

## **GRADES 1-3 EXPLORING UU PRINCIPLE 4**

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/session8>

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session9>

### **SUGGESTED MATERIALS**

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

Picture of Clyde Tombaugh

Picture of Pluto & Solar System

Truth or Dare sentences cut up into strips. Put into basket

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

Use the story of Clyde Tombaugh to explore the fourth Unitarian Universalist Principle: a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. (Children's version: We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life.)

Clyde Tombaugh (1906 - 1997) was an astronomer (and Unitarian Universalist) who discovered Pluto. (In 2006, Pluto's status changed from planet to dwarf planet).

His story serves as a springboard to discussions about how the search for truth and meaning is an ongoing quest.

### **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.

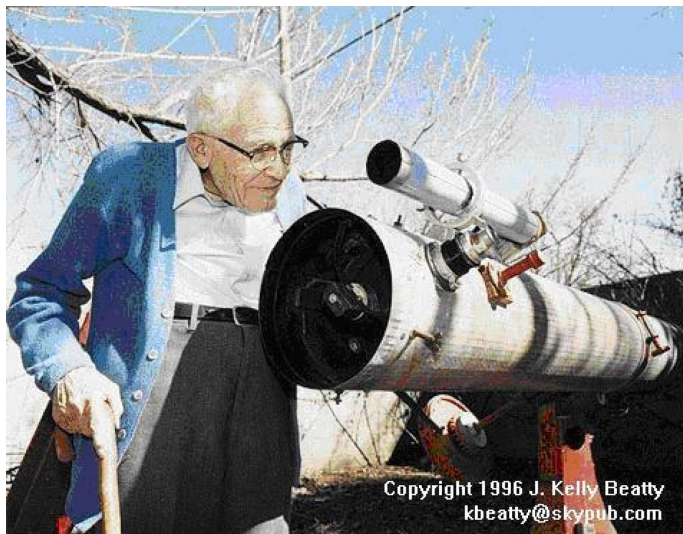
**The principle you'll be exploring is: Principle 4: We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life.**

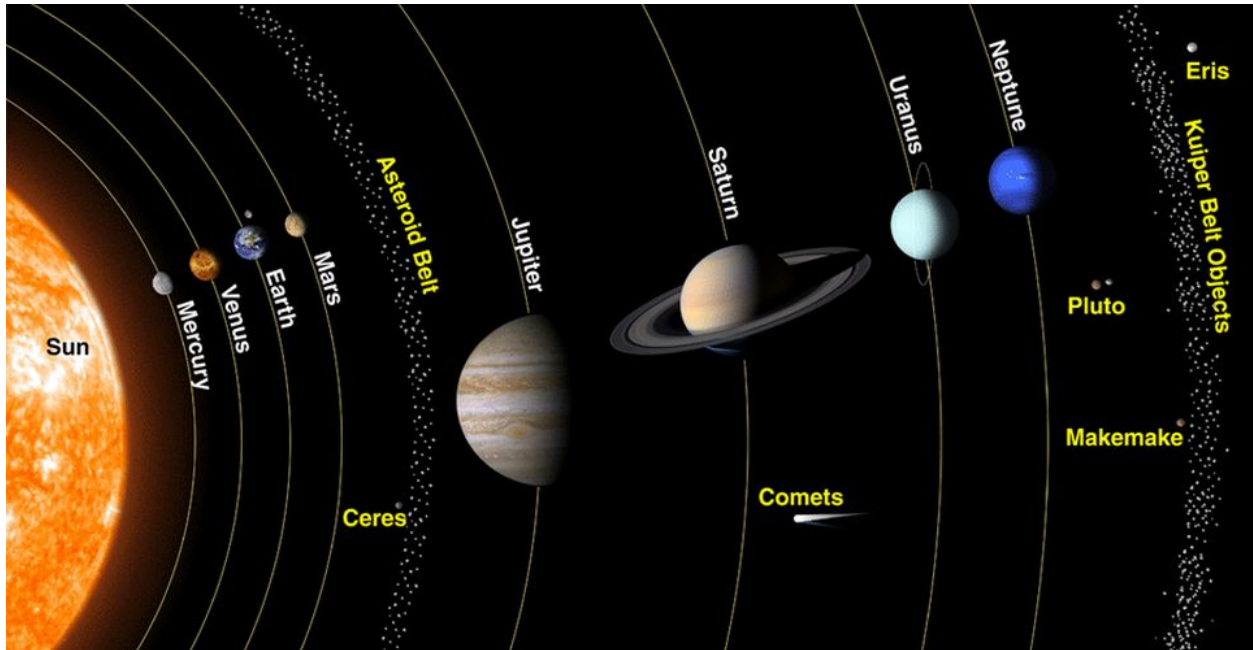
### Unitarian Universalist Principles, Children's Version

