

Unitarian*Universalism in Australia, New Zealand and parts of Asia

Gentiana



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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.

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

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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>.*

Unitarian*Universalist Groups in Australia, New Zealand and parts of Asia: Preparing for this Unit

This unit is divided into two sessions. Session 1 covers the history, context, beliefs and practices of five Unitarian*Universalist groups in Australia, New Zealand and parts of Asia. Session 2 is a Small Group Worship service in a covenant group format in honor of these groups.

Facilitators should look over the entire unit to be prepared and comfortable with the material and the flow of the unit. They will need to decide which session(s) or parts of a session 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 wish to choose one or more activities from the list under Harvesting (p. 17) to do together after discussing the readings. These activities have been designed to honor other ways of learning, to create more 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. This will depend 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 want to 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.

Unitarian*Universalism in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Asia

I. HISTORY AND CONTEXT/BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Preparing for Session 1

- ___ Make copies and hand out in advance the article, *Sowers and Nurturers* (p. 5-6), the accompanying pre-reading activity (p. 5) and post-reading questions (p. 14), and the articles about the U*U groups covered in this unit (p. 7-13), 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. 18-19) in advance.
- ___ Choose, or have the group choose, in advance, one or more activities from *Harvesting: Additional Activities* (p. 17) to do after your discussion. Prepare materials needed for the chosen activities.
- ___ Invite members to bring items from any of the countries covered in the unit to display.
- ___ Arrive early to set up your room.
- ___ Set up a chalice. Have matches handy.
- ___ Bring a map or globe on which you can locate the countries of the Unitarian*Universalist groups covered in this unit.
- ___ Display a gentiana plant or a photo of gentiana.
- ___ Have music from any, or several, of the countries covered in this unit 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 items to display to put them out on a table, perhaps next to the chalice.
2. Chalice lighting:
A golden thread binds us to all that has been and will ever be. Here the tender soul yearns. Here the greatest dreams are sighted. Here the sacred flame burns. – Mark Allstrom, Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Association).
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. 17) 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.
6. Ask members to share and discuss answers to the pre-reading Tilling exercise on p. 5
7. Ask members to share their responses to the post-reading Hoeing exercise on p.14. When discussion has wound down, extinguish the chalice:
Be silent, make your mind calm and maintain it unruffled. You are the handiwork of mother earth. Consider your contribution for the betterment of humanity. – Walter Jayawardene, Sri Lanka (adapted).
8. Gather for your *Additional Activity* from *Harvesting* (p. 17), if your group decided to do so: make a newspaper or radio show, listen to Unitarian radio, read Jataka tales, etc.

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

Handout:



Tilling

Try to match each U*U group with the correct description.

Country	Descriptive information
1. Unitarian Universalism in Sri Lanka	<input type="checkbox"/> a. branched from a Seventh-Day Adventist tradition.
2. Unitarianism in Australia	<input type="checkbox"/> b. includes Buddhist Jataka tales as a source of religious inspiration.
3. Unitarianism in Indonesia	<input type="checkbox"/> c. dates back to the late 19 th and early 20 th centuries; one prominent native-born leader of the Unitarians there graduated from Harvard Divinity School in 1916.
4. Unitarianism in New Zealand	<input type="checkbox"/> d. can boast that a picture of one of its famous members was featured on a note of its country's currency.
5. Unitarianism and Universalism in Japan	<input type="checkbox"/> e. appointed the first woman minister in its country and a female trade unionist as Chairperson of one of its churches.



Planting

Read the brief introduction, *Sowers and Nurturers*. Then read about the four different U*U groups represented in this unit, p. 7-13.

Sowers and Nurturers

As sowers we go out to sow, to sow the seed of our liberal faith.

But we are conscious that the ground in which we sow can vary from place to place.

For some, the hard, stony ground of the secularized society.

For some, the fertile ground of people seeking refuge from regressive religion.

For some, the unbroken ground where our seed is new and the task is to just get rooted at all.

Some face the choking weeds of religious and political hostility; others are plagued by parasitic growths that sap their strength.

Everywhere the ground is different, but the seed we sow is resilient . . .

