



Home Connection December 2010

God

Chalice Lightings:

We light this flame
this symbol of energy
of light, of life
of the energy within us
of the light of our life
of the light that is in us
of the light that is us.

-- Janet Goode

Whatever road I take
joins the highway
that leads to God.

-- Persian Scripture

Great Spirit, fill us with light.
Give us the strength to understand and eyes to see.
Teach us to walk the soft earth as relatives to all that live.

-- Sioux Prayer

Story:

Hide-and-Seek with God

By Mary Ann Moore

Once upon a time God said, "I'm bored because I don't have anything to do. I want to play with my friends." And because God is God, as soon as the words were spoken, God's friends were there. When God saw them all gathered, God said, "I've been bored because I haven't had anything to do. Let's play something."

"Good idea," said God's friends. "What shall we play?"

God thought for a minute and then said, "I know, let's play hide-and-see!"

The friends all said, "Yay!" They knew that hide-and-seek with God was always exciting and different because God was the one who hid and God always thought of wonderful places to hide.

God's friends closed their eyes tight and counted to ten. When they opened their eyes, God wasn't there anymore. So they all went off to look for God.

One friend decided to look close on the earth and soon came to a meadow. As he was searching, he stopped to admire the tender new sprouts of green grass pushing their way up toward the sun. As he bent over to look more closely at the tender green, he realized there was something special and amazing and wonderful about it. So he jumped up and ran back to home base, calling out, "I found God! God is green and growing. I found God in the grass!"

Another one of God's friends decided to look for God in the night. She watched the sun go down, and heard the work-a-day noises stop, and saw the lights in the houses go out. As it got darker and the peaceful night wrapped itself around her, she listened very hard, and then she realized there was something special and amazing and wonderful about it. And when it was so still that she could see and hear nothing at all, she suddenly jumped up and ran to home base, calling out, "I found God! God is dark and peaceful. I found God in the night!"

A third friend looked on the earth and felt the mystery of the grass growing toward the sun. He stayed and watched the night come on, and he felt the mystery of the darkness and the stars. He thought to himself, "These mysteries are special and amazing and wonderful." But when he finally came back to home base, he said, "I found wonderful mysteries but I'm not sure if I want to call them God."

A fourth friend decided to look for God where people were. He joined a group of people going home from work and went with them into the store where they bought food. He went with them back out on the street as they started for their homes. He was with them when someone came up and said, "Please, I'm very hungry. Could you share a little food with me?" The people readily agreed and as he watched them share, he realized there was something special and amazing and wonderful about those people. He turned around and ran to home base, calling out, "I found God! God is love and sharing. I found God in people who care for others!"

Finally, two more of God's friends, a boy and a girl, decided to look for God together. After a time, they came to a house and decided to look for God in the house. In the house they saw a room, and they looked for God in the room. In the room they saw a mirror, and they looked for God in the mirror. As they looked into the mirror, they realized there was something special and amazing and wonderful being reflected in it. They turned around and ran to home base, calling out, "We found God! We found God in us!"

At this God appeared again and said, "I had so much fun! Weren't those good hiding places? Some of you found me, others weren't sure, and others are still looking. That's OK because the most important thing is just to play the game. Let's do it again! I'm sure I can think of some other good hiding places." And they all called out, "Olly, olly, oxen free, free, free!" And the game started all over again.

The Story "Hide-and-Seek with God" can be found in the curriculum Stories About God by Mary Ann Moore. The story is included in the collection of stories from the curriculum Hide-and-Seek with God published by Skinner House Books in 1994. The story also appears on the UUA's Worship Web as a reading resource at

<http://www.uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/readings/submissions/5953.shtml>.

Story Questions:

- What is the most important part of the story to you, and why?
- What lesson can you learn from the story?
- Where do you find God?
- How would you play with God?

Possible Activities:

- Consider creating a piece of art, or writing a poem that reflects your sense or vision of God.
- With family and/or friends make a list of all the names you have heard used to refer to God. Discuss them. Which of them resonate or feel right to you.
- Look up the many names of God in various religions as found on the Wikipedia site http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_God. This site also describes traditions around the use of such names and the prohibitions that surround the use of the name of God in some faiths.
- The term "God" is often difficult. Consider how you would name the *divine*, or that which is most sacred to you.

Resources:

Books for Children:

Because Nothing Looks Like God, by Laurence Kushner and Karen Kushner, Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000

In God's Name, by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, Jewish Lights Publishing, 1994

God in Between, by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998

What is God?, by Etan Boritzer, Firefly books, 1990

What About Gods? (Skeptics Bookshelf Series), Chris Brockman, Prometheus Books, 1979

How do you Spell God?, Marc Gellman, Monseignor Thomas Hartman, and Jos a. Smith, HarperTrophy, 1998

Hide-And-Seek With God, Mary Ann Moore, Skinner House Books, 1994

Resources for Parents:

Teaching Your Children About God: A Modern Jewish Approach, David J. Wolpe, Harper Paperbacks, 1994

Parenting Beyond Belief: On Raising Ethical, Caring Kids Without Religion, Dale McGowan, editor, AMACOM, 2007

Gently Lead: How to Teach Your Children About God While Finding Out for Yourself, Polly Berrien Berends, Crossroads Publishing Company, 1997

Resources for Adults:

Explore the following readings in Singing the Living Tradition published by the Unitarian Universalist Association. (Our hymnal)

417 by Robert French Leavens

#446 by Joan Goodwin

#467 from Deuteronomy 6

#504 by e.e. cummings

#513 from Matthew 6

#514 by Lala Winkley

#516 Khasi Unitarian Prayer

#517 by Starhawk

#518 from the Objivay Indians

#520 from the Tewa Indians

#524 by Starhawk

535 from Psalm 42

#549 by Teilhard de Chardin

#566 from Adapted from Francis David

#607 from Shams Ud-Dun Mohammad Hafiz

#608 by Kabir

#611 from the Bhagavad-Gita

#639, I John 4

The Case for God, by Karen Armstrong, Anchor, 2010

A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam by Karen Armstrong, Ballentine Books, 1994

The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins, Mariner Books, 2008

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism, by Timothy Keller, Riverhead Trade, 2009

God, A Biography, by Jack Miles, Vintage, 1996