

Session # 17 On the Night You Were Born

Overview

The birth of each baby-"the one and only ever you"-causes jubilation throughout creation when bears dance and the moon smiles. The book helps emphasize the Unitarian Universalist poem by Sophia Lyons Fahs in which "Each Night a Child is Born is a Holy Night" and the U.U. principle that each person is worthwhile.

Goal: To celebrate the uniqueness of each person with a birthday party for all.

Principle: Each person is worthwhile

Source: The sense of wonder we all share.

Belief: We believe that each person has good in them.

UU Identity: Individuality

Holiday/Theme: Birthday

Supplies:

Book

Copies of Take Home Page

Supplies for the activities you chose

Décor for the room or chalice lighting altar – a small wrapped present.

Camera for taking pictures for your own picture book

Set Up: Purchase or make a birthday cake or cupcakes or other birthday food. Check on any food allergies among the children.

Entering Activity:

Decorate the room as if for a birthday party with décor, such as crepe paper swags across the ceiling and windows, balloons, ribbons around the chairs, etc.

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 the small wrapped present 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 "**On the Night You Were Born.**"

UU Identity teachable moment: Ask the children for their reflections on the story. Say something like, "Our first principle states that "Each person is worthwhile." 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, when a child is born, many magical things happen. We Unitarian Universalists celebrate each child and each person as worthwhile and unique. Today, each of us will be able celebrate our birthdays as a way of showing that we believe each person is worthwhile. When is your birthday?" Invite the children to say when their birthday really is. 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 "Happy Birthday" to all.**

If you have a few children, you may wish to sing to each child, otherwise sing "to all."

3) **Serve the Birthday cake or other birthday food.**

Decide how many candles to put on the cake, turn out the lights, then light them. Use the special mood of the lit candles to read "Each Night a Child is Born" in the "Singing the Living Tradition" hymnal, # 616. Invite the children to blow them out.

Eat the birthday cake (or cupcakes). Ask the children if there are any stories about their birth that they wish to share with the group.

4) **Opening the present and visualization.**

Prewrap a small box (and use in the Talking Circle)

Inside place a small "treasure" symbol, such as a sparkling piece of jewelry, a pretend gem, or a glitter star.

CD player and meditative CD.

Paper, pencils and markers

Hold the small wrapped present from the Talking Circle. Invite each child to try to guess what is inside it. Open the present and hold up the “treasure.” Say something like, “The gem represents the treasure that is inside each of us. Get into a comfortable position (laying down on the floor is great if that’s an option), and I’ll turn out the lights and turn on some music for a birthday meditation. Let’s find out what treasure is inside of us.

First, imagine that each muscle is being relaxed. Close your eyes and take a deep breath and let it out with a noise. Take another breath and let it out with a different noise. Finally, take a really deep breath and let it out with no noise at all. Your toes are soft, your legs are heavy. Your hips and torso flatten as you breathe slowly in and out. Your shoulders move down away from your neck and your arms and hands open slowly and gently. Your neck and head relax, your tongue drops from the roof of your mouth. Your jaw relaxes. Imagine that there’s a white light that enters your feet, spreads through your body and beams out of the top of your head. You follow that light and find yourself in a beautiful place, with green grass and rolling hills all around.

You walk down a path that appears at your feet and notice friendly creatures around you, giving you encouragement. You notice trees and flowers along the path. You look ahead and there’s a special rock. What does it look like? You approach it and stand next to it. A little person comes out from behind the rock. That person tells you to lift the rock and you do. There is a special treasure under the rock, just for you. You pick it up and hold it next to your ear. It whispers to you, a message only you can hear about a great treasure that only you possess. Take a moment and really listen.... You put it in your pocket and turn back onto the path. Slowly, you walk along the path and it starts to get whiter and whiter. The green hills fade into white light and you return slowly to your own body, in this room, and you hear the noises around you. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and return to this place.”

Once everyone has “returned” as them to draw a picture or write down what they saw. Continue the meditative music. Finally, gather in a circle and invite those who wish to share their experience. Invite them to share their picture or tell the group in words. Say something like, “What did it look like? What did you see? What did you hear? Did you find out what your treasure was? If not, that’s O.K. there’s no rush. Perhaps it will be revealed some day in a dream or after thinking about it more.”

3) Give each child a “gem.”

Purchase “gem” type beads and give each child one to represent the gift that they bring to the world. String them on a piece of yarn or cord. One teacher found plastic diamond-shaped gem beads at Hobby Lobby, a crafts store.

4) Make a birthday card for yourself.

Construction paper, copies of the template, below or 8 1/2 x 11 white paper
Glittery medium, glitter pens, or sticker stars, etc.

Envelopes and stamps, optional, if you are going to mail it through the post office.

Invite the children to make a Birthday card for themselves. Encourage them to use a glittery medium to represent something they discovered about the treasure that is inside of them.

Consider mailing them through the post office and have each child put their card in an envelope and put a stamp and their name on it. The teachers may have to address it using a congregational directory or with the help of the DRE.

Or

Send it home with the children.

Closing: Make a circle by linking hands. Say something like, “We as Unitarian Universalists (or repeat the name of your congregation) believe that each person is worthwhile and magical.” Sing “Happy Birthday” one more time together then sing the Do-Re-Mi Principles song. “Go in Peace.”

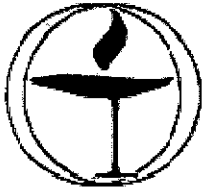
Background for Teachers:

There are two books in this genre that could be used. The other is called “On the Day You Were Born” by Debra Frasier. I prefer “On the Night You Were Born” because I like the illustrations and poetic pace better, but either could be used.

Happy Birthday!

Your "treasure" is:

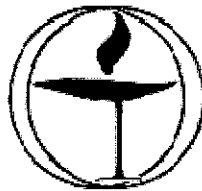
Each Night a Child is Born is a Holy Night.
- Unitarian Sophia Fahs



**Picture Book U.U. Identity: On the Night You Were Born
Take Home Page**

Today we read, **On the Night You Were Born** by Nancy Tillman. The birth of each baby-"the one and only ever you"-causes jubilation throughout creation when bears dance and the moon smiles. The book helps emphasize the Unitarian Universalist poem by Sophia Lyons Fahs in which "Each Night a Child is Born is a Holy Night" and the U.U. principle that each person is worthwhile.

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