

March 2021: COMMITMENT

Throughout our abundant lives, we can find simple and quick ways to connect our learning and growth at church to our lives at home.

COMMITMENT: [Spotify Playlist](#) / [Youtube Playlist](#)

Blessing of COMMITMENT

Set your course with intention, friends: we make our promises, and our promises make us. It's a journey through deep and unknown waters.

Whatever your north star – causes, people, practices, hopes, futures, dreams, or all of these arching overhead in great swaths we might call love or justice – may this and your reading of the winds lead you home.

May your commitment beckon and steady you in fair weather, and be a port in which to dock the boat of your becoming when conditions are unfriendly.

We are a fleet of the faithful, beloveds; steady as we go.

-Teresa Honey Youngblood

Monthly Meditations

Superhero Senses

Being committed means you pay attention like a superhero would to what is around you. Heighten your senses for this mindful moment.

Centering:

- Let's now get into our meditation positions.
- Sit comfortably in your chair or on the floor.
- Put your hands on your lap or on your knees.
- Sit up nice and tall.
- Focus your eyes in front of you.
- Find your breath moving in your body by taking in one breath through your nose and then slowly breathing it out through your mouth.

Mindful Moment:

How can you be mindful of what is around you?

Try switching your senses up to a superpower level, just like Spiderman, Wonderwoman, Black Panther and Superman. Imagine that you can sense the tiniest things and the biggest things around you. If you are curious about something, you can focus your senses to discover what is going on.

In this moment, open up your superpower senses to be curious about everything around you. I invite you to be mindful and curious in silence for a while.

Enter into mindful silence...[PAUSE]

Now...I am going to focus on each sense. Answer each sensing question after I ask it.

- Imagine your ears are super powered. What can you hear?
- Imagine your eyes are super powered. What can you see?
- Imagine your tongue is super powered. What can you taste?
- Imagine your nose is super powered. What can you smell?
- Imagine your fingertips and skin are superpowered.

Remain in this superpower state for a few more moments, thinking about how it feels to be committed, or dedicated to something.

Mindful Moments with Lea COMMITMENT

- Remind the children about the importance of calming ourselves so we can better focus on each other and our time together.
- Tell them that a special friend named Lea has written a song for us to learn and it is a song that teaches us about the importance of this month's theme: Commitment.
- Center the children before playing the video.
- After the video, talk and listen with your child to discover all the things you heard together.

Week 1 (3/7/21): Commitment to Curiosity (the importance of asking questions)

At Church

We learned that committing to curiosity means we must ask questions. In this time of uncertainty, what deserves our commitment? Our Unitarian Universalist faith encourages us to ask questions of wonder. We support each other as we ask questions of doubt. Far from outlawing doubters and questioners, our faith places them at the center.

Morning Time:

Superhero Senses or Mindful Moments with Lea

Consider these words by Stephen Covey~

“Anything less than a conscious commitment to the important is an unconscious commitment to the unimportant.”

Weekly Chalice Lighting:

May this flame,
symbol of transformation since time began,
fire our curiosity,
strengthen our wills,
and sustain our courage
as we seek what is good within and around us.

~By Bets Wienecke

Meal Time:

Discuss: What does it mean to be a people of Commitment?

Drive Time:

Listen to: *The Universe* by Gregory Alan Isakov

Bed Time:

Read: *I Wonder* by Annaka Harris

Family Time:**Treasure Hunt for Commitment**

The UUA joins other groups in observing Climate Justice Month, March 22 (World Water Day) to April 22 (Earth Day), a commitment to approaching climate justice as a matter of faith. UUs acknowledge that the issue of climate justice is best addressed when it acknowledges North America's legacy of colonization, and looks to the leadership of indigenous peoples who have been protecting the earth and its waters for many, many generations.

This month's treasure hunt can be done in a combination of spaces--online, and in-person outside.

See if you can find or find out:

1. The names of the native peoples of the land you live on. Do you know anything about those peoples, historically and currently?
2. A historical marker or heritage site in your area that acknowledges the land's indigenous population. (The Historical Marker Database might be a place to start, or you could contact your local historical society for pointers.)
3. Five native plants
4. Five introduced plants
5. Your watershed: have you been to the body of water that your land's runoff drains into?
6. The landfill closest to you (Not the most exciting field trip, we know, but an important visual to have in mind when we throw things "away.")
7. Who is leading environmental protection efforts in your area? Which one seems like the best fit for your family to be involved with?

Week 2 (3/14/21): Commitment to Change (the importance of keeping an open mind)

At Church:

We considered what our commitments say about us. We considered what we can learn about ourselves from our commitments. Because our faith is a living tradition, one of the things we are committed to is keeping an open mind and being willing to change. And since everything changes, then we always have the opportunity to grow and to deepen our faith.

Morning Time:

Superhero Senses or Mindful Moments with Lea

Consider these words by Margaret Mead-

“Never doubt that a small group of committed, thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Drive Time:

Listen to: *Biko* by Peter Gabriel, YoYo Ma, et al. (Playing for Change)

(Thanks to Craig Williamson for the head’s up on this rendition of the song!)

Weekly Chalice Lighting:

As we kindle this flame,

May it spark in each of us

Connection and commitment

To this living tradition

And to each other.

-Rev. Cynthia Landrum

Meal Time:

Discuss: What commitments fit easily into your life? Which do you struggle to make room for?

Bed Time:

Read: *Mae Among the Stars* by Roda Ahmed

Family Time:**Commit to the Uncomfortable Conversations Around Race**

The National Museum of African American History and Culture has [an excellent resource page](#) on the work of talking about race, for both white folx and people of color. Unitarian Universalism calls us to commit to dismantling white supremacy culture, and honoring this commitment takes sustained effort over time.

