

Sources Facilitator Guide

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Introduction

“What will you do with this one wild and precious life?” asks the poet Mary Oliver.

UU Wellspring is a 10-month program of distinctly Unitarian Universalist spiritual development designed to help participants answer that provocative question.

Begun in 2005, the program celebrates the depth and breadth of our rich religious tradition. Over the years, UU Wellspring has expanded and now offers five years of programming: Sources (the revised first-year curriculum, described below), Spiritual Practices, Deep Questions, Faithful Actions and Sacred Practices, with Spiritual Ancestors in development.

UU Wellspring offers participants an opportunity for spiritual deepening that leads to more joyful living, increased congregational leadership, and faithful justice making in their lives and in their communities. UU Wellspring inc gives spiritual power to UU communities that will sustain and strengthen UU identity and justice work through these five essential components:

- Small group connections
- Daily spiritual practices
- Spiritual direction
- Deeper knowledge of UU history and theology
- Putting UU faith into action

The First Year: UU Wellspring - Sources

Background

Many Unitarian Universalists, young and old, are familiar with the seven principles, a statement of our most deeply held values that starts with “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” and ends with “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

In addition to affirming and promoting the seven principles, the living tradition of Unitarian Universalism also draws on six sources for religious knowledge and spiritual growth: direct experience, prophetic women and men, world religions, Jewish and Christian teachings, humanist teachings, and Earth-centered traditions. If the seven principles are what we aspire to, the six sources are what inspires us.

In UU Wellspring – Sources, which is a prerequisite for all other years of UU Wellspring, participants are challenged by, comforted by, and inspired by each one of the six sources. They learn not just about Unitarian Universalism, but also about how to integrate their Unitarian Universalist faith more fully into their daily lives.

A note about our resources: We use diverse voices in both readings and music and we credit every writer and artist. When we create our own documents, we seek permission from the authors. We are monitoring to ensure that the musical artists are from the culture the music represents. Our sensitivity readers look for the music to consistently meet these standards. We seek to continue to hold an evolving understanding of appropriation and we appreciate comments from facilitators and participants to help us be equitable in this area.

Structure

UU Wellspring – Sources is divided into six units, one for each of the six UU sources. Within each of the six units, participants cycle through a head-hands-heart experience of the source:

- **Head:** When introduced to a given source, participants learn about our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition. Grounded in UU history and theology, topics such as courage, love, and justice are explored.
- **Hands:** For the second section, participants reflect on how taking the source seriously might change the way we view the world and live our lives. Meaningful topics are brought into the circle such as the theology of everyday life, the prophetic imperative, and reimagining God.
- **Heart:** During the third part of the head-hands-heart cycle, participants go deep into core spiritual themes: vulnerability, forgiveness, joy, and more. Spiritual struggles, spiritual practices, and spiritual questions are all brought forth, with the wisdom of each source as a guide.

Holding this all together are the essential components that are the core of all UU Wellspring programs: small group connection, commitment to daily spiritual practice, monthly spiritual direction, reading and reflecting on the assignments, and putting our faith into action, all resting on a foundation of deep listening.

Sessions

Welcome Email to Participants

Retreat

Session 1*— Welcoming the Soul*

Session 2 — Everyday Theology

Session 3 — Spiritual Histories

Session 4— Prophetic Voices of Our Unitarian and Universalist Ancestors

Session 5 — Prophetic Voices of Today

Session 6 — Your Own Prophetic Voice: Vulnerability and Courage

Session 7*— Solstice Ritual*

Jewish and Christian Heritage

Session 8 — Jewish and Christian Teachings

Session 9 — Reimagining God: Process Theology

Session 10 — Prayer

World Religions

Session 11 — World Religions

Session 12 — Forgiveness and Letting Go

5th Source: Earth-Centered Spirituality

Session 13 — Nature as Spiritual Guide

Session 14 — UUism and the Crisis of Life

Session 15 — The Theology of Joy

6th Source: Humanist Teachings

Session 16 — Good without God

Session 17— UU Perspectives on Death and the Afterlife

Session 18 — Let Your Life Speak

Session 19*— Celebration and Reflection* (optional if you are online)

Required Books:

- *Everyday Spiritual Practice: Simple Pathways for Enriching Your Life*, edited by Scott Alexander
- *Heartwood: The Art of Living with the End in Mind* by Barbara Becker.
- *Let Your Life Speak*, by Parker Palmer
- One or both if possible: *To Wake to Rise* edited by Bill Sinkford and *Voices from the Margins*, edited by Mark Morrison-Reed and Jacki James.

Next Steps:

Please send the email to participants and review the retreat provided in your Source's Documents.

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