXT/PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES/LOGO

Preparing for Session 1

- ___ Make copies and hand out in advance the article, *The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism* (p. 6-9) and accompanying pre-reading questions (p. 13), or have members read the material online at <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>.
- ___ Make copies and hand out the in advance article, *The ICUU Principles and Purposes* (p. 10-11), or have members read the material online at <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>.
- ___ Make copies and hand out in advance the article, *The ICUU Logo* (p. 12), or have members read the material online at <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>.
- ___ Make copies and hand out *The Tool Shed: References and Resources* (p.17) in advance.
- ___ Choose, or have the group chose, in advance, one or more activities from *Harvesting: Additional Activities* (p. 14) to do after your discussion or Small Group Worship service. Prepare materials needed for the chosen activities.
- ___ Invite/Remind members to bring a cutting from a tree, plant or flower that represents them and/or their origins (or a drawing of the tree, plant or flower) for display.
- ___ Arrive early to set up your room. Add an international flair to it by displaying artifacts from countries around the world where Unitarians and Universalists are represented.
- ___ Set up a chalice. Have matches handy.
- ___ Bring a world map or globe to display or locate ICUU member and emerging member countries.
- ___ Provide a vase for display of participants' flowers and plants or have a picture of a bouquet or garden.
- ___ Have world music playing in the background.
- ___ Make copies of handouts for the next session you plan to cover.
- ___ Look over the instructions for facilitating the session to be prepared and comfortable with the material and the flow of the session.

Facilitating Session 1

1. Welcome participants and invite those with flowers, drawings, etc. to put them on display perhaps next to the chalice.
2. Chalice lighting:
 - O hidden life that vibrates in each atom,*
 - O hidden light that shines in each creature,*
 - O hidden love that embraces everything in unity,*
 - May all who feel one with Thee*
 - Know that for this very reason we are one with all the others.*

(in Portuguese)

O vida oculta que brilha em cada átomo
O luz oculta que brilha em cada criatura,
O amor oculto que tudo abrange na unidade,
Possa todo aquele que se sente um contigo
Saber que por isso mesmo é um com todos os outros.

- Annie Besan, adapted by Paulo Ereno, Unitarian Universalists of Brazil

3. Check-In/Announcements:

Give everyone in the room an opportunity to tell their names and a high or low point of their week.

Make announcements about today's session and upcoming sessions as needed. Choose an additional activity from Harvesting (p. 14) for next time, if appropriate. Distribute handouts for the next session you plan to cover.

4. Allow members to quickly and silently reread the articles and look over their notes.
5. Ask members to share their answers to the exercise, Tilling, p. 6. Were they surprised to learn that Unitarian*Universalism exists in some of the countries listed in the article? (Hoeing, p. 10). Locate these countries on a world map or globe.
6. Ask members what surprised or intrigued them about the ICUU (Hoeing, p. 13).
7. Ask members to share what plant or flower they chose, or would choose, to represent who they are and also why they chose that particular plant or flower (Hoeing, p.13).
10. Ask members to share other ideas and questions they had from the article.
11. When discussion has wound down, extinguish the chalice: *This church does not demand all people to think alike, but to think uprightly, and get as near as possible to truth; it does not ask all people to live alike but to live holy, and get as near as possible to a life perfectly divine. May it be so. - Theodore Parker, 1841, USA (adapted).*
12. Gather for an *Additional Activity* from Harvesting, p. 14 (if your group decided to do so): planning and planting a garden or flower box, making international greeting cards to sell, making chalices, eating, making a collage, locating ICUU member groups on a world map bulletin board display – whatever you and your group have chosen to do.

A Garden of Unitarian*Universalism: The ICUU

Handout: *The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism*



Tilling

Write the names of as many countries as you can where you believe Unitarian*Universalism exists.



Planting

Now read the following article on the history and context of the ICUU.

*The Garden of Unitarian*Universalism*

To attend a meeting of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) is truly like stepping into a beautiful garden full of an extraordinary variety of trees, plants and flowers – some of the species exotic, others quite familiar – and yet all part of the same garden.

