

Session # 20 Henry Climbs a Mountain

Overview

The book takes its inspiration from "Civil Disobedience," in which Henry David Thoreau describes a night spent in jail. In this story Henry the bear, confined to a cell after refusing to pay taxes to a state that allows slavery, takes his crayons and begins to draw pictures on the wall. Reminiscent of *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, Henry then climbs into the scene he is creating. Hiking along the mountain path, he befriends a traveler who is walking northward to freedom, obviously an escaped slave. Clearly the bear, like the man, sees things a little differently from most. Henry David Thoreau hoped others would also stop paying their taxes. If enough people went to jail, the leaders of the country would change the laws and end slavery forever. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King were inspired by Thoreau's writings.

Goal: To become familiar with the idea that one person can help bring peace and justice to the world.

Supplies:

Book

Copies of Take Home Page

Supplies for the activities you chose

Décor for the room or chalice lighting altar – a crayon.

Camera for taking pictures for your own picture book

Set Up:

Research any congregational justice projects that you wish to discuss with the participants. Invite a guest who is involved in a justice project.

Entering Activity:

Make available the bear coloring sheet, below, as well as blank white paper. Invite the children to color.

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, matchbook, match holder, 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."

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. This would be a good session to pass around a crayon as a Talking Stick. 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 "**Henry Climbs a Mountain.**"

UU Identity teachable moment: Ask the children for their reflections on the story. Say something like, "Our sixth principle asks us to "Work for a peaceful world." 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, Henry goes to jail because he doesn't want to pay taxes that support slavery. We Unitarian Universalists seek to learn how to live in a just and peaceful world. Today, each of us will be able to try some of the things mentioned in the book." Describe the activities that you have prepared and invite the children to engage in them.

Activities: Choose from the following options.

1) **Take pictures for "Our Own Picture Book."**

2) **Sing "The Bear Went Over the Mountain." As in the book.**

For the tune (Sung to "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow") visit

<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/lyrics/bhttp://kids.niehs.nih.gov/lyrics/bearwent.htm>

The bear went over the mountain, the bear went over the mountain

The bear went over the mountain, to see what he could see.

And all that he could see, and all that he could see

Was the other side of the mountain, the other side of the mountain

The other side of the mountain, was all that he could see.

3) **Draw with Crayons.**

Invite the children to create their own crayon landscape. Will it be a mountain, or a tree house, or a desert, or ?

4) **Discussion about peace and justice.**

Invite the children to tell something about what their family does for peace and justice. Has anyone participated in a peace rally, or marched in a parade? Have you helped in a peace or justice project that your congregation sponsors? If there is something that your congregation does, mention it as an opportunity to work for peace and justice.

5) Play a shoe game.

Henry's adventure started when he drew a shoe. Try this shoe game! Every child throws their shoes into a pile in the middle of the circle. One child will cover their eyes (closed or with a blindfold) and feel around for their shoes. Which ever ones they pick - they have to guess who they belong to, or put them back on their feet!

Closing: Make a circle by linking hands. Say something like, "We as Unitarian Universalists (or repeat the name of your congregation) wish to work for peace and justice and do interesting things just like Henry David Thoreau." Sing the Do-Re-Mi Principles song. "Go in Peace."

Background for Teachers:

Here is what H.D. Thoreau wrote in his book "Walden."

"One afternoon, near the end of the first summer, when I went to the village to get a shoe from the cobbler's, I was seized and put into jail, because I did not pay a tax to, or recognize the authority of the state which buys and sells men, women, and children, like cattle at the door of it's senate house."

