

## GRADES 1-3 EXPLORING UU PRINCIPLE 2

Unitarian Universalists express faith in our actions and behaviors. Below is an adapted version of the Faithful Journey's curriculum to guide children as they explore one of the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism and begin to develop an understanding of how our beliefs translate into action.

The original lessons for this principle may be found here:

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session4>

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session5>

### **SUGGESTED MATERIALS**

Print out of Children's Version of UU Principles (with Adult version on backside)

Pictures of Fannie Barrier Williams

### **NOTE FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS**

Use the story of Fannie Barrier Williams (1855-1944) to explore the second Unitarian Universalist Principle: justice, equity, and compassion in human relations (Children's version: We believe all people should be treated fairly).

Fannie Barrier Williams was a Unitarian who was active in the club movement and in creating clubs for African American women.

Her story serves as a springboard to discussions about what it means to belong and how it feels to be excluded, and how organizing a group to fight injustice can be effective

### **EXPLORATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION & CHALICE LIGHTING:**

Explain that as you start this exploration, you want to make sure everyone is on the same page and to do that, you'd like to take a minute and light the chalice. This is a way for you all to connect and get a bit of centering.

*Life is a gift for which we are grateful. We gather in community to celebrate the glories and mysteries of this great gift.*

Show children the print out of the Unitarian Universalist Principles (children's version). Explain that you would like to spend some time exploring these principles and what they mean. (In your own words, you might explain that most UUs believe a commitment to these principles is an important part of being a UU and making the world a better place. You might explain how that translates in your life – do you actively try to follow them?). Explain that together, you'd like to find ways for you all to take action based on the principles, since you believe they are important.

**The principle you'll be exploring is: Principle 2: We believe all people should be treated fairly.**

Unitarian Universalist Principles, Children's Version
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1. We believe each and every person is important.
2. We believe all people should be treated fairly.
3. In our congregations, all people are accepted and we learn together.
4. We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life.
5. Everyone deserves a vote about the things that concern them.
6. We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.
7. We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us.

### **STORY/DISCUSSION**

Show the pictures of Fannie Barrier Williams before you begin the story.



*Story: Belonging – Fannie Barrier Williams (Written by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer)*

*Our hearts should be too warm and too large for hatred.*

*More than one hundred fifty years ago, back when trains were new and airplanes and cars hadn't been invented, back when women always wore long skirts and everyone wore hats, a girl named Fannie Barrier lived in a town in New York State.*

*Fannie lived with her older brother, George, and her older sister, Ella, and their parents. During the week, Fannie and George and Ella would get up and get dressed and eat breakfast, and then go to school. In the afternoon, they would play in the woods or maybe go sledding in the snow with their friends, then do their chores, eat dinner, do their homework, and go to bed.*

*On Sundays, the whole Barrier family would go to church. Fannie's father was a deacon, a leader at the church. Her mother taught Bible school. When Fannie was old enough, she played the piano while people sang hymns. She sang, too, and painted pictures. Maybe some of you like to do those things, too.*

*Maybe Fannie's life sounds a lot like your life, even if she did wear long skirts instead of pants and use kerosene lamps instead of electric lights and cook food on a wood stove instead of in a microwave oven. Going to school and to church, doing homework and chores, making music and playing with friends – these are all things we still do today.*

*But Fannie's life was different. Very different. Because back then, one hundred fifty years ago in the United States of America, most people didn't believe that everyone was equal. Most people believed that some groups of people were better than other groups. They believed that men were better than women. They believed that Protestants were better than Catholics or Jews. And they believed that people with light skin were better than people with dark skin. Fannie Barrier had dark skin.*

*When she was a teenager, she went to the city of Boston to study music. Some of the other students said, "We don't want her here. She's dark, so she doesn't belong. If she stays, we'll all go." The school asked Fannie to leave.*

*So, Fannie went to Washington DC to study painting. She had to hide behind a screen so no one could see her. "If the other students know you're here," the teacher told Fannie, "they'll want you to leave."*

