

UU Wellspring: Sources

Revised June 2020



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.

Sources is a prerequisite for all other years of UU Wellspring. Participants in *Sources* are challenged by, comforted by, and inspired by each one of the six sources. They learn about Unitarian Universalism, and also how to integrate their Unitarian Universalist faith more fully into their daily lives.

Structure

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 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 heart of all UU Wellspring programs: small group connection, commitment to daily spiritual practice, monthly spiritual guidance, reflecting on the assignments, and putting our faith into action. All rest on a foundation of deep listening.

UU Wellspring: Sources Topics



Introduction

Retreat

Session 1 — *Welcoming the Soul*

Direct Experience

Session 2 — Everyday Theology

Session 3 — Spiritual Histories

Prophetic People

Session 4 — Prophetic Voices of Our Unitarian Ancestors

Session 5 — Modern UU Prophets

Session 6 — Your Own Prophetic Voice: Vulnerability and Courage

Session 7* — *Solstice Ritual*

Jewish and Christian Teachings

Session 8 — Our Universalist Heritage

Session 9 — Reimagining God: Process Theology

Session 10 — Experimenting with Prayer

World Religions

Session 11 — Buddhism: Religion as Practice

Session 12 — Forgiveness and Letting Go

Earth-Centered Spirituality

Session 13 — Nature as Spiritual Guide

Session 14 — UUism and the Crises of Life

Session 15 — The Theology of Joy

Humanist Teachings

Session 16 — Good without God

Session 17 — UU Perspectives on Death and the Afterlife

Closing

Session 18 — Let Your Life Speak

Session 19 — *Celebration and Reflection*

*Attendees are encouraged to attend a solstice ritual if you prefer not to create one as a group.



Required Books for Sources

1. **Read as much as possible before retreat:** *Everyday Spiritual Practice: Simple Pathways for Enriching Your Life*, Scott Alexander, editor (Read as much as you can before the retreat.)
2. **Read or view before Session 1:** *A Hidden Wholeness*, by Parker Palmer. Key points also available as links provided in the Welcome Letter if you prefer not to purchase or borrow a hard copy.
4. **Read before Session 10:** *You Are Here: Discovering the Magic of the Present Moment*, by Thich Nhat Hanh
5. **Read Before Session 18:** *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer (used in session 18)
5. **One or both as possible, used throughout:** *Voices from the Margins* edited by Jacqui James and Mark D. Morrison-Reed or *To Wake, To Rise: Meditations on Justice and Resilience* edited by Rev. William Sinkford. (Both are valuable resources, but because each selection is short, they can be shared in the session if not everyone has a copy of the book.)