No matter where in the world you come from, as you listen to representatives from the various ICUU member and emerging member groups describe how they are organized, their beliefs and practices, and their histories, the diversity of our international Unitarian*Universalist movement stands out. You may even find yourself wondering what, if anything, you have in common with some of the groups. But the more you listen, the more you are able to discern what Unitarians and Universalists all over the world share. It is a seed – the seed from which all Unitarian and Universalist traditions have grown – the seed of free inquiry. The seeds were planted at different times, in different soils, under different climates and endured different weather conditions. Thus, each seed has blossomed into something quite unique in appearance.

This seed of free inquiry also keeps Unitarian*Universalism a dynamic religion, one that is open to new information, new questions, new ideas, new truths – no matter where you find it in the garden. So, unlike a jigsaw puzzle or a mosaic, both of which present images of diversity within unity, the garden is constantly changing. New flowers or trees may sprout at any time as is happening with Unitarian*Universalism in countries such as Spain, Argentina, Latvia, and Kenya. And these new plants will look different from the other plants in the garden given their soil, climate and weather. Established trees and flowers in the garden put on new growth without endangering their basic structure. Thus, as an image for diversity within unity, the garden is an accurate metaphor for international Unitarian*Universalism.

The ICUU is a young organization, having sprouted in 1995. However, the seed was planted a few years earlier. Prior to that time, Unitarians and Universalists from different countries met mostly at meetings of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), an interfaith group of liberal religious organizations. For over a century, Unitarians have taken the lead and been actively involved in the IARF. As Canadian Unitarian (and Secretary on the ICUU Executive Council for many years) Ellen Campbell writes, “There were some unfortunate results from this. One was that IARF has been perceived to be a predominately Unitarian group, and has been hampered in its own development because of that. The other is that Unitarians and

Universalists in North America have not had a sense that ours is more than a largely North American movement” (Campbell, 2001).

In her article, *Together, Our Vision Widens*, Ms. Campbell goes on to describe how the ICUU began. “In 1988, David Usher, a young Unitarian minister in England, proposed to the British General Assembly that a "World Unitarian Council" be established. The motion was passed unanimously, and at the next IARF Congress, a meeting of Unitarians was held to discuss it. It had support from some groups, including Canadians, but the largest (and wealthiest) group represented there, the UUA, was opposed” (Campbell, 2001). Six years and a new president later, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) of the United States sanctioned the idea. An international committee was formed to plan and carry out an inaugural meeting in 1995 and the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists had set roots!

Naming the organization proved a bit difficult. How does one succinctly cover Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist in a name? That first international committee was satisfied that “Unitarians and Universalists” was sufficient to cover both. This was sometimes abbreviated “U-U”, the dash (-) standing for “and/or”, a visible linking of our U-U world (McAllister, 2002). Canadian Unitarian Mary Bennett offered another option: “U*U”, also standing for Unitarian and/or Universalist. In this curriculum we have used the asterisk option (U*U). The asterisk resembles a flower and reminds us to view our international movement as the ever-changing garden that it is. At this time there is no official designation being used by the ICUU.

Although it is a global movement and English is the language most shared in common, English is not the first language of most members. Members whose first language is English are deeply grateful to those members who speak more than one language and thus make communication easier (McAllister, 2002).

There are several categories of membership in the ICUU. As of March 2004, there were 19 groups with full membership, one group with provisional membership, one group with associate membership and four emerging groups as well as other closely related groups. The full member groups range in size from the United States with around 160,000 members and over 1000 congregations to Finland with one lay-led congregation of 22 people. Some Unitarian and Universalist traditions are quite old; others are just taking root. Transylvanian Unitarians can trace their roots back to 1568 while the newest provisional member, Spain, was organized in 2000 (www.icuu.net, 2004).

The theology, practices, history and organizational structures of U*U’s vary around the world. In Lagos, Nigeria, the Unitarian Brotherhood Church, established in 1919, conducted services in the Yoruba language, and used native drums in their services. In Hungary and Transylvania, elected Bishops head the church and Unitarians there describe themselves firmly as Christian. In Germany, Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft was re-established in 1950 as a deliberately lay-led movement with a strongly humanist theology. The European Unitarian Universalists are actually several lay-led groups that meet annually in a retreat setting. In the Philippines, faith healing is an important part of the religious practice (www.icuu.net, 2004).