For our seed to flourish it must adapt to new environments . . .

from *The Ground in Which We Sow*
Clifford Reed, United Kingdom

The Reverend Reed's metaphor for Unitarian*Universalism around the world gives a particularly apt description of the U*U groups in the Australian and Asian island regions. Each group has a different environment it must adapt to and work with. Their sizes and ages vary. Their beliefs and practices all look a bit different. But each grows from the seed of free inquiry. Each is tended with care and love in the hope that it may grow and flourish.

In Asia, there are Unitarian*Universalist groups in India, Pakistan and the Philippines, Their histories, contexts, beliefs and practices are covered elsewhere in this curriculum workbook. (The complete curriculum is available at <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>).

There are also Unitarian* Universalist groups in Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Japan, and Indonesia. **In this curriculum, we will sometimes refer to this region as “Austral-Asia” when referring to the broad regional area in which these five groups are located.** This region is represented in our Garden of Unitarian*Universalism by the Gentiana family of flowers.

Like Unitarian*Universalism, Gentians are adaptable to a variety of climates and habitats: deserts, savannas, prairies, rainforests, temperate forests and even the cold tundra. Like Unitarian*Universalist groups in the Austral-Asia region, Gentians can be small and delicate (herbs), middle-sized (shrubs), or large (rainforest trees). Their flowers, like little gems, vary in color: blue, pink, purple, red, white, and yellow, just as the traditions and practices of the Austral-Asian U*U groups vary considerably. Gentians are useful to humans in many ways, as we hope Unitarianism*Universalism is useful to humans by providing a spiritual home where they can be free to question, learn, grow and change. The sowers and nurturers of Unitarianism*Universalism in Austral-Asia are careful and observant gardeners, mindful of the environment in which their seed has been planted.





(A chalice from the ANZUA website)

Unitarianism in Australia and New Zealand

Dynamic, open to change, Australia and New Zealand have long had reputations as lands of new possibilities. The same is true for Unitarianism in these countries. Australia is located southeast of Asia. New Zealand lies about 1000 miles southeast of Australia. Australia was originally inhabited by Aboriginal peoples and New Zealand by Maori tribes. Europeans began to arrive in numbers after Captain James Cook claimed Australia and New Zealand for Britain in the late 1700s. They brought with them their religious beliefs. Most of these early settlers were Protestants. Later immigrants from countries such as Italy brought a stronger Catholic presence. Continued immigration to these lands of “new possibilities” has reshaped the religious diversity of Australia and New Zealand. According to their 2001 Censuses, Christians from a variety of denominations represent the largest religious group but there are many non-Christian groups including a growing number of Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh groups. Many Australians and New Zealanders claim no religious affiliation; overall, Australia and New Zealand tend to be more secular than religious. There is no official state religion in either country.

The first Unitarian to arrive in Australia was Thomas Fyshe Palmer, a Unitarian minister who had been influenced by the writings of Joseph Priestley. He established Unitarian groups in Scotland, spoke out for political reform and was “transported” to Australia for sedition in 1794 for publishing and distributing a pamphlet critical of the king. He did not start a church during his years as a political prisoner in Australia. He died in Guam on his way back home. (McEvoy, 2003).

The first Australian Unitarian church was founded in Sydney in 1850. Soon afterwards communities were established in Melbourne (1852) and Adelaide (1854) (Western Australian..., n.d). Carved in wood in the Unitarian Church in Sydney are the words: “Think Truly, Speak Bravely and Act Justly” (Biester, n.d.). This sums up well the philosophy of Unitarians past and present in Australia and New Zealand who have a history rich in social activism and progressive views.

The Adelaide Unitarian Christian Church (now known as The Unitarian Church of South Australia, Inc.) was founded by a small group of men who had been Unitarians in England. They called John Crawford Woods, a Unitarian minister from Ireland, as their minister. Nearly 200 people attended his first service. Among them was Catherine Helen Spence, Australia’s most famous Unitarian. She was a writer and social activist. She worked for prison and election reform, services for orphaned children, and for the women’s suffrage movement. She was the first woman appointed to a school board in Australia, and the first woman member of a hospital committee along with being a founding member of several reform councils. Her face graced the Australian five-dollar note for several years (McEvoy, 2003).

