

Soul Matters Lesson 3: Let Wonder Wash Over You

(Honoring Our First UU Source)

Theme Angle:

Our faith reminds us that wonder is a central source of renewal, so much so that we've put it in the first of our UU sources: "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life." So what's one of the ways our faith guides us into becoming a people of renewal? It tells us to "Let wonder wash over you!"

Introduce It (Object Lesson)

Wish Upon a Star Reflection

Reflection Object: Telescope and/or Picture of the "Eye of God" Nebula on NASA

Learn more about the Eye of God Nebula at:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOL9-nYUG_s
- <https://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap030510.html>
- <https://io9.gizmodo.com/the-famous-eye-of-god-nebula-may-actually-be-weeping-1592005991> (This explains how the nebula may actually produce water that "seeds the cosmos.")

Suggested Script:

This photo by the Hubble Telescope is called the Eye of God. It is also called the Helix Nebula. It is about 650 light years away near the constellation Aquarius. This is one example of the parts of the universe which fill us with wonder.

When we look up at night, we see the stars in the sky. They make us wonder about our big questions. Wonder is a part of our Unitarian Universalist religion. It is one of our six Unitarian Universalist sources, in fact, it's number one. I'm going to read the words. Listen for the word "wonder" "renewal" and "life" when I read and hold up your finger if you can hear them. Here are the words (read slowly): "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and **wonder**, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a **renewal** of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold **life**." Lots of words. Did you hear the word "wonder" when I read the first source? "Renewal?" Did you hear the word "life"? How would you say this in your own words? [share their comments]

All of us wonder about things. When we wonder we renew our sense of the world as a place full of surprises and that makes us feel grateful and lucky to be alive, just as our first UU source suggests. Stars make us wonder. Looking at stars puts things in perspective.

Did you know there is a special wish you can make “on a star?” When you see the first star of the night, you can make a wish! That is one way our wonder can renew us.

Follow up by asking the children to share how gazing up at the stars makes them feel.

Lead With Strategy: Recruit a parent who is an amateur astronomer (someone who just likes to look at the stars) to join your zoom call. Ask them to bring their telescope. In this case you can ignore the Eye of God picture and just focus the kids on the telescope. Introduce your guest and tell the children that you invited them here so they could tell them about how they fell in love with star gazing. Ask the guest to end their sharing with a word or two about how stargazing renews their spirit.

Tell It and Talk About It (Story)

Option #1 You Are Stardust Video

Book: You are Stardust By Elin Kelsey

Video of the Book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRzxDXQ5R8w>

(Some cool background that might be helpful:

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/videos/category/smithsonian-channel/were-all-made-of-star-dust-heres-how_1/)

Online Permission Note: “OWLKids Publishing” has not publicly shared direction about online use, so you will need to make your own judgement call about use of this story. For help thinking through that see our Soul Matters document: [Copyright Guidance for Online Story Reading](#).

Option #2 Why We are Stardust Video for older elementary children

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WnJq_5QjBg

Meditate on It (Mindfulness Practice)

Feel Your Connection to The Stars

Use the below meditation as inspiration to create your own mindfulness experience about “feeling” your connection to the stars. Play off the idea that we are made of stardust and invite the kids to not just think about that but feel it by guiding them through a mindfulness exercise centered on rubbing their hands together, similar to how the below video meditation does it. Frame the hand rubbing with your own unique introduction and closing thought.

Centering:

I invite you to move into our meditation position.

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.

Meditation Guidance:

Star Energy | Mindfulness with Bari Koral -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JGi2sL1EY>

Explore It

(small group activities and experiential learning)

Send a Message in a Star!

Talking Points and Takeaways:

- Sometimes we wonder at “big things,” like the Grand Canyon. But often what’s most amazing in life is how much people go out of their way to support us or be kind. Acts of care, friendship and love are some of the most important and amazing things we experience. There’s a reason we say “You’re wonderful” when someone does something nice for us.
- So as a way of saying thanks, use this activity to say thanks to these special people. Think of it as a way of saying “you light up my life.”
- Or sometimes we forget that we are wonders. In that case, you can use this activity to write reminders to yourself about how much of a wonder you are.

Star Origami with a Message

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JugN18GDWFM>

Transition Tool: Play while the children are folding.

Waves of Light <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FiNZvuOkzY> (4 min.)

Chat about It Prompts/Questions:

- Who in your life makes you feel wonderful?
- Who introduced you to an amazing thing?

Some other origami stars for the more adventurous!

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1c7FIQt5UE>
- <https://www.instructables.com/id/Dollar-Bill-Origami-5-Or-6-Point-Money-Star/>

Lead With Strategy: Who is the older child who likes to fold origami? Invite them to learn this and then teach it!

Take It Home

(Home Based Activities)

This section provides ideas for your weekly follow-up emails to parents, giving them some ways to build on themes and activities you did in your online worship and groups.

Family Sharing Tips & Lesson Follow Up

- **Possible Script for Email:** “Hello Parents! During the Small Group time that was focused on how we are renewed by wonder, we learned how to make simple star origami, with messages inside. Ask your child to demonstrate it, or view the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JugN18GDWFM>
- Or “we talked about who in your child’s life makes them feel wonderful. Share your own people who make you feel wonderful during a family moment together.”
- Or schedule a Night of Family Stargazing
Experience some wonder as a family by using dinner time to talk about and learn about some star constellations. Then head outside when the sun goes down and find those constellations in the sky. Consider using one of the cool stargazing apps out there to assist you!

A Guide to Family Stargazing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtvDpuoR1j4>

15 Best Stargazing Apps

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/g26089673/best-stargazing-apps/>

- Or Make a Star Jar!
Bring some wonder of the sky inside your house by doing one of these awesome family crafts:

DIY Nebula Jar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrhWSdamtbl&list=PLd54oA1MBWfSxzCmHRSjOhRgEo2RlpCD4>

DIY Night Light STAR JAR

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlCmkrRRL4Y>