The ICUU has provided a forum for Unitarians and Universalists worldwide to come together and understand each other. Early interactions among international Unitarians and Universalists often resulted in misunderstandings. David Keyes in his book, *Most Like an Arch: Building Global Partnerships*, writes about the early Partner Church program that established partner congregations between North America and Transylvania and Hungary. Those early partnerships experienced difficulties when it was discovered that partners assumed Unitarianism

was one thing and found that their partners saw Unitarianism as something quite different. Many North Americans perceived themselves as more theologically “advanced” and were disturbed by what they perceived as racism, sexism and hierarchy in the partner churches they visited. Hungarian Unitarians were hurt that North Americans did not understand their history nor appreciate their struggles as an ethnic minority (Campbell, 2001). Money was an issue often misunderstood and what partnership really meant was sometimes hard to define. Great credit must be given to the Partner Church Council (PCC) which helped partners work through these misunderstandings and continues to educate all Unitarians and Universalists on what it means to be a partner and how best to help each other. Their continued work in matching partner congregations, extending partnership to more and more international U*U’s and in developing educational materials is important work. The Partner Church Council and the ICUU work hand-in-hand to help the cause of international understanding among U*U’s. Symposiums and meetings sponsored by the ICUU have brought international U*U’s together where deep sharing and listening can take place.

Like the PCC, the ICUU has experienced misunderstandings and difficulties along the way. Ellen Campbell tells a story of the development of the ICUU purposes:

In the first draft, the statement did not include the phrase ‘to serve the Infinite Spirit of Life and the human community.’ The day after we had agreed on the wording, Arpad Szabo from Transylvania said, “I can’t go back to my people with a purpose that doesn’t include ‘to serve God.’” And Lene Shoemaker from Denmark responded, “I can’t go back to my humanist congregation with a statement that does include it!” We brainstormed for a wording that would satisfy all of us. When the phrase ‘the Infinite Spirit of Life’ emerged, Jill McAllister asked Arpad, “Would ‘the Infinite Spirit of Life’ work for you?” Arpad answered with a smile, “Yes - but of course you know I will translate it as ‘God.’” For me, that was a moment of recognition - that in a religion without a creed, in which we ‘build our own theology,’ we are always translating theological concepts into our ‘own language.’

She goes on to describe difficulties that came up “about more mundane but also important matters. Originally we talked about ‘one country, one vote,’ but the UUA, which was providing most of the funding, was not willing to settle for that. A compromise gave larger organizations - 3000 and up - two votes - not a veto, but a bit more clout” (Campbell, 2001).

There have been other disagreements and difficulties for this young organization and times when it seemed this fragile plant might not survive. Yet the desire to reach out and connect with one another is very strong and despite differences, the organization continues to grow.

The ICUU benefits both its members and the larger Unitarian*Universalist movement. Some benefits are obvious such as the leadership development programs in Germany, Sri Lanka, Hungary and India, the international youth conferences in Transylvania and the Khasi Hills, conferences and study tours to New England and the Philippines, and a Michael Servetus commemoration in Switzerland. ICUU members have developed and shared worship materials and have arranged visiting ministers to congregations in countries without ministers. The ICUU has worked with the Partner Church Council to expand the partnership program. The ICUU has held symposiums, one of which led to the publication of a book about member countries, their theologies and practices (Hill, 2002). Such benefits are tangible and easy to see. But there are other less visible but no less important benefits to ICUU members, as described by Ellen Campbell:

For those communities which have [experienced] or are experiencing persecution, the very presence of an international Unitarian organization is supportive. For the Transylvanians, who were isolated and oppressed by the Ceausescu regime, and are still seen as an undesirable element by right-wing Romanians, connection with the outside world is a lifeline. For the Czechs, international support provided both concrete help and the emotional and spiritual support to enable them to carry on their struggle to regain their status as a religious community and their building.

Pakistani Unitarian Indirias Bhatti, who attended an ICUU-sponsored symposium in Britain in June 2001, reported that Unitarians in Pakistan are ostracized by their families, friends and neighbors and have had difficult financial crises because they have left Christianity. He said, “[ICUU support] is making me free from the fear and threats of death ...” He looks forward to a time when “we can worship openly instead of secretly, where we can practise our Unitarianism without being treated as a heretic...”(Campbell, 2001).