Catherine Helen Spence was moved by Woods’ sermons that spoke of a just and benevolent God rather than an oppressive God “who pre-determined the destiny of mankind and foreordained most of them to eternal damnation” (McEvoy, 2003) – quite a new message for the largely Presbyterian Church of Scotland and Calvinist audience in attendance. Many of the congregants took to heart Woods’ challenge to “catch the spirit of Enthusiasm for Humanity” rather than dwell on one’s own personal salvation. Many were involved in movements promoting education and women’s suffrage (McEvoy, 2003).

Australian Unitarians can claim the first woman minister of any denomination in Australia. Martha Turner came to Australia in 1870 from England. She was appointed minister of the Melbourne Unitarian Church in 1874 after it was discovered that she was writing many of the sermons for her brother who was acting as lay preacher (McEvoy, 2003).

Throughout their history, the Unitarians of Melbourne have been involved in social justice issues. "The motto of the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church is 'Seek the Truth and Serve Humanity'. Unitarians in Melbourne have [...] served humanity by being active in the peace movement and in other issues of social concern such as [...] civil rights, the protection of state education, the movement against fascism, support for public enterprise, Aboriginal Land Rights, etc." (Melbourne..., 2003).

In New Zealand, Unitarian services can be traced back to Auckland in 1863. The first New Zealand Unitarian church was established in 1898. It was founded by and for "free-thinking people who disagreed with some of the teachings of Orthodox Christianity" (Auckland..., n.d.). Once again progressive views and social action come hand in hand with being a Unitarian. Auckland Unitarian Church history includes: in 1923, the election of a woman active in New Zealand's trade union and women's suffrage movements to the position of Chairperson of the Church; the first woman minister, in a New Zealand Church, Wilna Constable; members instrumental in the founding of the Sunshine Clubs for the elderly (1930s), the Mental Health Association, the Humanist Society (1960s), the Civilian Maimed Association (1970s); and active participation in organizations such as the Workers' Educational Association, Halt All Racist Tours, Campaign for Racial Equality and Amnesty International (Holt, n.d.).

Today Unitarianism is represented and organized in Australia and New Zealand by the Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Association (ANZUA), founded in 1974. For many of its more than 150-year presence in Australia and New Zealand, several of the Unitarian churches had 200 members. Membership in the once large churches dwindled following WWII, but in the 1980s new fellowships started developing in Christchurch and Blenheim in New Zealand and in Brisbane in Australia. Since 2000, fellowships have started in Wellington and Nelson in New Zealand and in Perth and Sydney in Australia. As in North America, spin-off groups sometimes form in Australian Unitarian churches as congregations grow and change. This works to meet the needs of a diverse group of people in a religion that honors diversity and a culture that is open to innovation. Total membership is now over 300 people and continues to grow.

In May 2004, President of the Unitarian church in Sydney, Peter Crawford, speaking to John Russell on Australia National Radio noted that the issue in Australia "is not to convince people of our viewpoint. I think great numbers of Australians would be Unitarian in spirit and at heart; that is, they want something more than just a strictly secular world, but at the same time they don't want to be doctrinally straitjacketed." (National Radio, 2004).

All the groups and the Association itself maintain connections with the British General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. The churches in Adelaide and Auckland are members of the Unitarian Universalist Association of the USA. ANZUA is a full member of the ICUU and the International Association of Religious Freedom. These connections are important to Australian and New Zealand Unitarians living as they do in a somewhat remote part of the world.

The mission statement of ANZUA affirms the ideals of freedom, reason and tolerance; justice, respect and equality for all people; the search for greater understanding and wisdom in an atmosphere of interdependent relationship and inclusivity; and reaching out to one another and to the wider community with love and compassion (Allstrom, 2003). "The Principles and Purposes

are not a statement of beliefs; they are more of a statement of the way that Unitarians expect to work together” (ANZUA Homepage, n.d.).