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 Clyde Tombaugh and explain that he was a Unitarian Universalist who discovered Pluto (show a picture of Pluto & the Solar System). Explain that today's story started a hundred years ago, when Clyde Tombaugh was born, but is still changing. Point out that scientists find out new things about our universe every day.





<https://medium.com/starts-with-a-bang/you-wont-like-the-consequences-of-making-pluto-a-planet-again-3019b2077129>

*Clyde had finished his farm chores. Now he was free to spend the rest of the evening doing his favorite thing: stargazing. He got out his telescope and he looked up into the night sky. While he looked at the moon and the stars he wondered about the universe.*

*Does any other planet have life? Are there aliens out there somewhere? If there are, are they friendly or dangerous? How could we communicate with them? What are they like? How far away are stars and planets? Will anyone ever be able to travel in space? Could we live on another planet? What would it be like to walk on the moon? Why does Mars look reddish? What makes a shooting star streak across the sky? Why do the planets circle around the sun?*

*Clyde was filled with curiosity and questions. The telescope he had wasn't strong enough to get him answers. He wanted to see more, to see things more clearly. He decided to build his own telescope.*

*He searched his parents' farm for old pieces of machinery that he could use. He painstakingly ground mirrors for their reflective powers. His father let him have a shaft from his car. With these materials, Clyde made himself a powerful telescope. Now he could see much detail when he watched the planets. He drew pictures of what he saw. But, he still wanted to know more. So he sent his drawings of Jupiter and Mars to some astronomers. He hoped they would give him some information. Instead, they were so impressed with his pictures that, even though Clyde had not gone to college yet, they offered him a job.*

*Another scientist, Percival Lowell, was sure there was another planet, farther away from the Earth than Neptune. But, so far, no one had been able to find it. Clyde went to New Mexico. He*

*spent every night in an unheated observatory, looking through the telescope for Planet "X" and taking pictures of the sky. Through the long, cold nights, Clyde tried to glimpse a new planet. Later in his life he liked to say, "I've really had a tour of the heavens."*

*Finally, when he was twenty-four years old, Clyde took a photograph of the night sky that showed a strange shifting of light. There was a planet beyond Neptune! He had found Planet "X." The new planet was named Pluto, for the Roman god of the underworld.*

*All his life, Clyde loved learning about the universe. Over the years he discovered more than one hundred asteroids, a comet, and a supercluster of galaxies. He thought exploring and learning were so important that he became an astronomy teacher. He helped other people investigate the sky, sometimes using the huge, two-story telescope he built in his own backyard.*

*And, he loved learning so much that he and his wife helped to start a Unitarian Universalist church where they lived in New Mexico . Clyde knew a congregation, like an observatory, could be a very good place for seeking truth.*

*Clyde died, a very old man, in 1997, but our story does not end there. You see, now scientists have decided Pluto isn't really a planet, after all. New telescopes see much more detail than even Clyde's most powerful telescope could ever see. We now know there are many objects in space about the same size as Pluto. Could there really be dozens and dozens more planets? Or are these smaller objects something else? The scientists voted and agreed on three rules to determine whether an object in space is a planet. It has to orbit around the sun. It must be large enough that its surface becomes smooth and round. And it must be large enough to clear other objects out of its orbit. Pluto does not meet these new rules — it's too small.*

