

## Session # 8 If I Were President

### Overview

Here's a book about the diverse duties of the president of the United States. Beginning with campaign speeches and posters, six children take turns posing as the president while providing information about the rewards and responsibilities of the position. The topics include the White House, Congress, the creation of laws, the cabinet, veto power, Air Force One, and the Secret Service. Children will enjoy the idea of serving cookies in the Oval Office and being made into the face on a dollar bill.

**Goal:** We help shape the world around us and help make things happen.

**Principle:** All people have a say.

**Source:** The use of reason and the discoveries of science.

**Belief:** We learn best together.

**UU Identity:** Value democracy.

**Holiday/Theme:** Elections

### Supplies:

Book

Copies of Take Home Page

Supplies for the activities you chose

Décor for the room or chalice lighting altar – a flag, optional.

Camera for taking pictures for your own picture book

**Set Up:** Locate a flag.

### Entering Activity:

Invite the children to design a flag or color a flag coloring sheet.

### 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 flag 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 "**If I Were President.**"

**UU Identity teachable moment:** Ask the children for their reflections on the story. Say something like, "Our fifth principle states that "Each person has a say." 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, we imagine what it would be like to be the President. In our country grown ups have a say in who to elect President. We vote in elections. We Unitarian Universalists work for peace, liberty and justice for all. These words are in our principles (show the adult language in Principle #6.) Do they sound like words used in any other place? (The Pledge of Allegiance- you may wish to recite it together as one activity, below.)

Today, each of us will be able to think about what dreams we have for the country and how we might help them come true." 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) **Recite the Pledge of Allegiance.**

*I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.*

*And to the republic for which it stands,*

*One nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.*

It is respectful to recite the pledge with your hand over your heart.

The original Pledge went like this: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. America."

- from [wikipedia.org/wiki/Pledge\\_of\\_Allegiance](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Pledge_of_Allegiance)

3) **The Declaration of Independence**

Here is Jefferson's famous preamble to the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." There's that word again, liberty, which John Adams worked so hard for.

Order a parchment reproduction of the Declaration of Independence and find John Adams' signature on it (farthest right column of signatures.) One source for a large

parchment poster is <http://www.libertybellmuseum.com/MuseumShop/1300poster.htm> which sells for about \$10.00. At the same museum shop, you can order quill feather pens which would make a fun activity – have the children sign their name with a quill pen.

**4) Colonial Children's Games:** Our country was created before TV and before Radios were invented! There was no electricity invented yet. It was called Colonial times, in 1776. Colonial children played more games and had fewer toys than modern children. Any playthings that they had were homemade by themselves or adults. These games included Leap Frog, Hopscotch, Hop Skip and Jump, Squat tag, Stone Poison, Cat's Cradle and Bowling on the grass. Some of these games you may have heard of and some you may not. Here's how to play each one:

**LEAPFROG**-Play in partners. One player squats down while the other gently places his hands on the squatters back and leaps over. You can have classroom races.

**HOPSCOTCH**-Today's version of Hopscotch is much the same. Use a stick to mark Hopscotch squares in the dirt. Find a rock to throw as a marker.

**HOP SKIP AND JUMP**-Three motions are done in the order-hop, skip and jump-for distance, without a pause. Class members can take turns measuring the distance covered to determine the winner.

**SQUAT TAG**-A player is "safe" when in a squatting position. "It" tries to tag players not squatting.

**STONE POISON**-A player is "safe" when standing on a rock or stone. If you cannot collect enough stones to play, then cut "stones" from paper or cardboard to scatter on the playground.

**CAT'S CRADLE**-This game is also called Cratch Cradle. One player stretches a length of yarn over the extended fingers of both hands in a symmetrical form. The second player uses his fingers to remove the yarn without dropping the loops and tries to make another figure.

**BOWLING ON THE GRASS**-Set up empty milk cartons on the grass and roll a ball from a distance of about 15 feet. Try to knock over the cartons. Play on teams or individually scoring a point each time a carton is hit. (Of course, colonial children did not have milk cartons or the nice balls that children of today do!) from "Making Colonial Toys" <http://www.ic.sunysb.edu/Class/est572/joreste/#Toys>

**5) What dreams do you have? How can you make them come true?**

Draw a picture of a dream or wish that you have? Gather in a group and share how you might make it come true.

**Closing:** Make a circle by linking hands. Say something like, “We as Unitarian Universalists (or repeat the name of your congregation) wish to help create a peaceful world with justice and liberty for all.” Sing the Do-Re-Mi Principles song. “Go in Peace.”

**Background for Teachers:**

It wasn't until 1954 that the words, “under God,” were added to the Pledge, originally penned in 1892. President Eisenhower said, “These words [“under God”] will remind Americans that despite our great physical strength we must remain humble. They will help us to keep constantly in our minds and hearts the spiritual and moral principles which alone give dignity to man, and upon which our way of life is founded.”

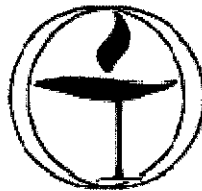


### **Picture Book U.U. Identity: If I Were President**

#### **Take Home Page**

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