Unitarians in Australia and New Zealand generally gather for services on Sundays where they “sing hymns (from British and American hymnals), listen to music, meditate or pray, listen to sermons or addresses, and drink coffee” (Allstrom, 2003). Lighting of a chalice and candles of joy and concern are often part of their services as well.

Outreach plays an important role. ANZUA intermittently publishes a journal, *The Unitarian Quest*, and ANZUA member congregations publish their own newsletters. There are several e-newsgroups devoted to Unitarianism and for many years one could receive sermons by email through the Adelaide church!

One of the most innovative and exciting avenues to growth has been through Unitarian radio shows. On Sundays from 8:00 AM to 8:30 AM one can listen to *Expanding Horizons* on Radio Adelaide (101.5 FM). It is described as “a non-proselytizing radio program about spirituality and society, religion and culture [...] Following the Unitarian tradition of ‘show by deed, not by creed’, presenters aim to provide some soul-food for those people who wish to explore non-materialistic values, but who do not find attendance of religious services appealing or practicable” (Expanding Horizons, n.d.). The Christchurch congregation in New Zealand has also produced its own series of “Expanding Horizons” for local radio.

In addition to *Expanding Horizons*, there is also the Unitarian Half Hour broadcast by Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church. The program is called “Seek the Truth and Serve Humanity.” It airs at 10:30 AM each Saturday on radio station 3CR. They have been broadcasting for years, and the program has become very popular. They present talks on Unitarianism and on current issues in line with their principles. “It is interesting how many people tune in but don’t [attend church]” (Melbourne..., n.d.).

In New Zealand, one of the highlights on the calendar is the annual retreat at Takahanga Marae, Kaikoura, which has been held since 1998. In what must be one of the most beautiful places on the planet, UU’s from Nelson, Christchurch, Blenheim and Wellington gather for the spring equinox. Another, more recent and popular event that has drawn media attention is All Heretics Day. Other activities that New Zealand groups have been involved in are refugee support and supporting the civil union campaign.

Unitarians in Australia and New Zealand, living up to the reputation of being dynamic and open to new possibilities, reaching out in innovative ways, have made it possible for this part of our Unitarian*Universalist Garden to thrive and grow.



(Chalice symbol of the UUSL)

Unitarian Universalism in Sri Lanka

The “Resplendent Isle,” Sri Lanka, is located 48 km. (30 miles) south of India. Since earliest times, Sri Lanka has been a multi-ethnic society. Both Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus claim to be the first colonizers of Sri Lanka but “confirmation of either claim is elusive” (<http://members.tripod.com>, 2004). Sri Lanka’s history is ancient, complex and intricately tied to India’s history and domination by European colonial powers. Besides the long time presence of Buddhists and Hindus, its political and religious history includes the influence of Moorish traders who were Muslim, some of who settled in the southern part of the island in the 7th century, the take over by Portuguese colonizers in the 1500s who were Roman Catholic and intolerant of other religions, then colonization in the 1700s by the Dutch who monopolized trade, brought the Dutch Reformed Church to Sri Lanka and were intolerant of the Roman Catholics as well as the urban Buddhists and Hindus, domination by the British in the late 1700s and 1800s who brought with them Christian missionaries. Sri Lanka continued under British rule until it negotiated its independence after WWII in 1947 (<http://members.tripod.com>, 2004).

Present-day Sri Lanka is still experiencing political, ethnic and religious clashes especially between the Sinhalese majority, which comprises about 70 to 74 percent of the population, and the Tamil minority, which comprises 13 to 15 percent. Christians (mostly Catholic) make up about 8 percent of the population and Muslims about 7 percent. (<http://members.tripod.com>, 2004). Amongst all this turmoil between ethnic and religious groups is a small group of about 25 Unitarian Universalists.

Sri Lankan UUs are passionate about Unitarian Universalism and its values. Although most of the members of this small group are Sinhalese and come from a Buddhist background, ethnic and theological diversity is welcomed. The Sri Lankan UUs get religious inspiration from the Buddhist Jataka tales, stories of Hindu gods, and from nature. A main focus for the group is environmental and social action projects. Their religion is for them a “new approach to human life and to nature” (Jayawardena, 2003). The Unitarian Universalists of Sri Lanka (UUSL) is one of the founder members of the ICUU (www.icuu.net, 2004).



