

Session # 2 Old Turtle

Overview

When all of creation, trees, stones, ants, the sky, fish, begins arguing over who or what God is, quiet Old Turtle is the only one who has the wisdom and ability to see beyond herself to capture the essence. The debate escalates until Old Turtle finally speaks: "STOP!" People also appear and soon are fighting among themselves over the nature of God.

Goal: Use this session to introduce the meaning of covenant, to create a class covenant and to talk about how to live harmoniously as a class.

Principle: Be kind in all you do.

Source: The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.

Belief: We can change our choices.

UU Identity: Listen to others

Holiday/Theme: Earth Day

Supplies:

Book

Copies of Take Home Page

Supplies for the activities you chose

Décor for the room

Turtle collectibles and toys, optional

A turtle collectible for a Talking Stick.

Set Up: Find a turtle toy or sculpture who can be used as the "Talking Stick" for the Sharing Circle as "Old Turtle," optional.

Ask in your local congregation if there is a pet turtle who can visit.

Bring in or ask your congregation to borrow non-delicate turtle collectibles.

Entering Activity: Invite the children to investigate the turtle items.

Find a turtle coloring sheet as an additional activity. There is a great one at the Free Kids Coloring website - http://www.freekidscoloring.com/big_turtle-8566.php

Sharing Circle:

After the children have arrived, invite them to gather in a circle around the chalice for the story.

Chalice Lighting:

Bring out the chalice and candle, matches, match holder (an ashtray or clay saucer will work,) and snuffer. Set out the chalice and the water bowl with rocks to drop in for sharing "Joys and Concerns."

Invite the children to recite with you the following chalice lighting words:

“To this quiet place of beauty we come from busy things, pausing for a moment for the thoughts that quiet brings.”

Light the match and hold it to the candle wick.

“We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.”

Place the spent match in the match holder.

Invite the children to share important things that have happened in their lives, passing a talking stick, shell or rock to indicate whose turn it is to share. In this session, it is especially effective to use a sculptured turtle to pass around. Have each child share a joy or a concern by dropping a small polished rock into the water bowl.

Say something like: “We will now share our joys and concerns in our sharing circle.

Each of us will have a turn to speak while the rest listen. You don’t have to share, you can always say, “pass.”

After everyone has shared who wishes to, add one more rock and say, “For all the joys and concerns which remain unspoken, we add this rock.”

You may prefer to extinguish the chalice flame with the snuffer at this point.

“Though we extinguish this flame, we kindle the flame to carry in our hearts together.”

Read “**Old Turtle.**”

UU Identity teachable moment: Ask the children for their reflections on the story. Say something like, “Our second principle states that “Be kind in all you do.” Show them the poster of the Do-Re-Mi Principles with the Principles in children’s language. Sing it if you wish. “In this book, Old Turtle reminds the animals and the people that they need to be kind to each other and remember that we are a message of love and a prayer from the earth. Sometimes it seems that people **do** forget that we are a message of love and a prayer from the earth. It happens here in our congregation, too. How can we in this class, remember to see God/ Spirit of Life in one another? How to we want to behave together?”

Elicit the children’s responses.

Use these responses to create a class covenant.

Say something like, “Here’s a new word: covenant. A covenant is a set of promises that we make to each other about how we will behave together. We Unitarian Universalists like to work together to create these promises.” Show the Covenant word in the adult language version of the Principles and Sources, optional, if you have one on your wall.

Describe the activities that you have prepared and invite the children to engage in them.

Activities: Choose from the following options.

1) **Making a Covenant Poster**

Chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip chart

Marker

Posterboard or large piece of paper

White drawing paper or index cards

Glue

Continue creating a classroom covenant by writing down the children’s suggestions on a chalkboard, whiteboard or flip chart. When there is consensus among the group that it is

done, ask them to make artwork on the index cards to glue onto the covenant while you write out their promises on a large piece of paper or a posterboard. It might be a small turtle artwork, or something that reflects what is in the covenant.

2) Playdough turtles

Offer play dough for making sculptures, perhaps of turtles, perhaps free form, to take home.

4) Turtle Shell Role Play

Make turtle shells from large circular pieces of flipchart paper, posterboard or cardboard. Cut out wedges and tape together the open edges to create a flatish cone shape, similar to a turtle shell. Invite the children to decorate it and crawl around as if they were a turtle.

5) Take pictures for your own Picture Book.

Closing: As the group to pause and listen for a moment for the closing.

“Do you want to see God in each other?” “Turn to your neighbor and smile!”

Background for Teachers:

The closing was taught to me by a Rabbi. I love the image of the divine within each of us that comes out when we smile.

Turtles remind us to take things slowly and carefully. This message is the same message as the one as we create a covenant with each other. Be purposeful and conscious of how you wish to act together. A covenant is not a set of rules, but a set of promises to each other.