*Percival Lowell had been curious to find Planet "X." Because of his questions, Clyde Tombaugh was hired to search the night sky. When Clyde discovered Pluto, everyone thought it was a planet. Then, new telescopes showed us many other objects in space like Pluto, and scientists made a new category: dwarf planet.*

*Clyde's wife, Patricia, said Clyde would have been disappointed about the vote, but as a scientist he would have understood. When we seek the truth, it feels good to make discoveries and find answers. But Clyde knew what's most important is to keep asking questions.*

Guide a brief discussion with these questions:

- I wonder, what are you really curious about or what do you love to learn about?
- When you want to know more about something, what do you do?
- Have you ever really believed one thing, and then learned it was not true? (Invite participants, one at a time, to share: What was that like? Was it easy or hard to get used to your new belief? Do you think your belief could change again?)

*NOTE: Children in this age group may hold a wide range of beliefs in God, Santa Claus, tooth fairies, and Easter bunnies. Be careful to validate all children's beliefs. Affirm children's truth-seeking impulses and actions, but do not allow argument or debate about what is "true."*

## **ACTIVITY: TRUTH OR DARE**

Explain the rules to the children and then together pick a consequence for those who do not want to answer the “truth” question or do the “dare”.

First player (start with youngest person in room) picks a slip of paper from the basket. It is either a “truth” question or a “dare”.

Continue with the next player until everyone has had at least 1 turn.

If the player chooses not to answer “truth” honestly, or refuses to do a dare, they must suffer a “consequence” which can be an alternative action chosen at the beginning of the game.

Truth or Dare choices:

- If you could have anything in the world, what would it be?
- Have you peed in a pool?
- What is the strangest dream you’ve ever had?
- Have you ever lied to a teacher and what was it about?
- Which superhero do you dig the most?
- Do you sneak snacks when your Mom isn’t looking?
- Would you rather have a pet, or a sibling?
- Which are the funniest words you know?
- If Aladdin’s genie visited you, what would be your 3 wishes?
- What would be your new name, if you were allowed to choose one?
- When was the last time you were bored out of your brains?
- What is your secret superpower?
- What is the worst gift you have ever received?
- What was your most embarrassing farting moment?
- What is the most annoying thing on Earth for you?
- If you get hold of a time machine, ‘when’ would you like to go?
- Would you rather be a princess or a mermaid?
- Who is your best friend in the whole wide world?
- Who do you want to be when you grow up?
- What is your favorite movie?
- What is your favorite food?
- What is your favorite animal?
- What is your favorite subject?
- What is your favorite place?
- Sing your favorite song in a funny voice.
- Moonwalk across the room.
- Stand on your head for 10 seconds.
- Try to lick your elbow.
- Do a crab-walk across the room.
- Spin around 10 times and try to walk a straight line.
- Keep a straight face as the others try to make you laugh.

- Act like a gorilla and pretend to pick bugs out of your friend's hair.
- Sing the "I'm a little teapot song". Do all the motions.
- Say the alphabet, backwards.
- Do the chicken dance for one minute –Don't forget to bawk.
- Do not blink for a minute.
- For 10 seconds, hold your breath.
- Lick your nose.

## **EXPLORE THE TOPIC FURTHER**

### **Try...**

As part of your family search for truth and meaning, experience a religious service with an unfamiliar worship style and/or theology. Afterward, discuss what each of you liked, did not like, agreed with, and disagreed with.

As your child prepares for school in the morning, place your hand on their head and offer the blessing, "Be curious today."

### **Play...**

Play Truth Hide-and-Seek. As in traditional Hide-and-Seek, designate hiders and a seeker. Play as usual, except that, to be released, a person who is found must say one thing they believe is true, such as a scientific fact or an ethical or theological belief.

### **SOURCE:**

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Print out & cut up - Truth or Dare choices:

If you could have anything in the world, what would it be?

Have you peed in a pool?

What is the strangest dream you've ever had?

What do you like the most about everyone in the room?

Have you ever lied to a teacher and what was it about?

Which superhero do you dig the most?

Do you sneak snacks when your Mom isn't looking?

Would you rather have a pet, or a sibling?

Which are the funniest words you know?

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For 10 seconds, hold your breath.

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