(The chalice symbol used by the Tokyo Unitarian Fellowship)

Unitarianism and Universalism in Japan

Lying in the Pacific Ocean off the northeastern coast of Asia is the island nation of Japan. The two main religions in Japan are Shinto and Buddhism, which have been part of Japanese culture for thousands of years. Christianity came to Japan in 1594 but went underground when Japan closed its doors to foreigners in the mid-1600s. Two hundred years later, in 1857, Japan opened its doors to missionaries, though today only about one percent of Japanese identify themselves as Christian. Japan is basically a secular society with Buddhist and Shinto traditions and ways of thinking tightly interwoven into the culture.

Unitarianism and Universalism have had a presence in Japan for about 100 years. During the first half of the 20th century in Japan there were several Universalist churches, a Japanese Kiitsu (Unitarian) Church, and the Japan Free Religion Association. Universalism came to Japan in the late 19th century through American missionaries. The missionaries and the Japanese leaders in the movement, such as the Reverend Akashi Shigetaro (see McEvoy, 2003), “were interested in promoting liberal religion and a vision of God and of humanity about which they were enthusiastic” (Reeves, 2004).

Unitarianism in Japan, prior to the Second World War, largely centered around one man, Shinichiro Imaoka, who graduated from Harvard Divinity School in 1916. He has been called the “Emerson of Japan.” His life and work have been documented by the eminent American scholar, Dr. George Williams (Dr. George..., 2001). Imaoka lived to be over 100 years old. During his long life he had a profound impact on the development of progressive and liberal religion in Japan (Biography..., 2000). He founded a liberal secondary school in Tokyo, in which was housed the Kiitsu Kyokai (Unitarian Church) and which was the foundation of the nation-wide Japan Free Religion Association. There has been talk among Japanese Unitarians of reviving this Association

Today there are two Universalist churches in Tokyo, a Unitarian Friends Circle, and the Tokyo Unitarian Fellowship, consisting of American and European members as well as Japanese. As of March 2005, there is also a Unitarian group meeting in Misawa, Japan (www.misawauu.150m.com). Cooperation among the Universalist and Unitarian groups in Japan, and between them and other organizations, is coordinated by the Unitarians and Universalists of Japan (UUJ), a committee of representatives from each of the organizations. Creation of this committee was prompted by the ICUU and its need to connect and communicate with the groups in Japan. The UUJ is not a member of the ICUU at this time.

Though the Dojin (Universalist) Christian Church is significantly larger than the others, all of these organizations are fairly small in size. In addition to having special celebrations and events, the two Universalist churches hold worship services every Sunday morning at 11:00 and publish regular newsletters in Japanese. The Unitarian Friends Circle meets twice a month in a coffee shop and publishes an occasional newsletter in Japanese. The Unitarian Fellowship has programs in English once a month, typically on the 2nd Sunday at 3:00 in the afternoon. They have been meeting at the International House of Japan but may move their services to the Dojin (Universalist) Christian Church in fall of 2004. Visitors to Japan may feel free to contact any of the leaders for additional information (see www.icuu.net).

(Reeves, 2004)



(Chalice designed by Sean Bolton, USA ©1997, not an official symbol of the IGCG)

Unitarianism in Indonesia

An archipelago located in SE Asia between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia is home to several ethnic groups and has a largely Muslim population (88 percent). About 5 percent of the population is Protestant and it was from the Protestant tradition, specifically Seventh-Day Adventist, that Unitarianism took root in Indonesia.

The Indonesia Global Church of God was organized in 1994 and legitimized by the Indonesian government in 2000. The church has nine congregations in seven cities with 250 worshippers who worship every Sabbath (Saturday) at each congregation with their ordained minister running all church activities and services (www.icuu.net, 2004).