*Over and over again, all through her life, Fannie was told she wasn't wanted and couldn't belong, just because she had dark skin.*

*When she was forty years old and living in the city of Chicago, some women invited her to join a women's club. But some other women in the club said, "We don't want her here. She's dark, so she can't belong. If she stays, we'll all go." The people in the club argued about it for more than a year. Finally, they voted to let Fannie in. But when she joined, those other women left.*

*Now, Fannie didn't like that. It hurts when people won't let you belong. It hurts when people don't want you around. Some days Fannie felt angry about it. Some days she felt sad. But most days, Fannie had no time to feel angry or sad, because she was busy making groups of her own. Fannie knew how much it hurt to be left out. And she knew it would be a lot easier, and more fun, to get things done together with others, than by yourself. She and her husband, the lawyer S. Laing Williams, joined the All Souls Unitarian Church in Chicago. They helped start a hospital, where everyone was welcome, no matter the color of their skin. They created a group to*

*study art and music.*

*Fannie Barrier Williams helped start a home for girls in Chicago, and she started a center where people could live together, no matter the color of their skin. She was part of the group that started the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (the NAACP), along with Frederick Douglass, Ida Wells Barnett, Frances Watkins Harper, and W.E.B. DuBois. Fannie also worked with suffragists like Susan B. Anthony, helping women get the chance to vote. Because back then, remember, people thought that men were better than women. Women couldn't own property or have a bank account or vote in elections.*

*In 1920, when Fannie was sixty-five years old, women were finally allowed to vote. And about fifty years after that, people starting letting everyone vote and everyone belong to groups, no matter the color of their skin.*

*Fannie Barrier Williams didn't live to see that. She didn't live long enough to see the United States of America become a place where most of the people believe that everyone is equal. But she helped make it happen. When some groups kept people out, Fannie Barrier Williams started groups that let everyone in. When the laws of our country said she and thousands of others couldn't belong because of the color of their skin or the church they went to or because they were girls instead of boys, Fannie Barrier Williams worked to change the laws so that everyone could belong – and would belong – no matter what.*

Take a few minutes to discuss this story, using the questions below:

- I wonder, why did Fannie Barrier Williams work so hard to make clubs where everyone could belong?
- Is it fun to be part of a club? What makes it fun?
- I wonder, how does it feel when you can't be part of a club?
- I wonder, how does being part of a club or group make it easier to work on a project or change unfair situations?
- I wonder, is there ever a time when it is OK to tell someone they cannot be part of your club?

### **ACTIVITY: FAMILY ACTION CLUB**

Create A Family Action Club. Give it a name and a logo. Find a justice issue that everyone in the family is concerned about and brainstorm ways that your family club can take action. For example, you could write a family letter to the school superintendent to protest an unfair policy, or donate some of your belongings to a charitable organization. Set aside a regular meeting time for your club when you can discuss and study your issue or take action together.

### **EXPLORE THE TOPIC FURTHER**

#### **Try...**

Pay extra attention to times when your child acts fairly or works for justice. Point out instances of your child acting faithfully in a way that reflects the second Unitarian Universalist Principle of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

Ask your child about their assessment of how welcoming their world (school, sports, church, etc.) is to all different types of folks. Affirm why fairness and justice are important. Tell your child about a justice issue that is important to you and explain how any groups you belong to – such as your congregation, a committee within it, or a local advocacy or social justice group – explicitly act on it.

**Read...**

*Best Friends for Frances* by Russell Hoban, illustrated by Lillian Hoban (New York: HarperCollins, 1969). The picture-book hedgehog learns how it feels to be excluded and uses her learning to be more inclusive of her little sister, Gloria.

**Learn about...**

Service clubs that are active in your area, such as Lions (at [www.lionsclubs.org/](http://www.lionsclubs.org/)), Kiwanis (at [www.kiwanis.org/](http://www.kiwanis.org/)) or Boys & Girls Club (at [www.bgca.org/](http://www.bgca.org/)). Find out what they do for the community and volunteer to help at a charitable event.

**SOURCE:**

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