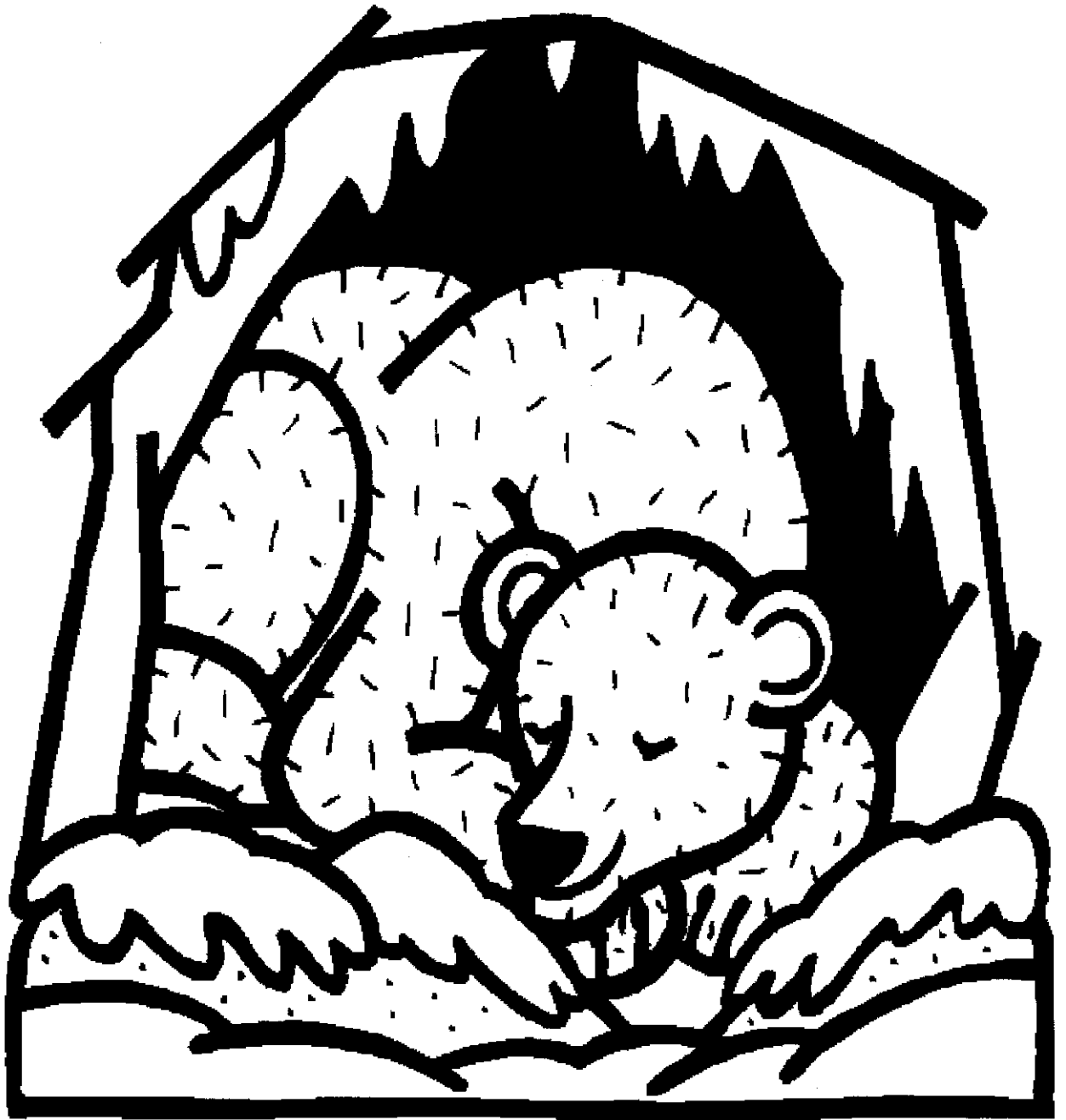
Unitarian Henry David Thoreau (born David Henry Thoreau; July 12, 1817 – May 6, 1862) was an American author, poet, naturalist, tax resister, development critic, surveyor, historian, philosopher, and leading transcendentalist. He is best known for his book *Walden*, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings, and his essay, *Civil Disobedience*, an argument for individual resistance to civil government in moral opposition to an unjust state.

Thoreau's books, articles, essays, journals, and poetry total over 20 volumes. Among his lasting contributions were his writings on natural history and philosophy, where he anticipated the methods and findings of ecology and environmental history, two sources of modern day environmentalism.

He was a lifelong abolitionist, delivering lectures that attacked the Fugitive Slave Law while praising the writings of Wendell Phillips and defending abolitionist John Brown. Thoreau's philosophy of civil disobedience influenced the political thoughts and actions of such later figures as Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Thoreau is sometimes cited as an individualist anarchist as well as an inspiration to anarchists. Though *Civil Disobedience* calls for improving rather than abolishing government – "I ask for, not at once no government, but at once a better government" – the direction of this improvement aims at anarchism: "That government is best which governs not at all;" and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have." from Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_David_Thoreau

Picture Book UU uses three other of Johnson's "Henry Books:" Henry Builds a Cabin, Henry Hikes to Fitchburg, and Henry Works.



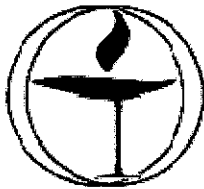


Picture Book U.U. Identity: Henry Climbs a Mountain

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