Ellen Kristi Nugroho, daughter of founder Tjahjadi Nugroho, writes of Jemaat Allah Global Indonesia (Indonesia Global Church of God) the following,

“The history of our church begins in 1994. Tjahjadi Nugroho, 30 years a member of the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church in Semarang, Indonesia, attended an internal seminar concerning efforts to get the church revived. A big question came into his mind during that seminar, ‘How can we be like Christ if He is God?’ Several months later during a family Bible study, the Nugroho’s found some verses that clearly stated that Jesus is one of God’s creations (Rev. 3:14 and Col 1:15). The circle of the Bible study expanded to other Seventh-Day Adventist members. At first this Biblical discovery shocked us since, as devout Seventh-Day Adventists, we used to believe in the Trinity God. But after reading and comparing more and more verses, the new understanding inevitably got clearer. That year we abandoned our belief in the Trinity God and developed faith in the One True God as introduced to the ancestors of faith (Deut 6:4). Jesus was understood no more as God the Son but the divine messenger of God, an angel incarnated in flesh.

We tried to discuss our Biblical discovery about [u]nitarianism with pastor, scholars, and leaders of the SDA, which ended in disagreement and their unwillingness to give us freedom in understanding the Scriptures. After exhausting heated, and painful discussions with them, we decided to quit the denomination. At that time, there were already several more families and persons from other cities who believed in the One True God as we do.

We came into contact with the ICUU after we got information from the president of the International Council of the IARF when he visited Indonesia in 2002. Before that, we never had any contact or relationship with other UU organizations. We didn’t even know that our belief is known worldwide as Unitarianism. As of May 2003, we are pursuing membership to the ICUU.

We now consist of several congregations from several cities. Most of us have Christian religious roots, especially Seventh-Day Adventist. We open our hearts to listen, to learn, to accept truth and good teachings from all traditions of faith by the measure of conscience, reason and the Bible. We celebrate the Sabbath beginning at sunset on Friday at home with an opening worship, prayers, hymns and readings from the Bible. On Saturday mornings, we gather with other families and church members for Sabbath celebration of prayer, songs, Bible study, sharing of stories and testimonies, a sermon and finally a potluck lunch.

We teach our children how to pray, how to read the Bible, how to sing religious songs, how to serve in our church and neighborhood community. We let them socialize within our pluralistic society, answer their questions about other religions and faiths as objectively as possible and encourage them to dare to be different.

We regard the Bible as a source of meaningful stories about the experiences of our ancestors of faith. Although maybe not all things told in the Bible are facts, they reflect the involvement of God in the history of human beings. In addition to the Bible, we also study the Quran, which we regard as the inspired words spoken by the Prophet Mohammad. We were born, grew up and lived in the Java island. The Javanese culture is basically very tolerant to various religious views and teachings. For ages, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity have lived together side by side and sometimes blended with the native Javanese religious convictions. This religious tolerance is internalized within our church also. We strongly believe in the Bible, but we don't want to be fanatics. Instead, we'd like to live in harmony with our fellow humans who have other religious faiths or traditions. We highly regard conscience and honesty as the main principles to understand the truth and knowledge. We believe that man and woman will get salvation when they live their life with their purest conscience and honesty. The more good teachings they know, the more they must do them and the more it is their responsibility to do good deeds.”

(Nugroho, E.K., 2003)



Hoeing .

1. Check your answers to Tilling (p. 5) with the information from the articles. Do you need to change any of your answers?
2. What did you find most intriguing or surprising about each group represented in this unit?
3. Are there any practices of the groups represented in this unit that you would like to integrate or adapt into your personal practices, into your faith community or into outreach? If so, what are they?



Harvesting

Has your group decided to do any of the *Additional Activities* from Harvesting (p. 17) following the discussion of the reading? If so, prepare any materials you might need.



Unitarian*Universalist Groups in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Asia

II. SMALL GROUP WORSHIP

Preparing for Session 2

- ___ Make copies and hand out in advance. *Small Group Worship – Nature and Religion: Unitarianism*Universalism in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Asia* (p. 16), or have members read the material online at <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>.
- ___ Make copies of the handouts for the next unit you plan to cover. These will be handed out when you meet for Session 2, Small Group Worship.
- ___ Download and copy the Order of Service for the Small Group Worship – *Nature and Religion: Unitarianism*Universalism in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Asia*, 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. 17) to do after your Small Group Worship service, if appropriate. Prepare materials needed for the chosen activities.
- ___ Invite members to bring items from countries covered in this unit to display at the Small Group Worship service.
- ___ Look over the instructions for facilitating the session and the Order of Service to be 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 honoring Unitarian*Universalist groups in Australia, New Zealand and parts of Asia 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). 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. Have matches handy.
- ___ Display a gentiana plant or a photo of gentiana.
- ___ Have music from one of the countries represented in this unit playing in the background.
- ___ Invite members to display items from countries represented in this unit.