Of course, many groups are not persecuted but still need the recognition and support that an international body can provide. Many small groups are emerging, often as a result of the Internet. The ICUU provides a route through which these small, emerging groups can receive materials, get assistance and support, and make connections with other Unitarians. In 2000, small groups from Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia met in Sorato, Bolivia. This community grew to include many other U*U groups and individuals from Latin America (including Cuba and Puerto Rico) who, with the help of the ICUU, met in San Nicolás, Argentina in January of 2005 to organize as an official umbrella group for U*Us in Latin America. Also in 2005, groups from Estonia and Croatia made contact with the ICUU.

“In Russia, two groups have formed, one in Moscow and one in St. Petersburg. Just as in Latvia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania, the fall of Communism has enabled people to practice religion openly, but there are uncertainties. Traditional national religions often expect the restoration of their previous status, and evangelical missionaries are flocking into these countries. Where do Unitarians fit in these religious demographics? Again, the presence of an international Unitarian body enables them to share their experience, and to build on the experience of others” (Campbell, 2001).

In much of western Europe state churches still exist. Under the state church system if you are born in that country, you are automatically a member of that state church unless you provide documentation otherwise. And even then, you can only claim one of the recognized religions. In many of those countries Unitarianism is not recognized as a religion. But the ICUU helps members of these U*U groups feel recognized in the world and supported.

What do the larger, well-established and recognized Unitarian and Universalist groups have to gain from being part of the ICUU? They gain a deeper and broader understanding of our faith and begin to appreciate the turbulent history of this faith and what our Unitarian and Universalist forebears have experienced to keep it alive. They have the opportunity to see the movement afresh through the eyes of emerging groups who have recently discovered our liberal faith. They, like the others, will discover aspects of the garden they may never have seen before. Just as each plant adds to the beauty of the garden, each member of the ICUU adds to the beauty and richness of our religious movement. Our contact with each other enriches our lives and each of us gains a better understanding of what it means to be a Unitarian*Universalist in the world.

A Garden of Unitarian*Universalism: The ICUU

Additional Handout: *ICUU Principles and Purposes*

ICUU Principles and Purposes

We, the member groups of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists, affirming our belief in religious community based on

- liberty of conscience and individual thought in matters of faith
- the inherent worth and dignity of every person
- justice and compassion in human relations
- responsible stewardship of the earth's living system
- and our commitment to democratic principles

declare our purposes to be

- to serve the Infinite Spirit of Life and the human community by strengthening the worldwide Unitarian and Universalist faith
- to affirm the variety and richness of our living traditions
- to facilitate mutual support among member organisations
- to promote our ideals and principles around the world
- to provide models of liberal religious response to the human condition which uphold our common values.

According to the ICUU Bylaws, any Unitarian*Universalists, having established themselves as a group, with regular and formal meetings may apply for membership by submitting a request and required documentation such as their Constitution, bylaws, a record of meetings, etc. The ICUU Executive Council reviews requests, and if a group meets the criteria set forth in the ICUU policy, it is welcomed as a provisional member and invited to send representatives to the next General Council meeting. Full membership is voted on by the entire Council. This process takes at least two years and often up to four years because the entire Council meets only once every two years. This also gives provisional members the opportunity to demonstrate their unity, stability, and effective administration before being granted full membership.

It is the policy of the ICUU to promote the formation of a single member group per country. If more than one established group exists in a country and they do not wish to merge fully, the ICUU will encourage them to form a single "umbrella body" on the model of the Indian Council of Unitarian Churches. If for reasons of tradition and practice, groups from the same country wish to remain independent, then they may seek ICUU membership separately, but this must be by mutual consent on the part of the groups concerned (ICUU Policy Summary).

The Member Groups of the ICUU as of May 2004

Full Members of ICUU

Australia: Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Association, www.anzua.org
 Canada: Canadian Unitarian Council, www.cuc.ca
 Czech Republic: Religious Society of Czech Unitarians, www.unitaria.cz
 Denmark: Danish Unitarian Church, www.unitarisme.dk
 Europe: European Unitarian Universalists, www.euu.uua.org
 Finland: Unitarian Universalist Society of Finland, www.netlife.fi/users/anti.pelkola/uu
 Germany: Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemein, www.unitarier.de
 Great Britain: General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, www.unitarian.org.uk
 Hungary: Unitarian Church in Hungary, www.unitarius.hu
 India: Indian Council of Unitarian Churches
 Nigeria: Ijo Isokan Gbogbo Eda Unitarian Brotherhood Church
 Philippines: The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines
 Poland: The Unitarian Church in Poland - Kosciol Unitarianski
 Romania: Transylvanian Unitarian Church, www.unitarius.ro
 Russia: Moscow Unitarian Advocates
 South Africa: Unitarian Church of South Africa, www.unitarian.co.za
 Sri Lanka: Unitarian Universalist Association of Sri Lanka
 United States: Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, www.uua.org

Provisional Members

Spain: Sociedad Unitaria Universalista de España, www.suue.org

Emerging Members: Emerging groups are moving towards full or provisional membership and are deemed to be reasonable prospects but do not yet fulfill all of the conditions.

