



FAMILY REFLECTION

June 2016 Simplicity

Rituals help us slow down, create a practice of mindfulness, and reinforce what is most important. We invite JUC families to sit down together for a family ritual of sharing and reflection. Most of your children's spiritual and religious development takes place within your family and we hope to assist you to be more intentional.

We offer a simple ritual that includes lighting a chalice (the symbol of Unitarian Universalism), opening words to say together, some questions you can use for reflection and sharing together, and a unison closing. The theme and questions are based on the same monthly themes that are reflected in sermons, our small group ministry programs and our monthly Children's Chapel.

Choose one or more nights each week to gather before eating dinner or at bedtime. We recommend the time you pick be consistent. The power of ritual is that it be predictable and regular. Feel free to adapt the reflection questions to meet your family's needs.

You will need a chalice, a small candle (it could be either electric for younger children or wax) and matches.

Unison Opening Words



We are a Unitarian Universalist family.
We are a family of open minds,
We are a family of helping hands,
We are a family of caring hearts.
Our family cares for the earth
and works for justice for all people.

Chalice Lighting



Today we light this chalice to honor our family that is slowing down and breathing deeply with each other.

Reflection



The school year has come to an end. Sometimes summer feels like a simpler time with less activities and homework. Reflect back on this past year of school, how have you grown? What challenges did you overcome? What was particularly hard about this past year? Listen to one another without challenging each other's reflections.

Unison Closing Prayer



These are Reverend Wendy's Words from the Blessing Cantata. They seem to fit simplicity too!

If there are words to be spoken, let your voice speak them.

If there are hands to be touched, let your hands hold them.

If there is silence to be held, let your witness give it.

If there is hurt to be named, let your ears hear it.

If there are lonely ones, let your eyes meet them.

Reflection 2

Electronics can do many things to enhance our lives. How do they make our lives simpler and how do they make our lives more complicated?

Reflection 3

For some, simplicity means making time to pause and allowing time to reflect. Jedi Masters teach that to harness the power of the force you must be tuned into your emotions and feelings. How can we follow the teaching of the Jedi and make time to pause?

Reflection 4

What is the difference between simple and easy?

JUC Family Facebook Page Sharing

What are some other ways to incorporate the theme of simplicity into your family life?

What worked and what didn't work?

How did you family discuss the theme of blessing?

Please share on the JUC Families Facebook page.

Activity 1

Challenge your family to give up electronic devices and/or screen time. Set a date and a length of time. Some examples might be, there will be no devices at the dinner table on Saturday evening. Instead of watching a family movie choose a family game night like cards or a board game. What happens when we detach and are fully present with those around us? Was this activity harder or easier than you thought?

Activity 2

Go on a family walk or hike. Set your intention to be mindful of things happening around you. What do you hear? What types of birds or other animals do you see? What smells are in the air? What does the air feel like- is the sun hot on your skin or is there a breeze blowing by?

Activity 3

Quieting our minds, hearts and bodies allows us to be more present in our lives. It helps us be more openhearted towards ourselves and others.

Gather your family together and sit in silence. Start out with just 30 seconds of silence. Can you slowly increase it? As summer continues, how long can your family sit together in shared silence? Over the month, you might want to agree on a family challenge to see how long you can sit in silence.

Activity 4

Ask an adult or older adult if their younger life was simpler. What about their life was simpler and what about their life is similar than yours.