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 has a similar theme.

Preliminaries This is a time to make announcements and to ask for volunteers to help with the Small Group Worship tasks. If you are using this curriculum in a retreat or workshop setting and will be following the group worship with one of the additional activities listed in *Harvesting* (p. 17), 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. You may want to make plans to do one of the activities listed on p. 17 following the Small Group Worship. There are many to choose from including listening to Unitarian radio, studying the Quran, and making a radio show.

**Handout: *Small Group Worship –
Unitarian*Universalism in Australia, New Zealand and parts of Asia***

After you have read the articles and reflected on the Austral-Asian U*U groups represented in this unit, 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 – Nature and Religion: *Unitarian*Universalists in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Asia* <http://www.icuu.net/resources/curriculum.html>

Bring an item from one of the countries represented in this unit, if you have one, to display at the service.

The Small Group Worship for U*U groups in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Asia 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). There is no article to accompany the Small Group Worship service, only an Order of Service, which is a separate file and will be downloaded and copied by the facilitator.

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.





Harvesting: *Additional Activities*

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

1. Read Jataka tales and tales of Hindu gods and goddesses. You may find some at your local public library, particularly in the children's section or at the following websites:
[http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php3?author=babbitt&book=morejataka&story= contents](http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php3?author=babbitt&book=morejataka&story=contents)
<http://members.tripod.com/~srinivasp/mythology/jataka.html>
<http://www.hindukids.org/stories/>
Discuss how the morals and lessons illustrated in these stories relate to Unitarian*Universalism.
2. Listen to *Expanding Horizons*, the Unitarian radio show from Adelaide. Radio Adelaide provides "real radio on demand", accessible via its website at <http://radio.adelaide.edu.au>. You can listen by following the links provided on that website: Click 'Listen Online'; then click 'Radio Adelaide LIVE'). Your PC will need to have software such as *Real Player* installed. In order to find your local time corresponding to 8:00 AM in Adelaide, visit www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/; Click on the *Fixed Time Calculator* at the bottom of the page. In the resulting dialog box specify 8:00 AM in Adelaide, South Australia.
3. Plan and tape your own Unitarian*Universalist "radio" program about U*Us in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Asia for the children and youth in your congregation. Include music, information, questions, stories (see #4 below and #1 above), and ideas for fun activities.
4. Illustrate or dramatize one or more of the stories of Unitarian*Universalists described in Don McEvoy's book, *Credo International: Voices of Religious Liberalism from Around the World*. It includes biographies of U*Us from Australia and Japan. You can order the book through the ICUU website: www.icuu.net.
5. UUs in Sri Lanka feel a deep connection to nature. Create a bulletin board display that illustrates your group's connection to nature. Include inspirational poems or prayers, photos of native plants of your area and information on preserving local natural habitat.
6. Want to know what your Adelaide, Australia counterparts have been hearing at their services? Choose a sermon at <http://homepages.picknowl.com.au/unitariansa/index.htm>.
7. Like our UU brothers and sisters in Indonesia, you too can study the Quran as part of your religious study. A wonderful resource can be found at <http://www.submission.org/YES/>
8. Create a newspaper that provides information on Austral-Asia U*U groups. Use information from this unit and updated information from the ICUU website news link: <http://www.icuu.net/news/index.html>. Include news articles, comic strips, an advice column, "ads", etc. Be creative! Make the newspaper available to members of your congregation including the kids. Put it on your church website for others to enjoy.
9. If members of your group have had personal experience with any of the countries represented in this unit, set aside time when they can share their experiences with the group.
10. Your own ideas.



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