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil

Latvia: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Latvia in Riga

Puerto Rico: Los Unitarios Universalistas de Puerto Rico, <http://www.uupuertorico.org/>

Associate Members: Associate membership is open to groups or organizations with beliefs and purposes closely akin to those of the ICUU but by the nature of their constitutions, purposes, or limited fields of work, are not eligible for full membership, or which do not wish to become full members now or in the foreseeable future.

Northern Ireland: Ulster Unitarian Christian Association (NSPCI Church).

Several other Unitarian*Universalist groups worldwide have expressed interest in having contact with the ICUU:

Croatia

Estonia

France: L'Assemblees Fraternelles des Chretiens Unitariens de France

France: L'Association Unitarienne Francophone et Église Unitarienne de France

Iceland: Icelandic Unitarian Fellowship

Indonesia: Indonesia Global Church of God

Ireland: Unitarian Church in Dublin and Unitarian Church in Cork. Both are members of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

Japan: Representatives of two Japanese Universalist Churches and two Japanese Unitarian groups, have informally agreed to forming a Coordinating Council.

Norway: Unitarkirken (The Unitarian Christian Church in Norway),

<http://eunitarforbundet.org/>

A Garden of Unitarian*Universalism: The ICUU

Additional Handout: *The ICUU Logo*



The ICUU Logo

The official logo of the ICUU was adopted at the council meeting in Prague in May 2003. It was created by noted Czech graphic designer, Ondrej Smerda.

In the design, the dual flame represents Unitarianism and Universalism. It is a moving, dynamic flame to depict our dynamic faith. The chalice is also a traditional symbol of our movement and in this very open bowl shape, it also signifies our openness to all of humanity as well as to the divine. The rounded base of the chalice represents Earth, our world. The lettering is in a font originally developed for printing Bibles that is clearly legible in small sizes.

The color version of the ICUU logo, with or without a surrounding circle, is depicted in two colors: the flame in light red to symbolize life itself and fire, one of its elements; and the chalice and letters in dark blue, symbolizing our blue planet with both sky and water, also elements of life.

(Hess, 2003)



Hoeing

1. What surprises or intrigues you about the ICUU? Be prepared to share your ideas with the group.

2. The ICUU has been described as a diverse garden. What tree, flower or plant would you choose to represent you and/or your origins in this garden? Why? Bring a sample of your flower, plant or tree or a drawing or photo of it, to the group meeting.



Harvesting

Has your group decided to do any of the *Additional Activities* from Harvesting (p. 14) following the discussion of the reading? If so, prepare any materials you might need.





Harvesting: Additional Activities

Below are activities that you might want to do later as a group or at home with family and friends.