Invitation: Even if you think you’ve done the deep work and internalized the needed paradigm shifts, check out this website as a family. There is one section in particular, “A Questioning Frame of Mind,” that offers sample scripts for how to interrupt racism in interpersonal conversations, using curiosity and connection. Practice these conversations within the family, and talk about why experiencing the discomfort of confronting racism is worth it. Living Room Conversations is another useful resource that

supports how to have important conversations about a variety of topics.
[Here's a link specific to conversations around Race and Ethnicity.](#)

Week 3 (3/21/21): <u>Commitment to Conscience (the 5th principle)</u>
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At Church:

We learned that committing to conscience is a way to tell right from wrong. Our 5th UU principle inspires us towards democracy: all people should have a vote about things that concern them. Instead of turning to one person for all the answers, we believe that every single person has wisdom inside that needs to be listened to. The still, inner voice that we call conscience is a way to guide us on our journeys. Making commitments can help us focus and help keep us on the paths we choose to travel.

Morning Time:

Superhero Senses or Mindful Moments with Lea

Consider these thoughts by David Brooks ~ “Most of life is choosing what you already chose. Our lives are stories of recommitment.”

Drive Time:

Listen to: *Everyday People* by Jack Johnson, Jason Mraz, Keb' Mo, et al (Playing for Change)

Weekly Chalice Lighting:

Enriched by our differences,

And joined together in our search for meaning,

We covenant with ourselves and each other:

To seek truth in a spirit of love;

To strive for justice; and

To serve others with a joyful heart

~Rev. Peter Friedrichs

Meal Time:

Discuss: What is one of the hardest commitments you've ever made?

Bed Time:

Read: *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom
The Undefeated by Kwame Alexander

Family Time:Following Through on a Commitment to Gratitude with a Gratitude Paper Chain

What do we need to make good on our commitments? We need follow-through... and through... and through... and through! This activity is more playful than game-like, and while it can be competitive, it can also be done cooperatively.

You'll need a lot of strips of paper. Like, a lot. Old calendars work well. Construction paper, too. Scrap office paper does the job, also.

Your commitment for whatever amount of time your family determines (a week, a month) is for each person in the family to write down on a strip something they are grateful for: strawberry milkshakes, Ms. Williams, sunny days, roller skates, vaccines. Gratitude practices fuel our spirit for the work of commitment; they increase positive emotions, improve health, boost our resilience in trying times, and help us build stronger relationships.*

You might keep the blank strips and a marker in one jar, and put an empty jar next to it for finished strips.

At the end of the time period, you'll make a paper chain to hang in your home or another place that reminds you of your commitment.

Week 4 (3/28/21): Commitment to Compassion (2nd and 8th principles)
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At Church:

We learned about the energy present in commitment and its importance, which is putting that energy into action. Compassion comes from Latin words meaning "suffer with." The 2nd UU principle invites us to "Justice, equity and compassion in human relations." Compassion for others points us to our larger community. Compassion guides us to freeing others from suffering by putting our love into action. So, what's one of the ways our faith guides us into becoming a people of commitment? It tells us "Commit to treating the struggles of others as your own."

Morning Time:

Superhero Senses or Mindful Moments with Lea

Consider these thoughts by Bell Hooks ~ "The heart of justice is truth telling, seeing ourselves and the world the way it is rather than the way we want it to be. More than ever before we, as a society, need to renew a commitment to truth telling."

Drive Time:

Listen to: *Good Job* by Alicia Keys and the One Voice Children's Choir

Weekly Chalice Lighting

Each time we light the chalice

we renew our commitment to our Unitarian Universalist faith.

With the spark of a match, we make it new again –

as fresh and surprising as the first day

we encountered this spiritual community

and realized we were home.

~Rev. Suzelle Lynch

Meal Time:

Discuss: If your family had an extra day or two every month to commit to being of service to others, what would you do with that time?

Bed Time:

Read: *I am Enough* by Grace Byers

Be Kind by Pat Zietlow Miller

Family Time:

A Family Sign: Writing Your Own Name on Your Heart

New science on self-talk shows that when you harness the power of your inner voice, and maybe especially if you consciously use your own name as you do so (in the 3rd person), your neural pathways seem to interpret your statements and assessments as challenges to rise to.”

This month, let’s test these new ideas out by committing to loving self-talk for the whole of the month.

1. Set a timer on your phone, or decide on a time of day that works for the whole family.
2. Gather together, and either out loud or silently to ourselves, in the too-often unfriendly space of our own minds, say “(Your own name), you are beloved. Write it on your heart.”
3. When you get to the heart part, everybody write their own name with their finger across their heart, or if they are very young, draw a heart over their own heart.

Why are we doing this? Because our commitments are rooted in love. And all love begins with self-love. But humans are not so consistent, so even if you have loved yourself in the past, or love yourself easily in some areas of your life, we could all use the boost and reminder that we are beloved.

Last month, we explored Beloved Community together. Beloved community and commitment are intertwined. So this practice and movement is also a way to remind us of the greater good we are working for when we put this effort into self-love. If we believe and are willing to commit to the manifestation of a beloved community for all, then we have to acknowledge that we belong there, too. Love isn't just for other people. It's for us, too, whether or not we believe in any particular moment that we're worthy of it.

Throughout the month, if someone in your family seems down on themselves, or as if they could use a reminder of their divine nature, you might consider making eye contact across a room and wordlessly drawing a heart over your own heart. Especially after doing the above ritual together a few times, the meaning will be clear: You are made of and for love; I see you.

**Kross, Ethan. *Chatter: The Voice in Our Head, Why it Matters, and How to Harness It*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2021.