1. Use self-hardening clay, or other material, to create chalices together to represent each ICUU member group or unit you will be studying, to be used at the appropriate group meetings. Or design and make one International Chalice to be used at all of your group meetings.
2. Make a timeline on which the group can fill in founding dates of Unitarian*Universalism around the world. Display the timeline on a bulletin board for your congregation. You can find founding dates on the ICUU website at www.icuu.net or in the book, *A Global Conversation: Unitarian/Universalism at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, edited by Andrew Hill, et al. (2002). Prague: International Council of Unitarians and Universalists. See references, p. 17.
3. Read and discuss one or both short stories about Arius and Michael Servetus from McEvoy, D. (2003). *Credo International: Voices of Religious Liberalism from Around the World*. Del Mar, CA: Humanity Press, pages 1 to 9. Though the term Unitarian did not come into use until the 1560s, Arian and Servetus had decidedly “Unitarian” views.
4. Plant a mini-garden together in a large pot or planter box. Dedicate this “garden” to Unitarian*Universalists all over the world. Label it as such. Bring your mini-garden to each of your group meetings as a reminder that you are part of a larger movement.
5. Learn how to say Unitarian and/or Universalist in all the different languages represented by ICUU members and emerging member groups. (Hint: the ICUU website at www.icuu.net may be a good place to start your hunt.) In addition, learn to say “Thank You” or “Peace” in these languages. There are on-line dictionaries that might help. Make greeting cards using these words. Sell the cards and donate the money to help fund ICUU programs.
6. Have an international potluck. Ask members of the group to bring a dish from any one of the ICUU member or emerging member group countries.
7. Make an ICUU collage. Visit websites of ICUU member groups. Download images, photos, chalices and words to include in the collage. Members who have visited ICUU member countries or have attended any ICUU-sponsored functions might include photos from their trips. Also include images of flowers, trees and plants on the collage.
8. Using a current map of the world, label countries where Unitarian and Universalist groups are found. As you learn more about each group, you may add information such as founding date, name of founder, number of members, etc.
9. If members of your group have attended an ICUU-sponsored conference, meeting or workshop, set aside time when they can share what they know with the group.
10. Your own ideas.

The ICUU

II. SMALL GROUP WORSHIP

Preparing for Session 2

- ___ Make copies and hand out in advance *Small Group Worship – ICUU* (p. 16), or have members read the material online at <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>.
- ___ Make copies of handouts for the next session you plan to cover. These will be handed out when you meet for Session 2, the Small Group Worship.
- ___ Download and copy the Order of Service for the Small Group Worship – *U*U's Around the World* which is a separate file, <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>.
- ___ Choose, or have the group choose, in advance, one or more activities from *Harvesting: Additional Activities* (p. 14) to do after your Small Group Worship service, if appropriate. Prepare materials needed for the chosen activities.
- ___ Invite members to bring a flower, or cutting from a plant or tree that represents them to create a bouquet (or a drawing or photo of the plant) to display at the Small Group Worship service. Have a vase of water ready.
- ___ Look over the instructions for facilitating the session and the Order of Service so you are prepared and comfortable with the material and the flow of the session.

Facilitating Session 2

Small Group Worship is designed to be a worshipful time for self-reflection and for connecting with one another. The Small Group Worship for the ICUU is based on a covenant group format which is now being used at many international U*U meetings and conferences. (See Thandeka, 2002 in references). After creating the space and preparing the materials, simply follow the Order of Service.

Space

- ___ Arrive early to set up your room. Create a worship space that is different from how the space usually looks.
- ___ Set up a chalice. If your group has made an international chalice for your meetings (see *Harvesting*, p. 14), use it. Have matches handy.
- ___ Prepare a vase for the flowers and cuttings members will bring to create a mixed bouquet and/or have on display already, a mixed bouquet or a photo of a mixed bouquet or garden.
- ___ Have “world music” playing in the background.

Order of Service If you haven't already, download, copy and have available the Order of Service for the Small Group Worship. It has been designed to be printed or photocopied front to back and folded. Read through it carefully so you can lead it comfortably.

Songs If you are not familiar with a chosen hymn or don't have the music for it, feel free to substitute a different hymn that fits the theme of the service.

Preliminaries This is a time to make announcements and to ask for volunteers to help with the Small Group Worship tasks. If you will be following the group worship with one of the additional activities listed in *Harvesting* (p. 14), you may want to announce your agenda and what you need from the group.

After the Service Distribute handouts for your next meeting if appropriate. If you haven't done so already, you may want to make plans to do one of the activities listed for this unit (See *Harvesting*, p. 14) following this Small Group Worship. There are many to choose from including planting a mini-garden.

Handout: *Small Group Worship – ICUU*

After you have read the articles and reflected on the ICUU, you are ready to share in Small Group Worship.



Small Group Worship

Your facilitator will download and have ready the Order of Service for the Small Group Worship Service – *Unitarians and Universalists Around the World*

<http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>..

Bring a flower or cutting from a tree or plant that represents you to add to a bouquet for display at the service.

The Small Group Worship for the ICUU is based on a covenant group format that is now being used at many international U*U meetings and conferences. (See Thandeka, 2002 in references).

While participating in the Small Group Worship, listen deeply to the words of hymns, prayers and readings. Listen deeply to the words of others in your group as feelings and ideas are shared with one another.





The Tool Shed: *References and Additional Resources*

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