

Dreamers, Devisers, and Doers: Women

Transforming Themselves & The World

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Introduction

Dreamers, Devisers, and Doers is a sequel to *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* and *Rise Up and Call Her Name*. Before we get started with the sessions, I want to talk with you about this curriculum. In this case, 'we' refers to me, the author, and you, the reader and/or facilitator of this curriculum. I first wrote this introduction in the third person, sounding very authoritative, but I have learned much through the writing of this curriculum and this introduction, and one of the things I have learned is that I am a learner just like you, and I don't want to sound like the final authority on any of this.

First, I want to tell you that you are welcome to read and use this curriculum. It was written with a specific purpose in mind, and I will talk about this purpose in a little bit, but this curriculum is for everyone. I would ask you to use it sincerely and in a spirit of learning.

Second, another thing I have learned while writing this is that if I use the word 'we', I should always make clear to whom 'we' refers. 'We' can sometimes be used in an exclusionary way, so making it clear to whom it refers pushes back on that exclusion and makes 'we' inclusionary. Whenever I use the word 'we' in this curriculum, I will explain to whom it refers.

Story Telling

Stories are important. Most people tell stories about who they are and what is happening to them in the world. They also tell stories about the past, about things that happened in the past, and things that never happened, but that they imagine might have happened. If you do not tell stories about yourself or other people or the past, that's okay, I just want you to know that lots of people do, and in this section I am going to talk about those stories.

If you want to understand people and their relationships with each other, themselves, and their institutions, like congregations and fellowships, it is important to understand the stories people tell. To understand stories, you need to find the answers to several questions.¹

1. Who is telling the story?
2. Who is the story about?
3. Who is included in the story?
4. Who is left out of the story, and why?

¹ I learned about these questions when I took the Renaissance Module, Leading UU Culture Change pilot class, offered in April 2021 by Gail Forsyth-Vail and Rev. Dr. Natalie Fenimore.

The Story of this Curriculum

Purpose: Who is telling the story, and why?

The purpose of *Dreamers, Devisers, and Doers* is to teach about women, both cis and trans, and non-binary and genderqueer people who dared to dream of a better way, who devised a method or a pathway that would support needed change, and who through their actions, contributed to the betterment of our society.

The final session of the curriculum is about the 8th principle. As I write this curriculum, there is a movement to add an 8th principle to the 7 UU principles. Perhaps by the time you are using this curriculum, it will have been added to the principles and we will have 8 UU principles, but as of this writing it is a necessary thing to discuss the 8th principle and introduce it to congregations, so I am including an exploration of it here. Throughout the curriculum, you will find anti-racist activities that are intended to demonstrate the need for the 8th principle and get the group thinking about it. If your congregation is already deeply engaged in anti-racist work and/or has already added the 8th principle, please adjust the activities as needed to reflect the needs of your congregation.

I, a woman, wrote the curriculum with the expectation that it is being used by a group of women to learn more about the history of women, who are often not included in the usual history taught in the United States.

For a fuller explanation of my understanding of gender and how I refer to it in this curriculum, please see the section of this introduction titled [‘On Gender.’](#)

Perspective: What lens informs the storytelling?

I hope people of every gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, and ability will use this curriculum. I name the group for which it was originally created to let the reader know the perspective of its origin. The Unitarian Universalist Church in Idaho Falls is a small congregation of mostly white people in a mostly white town, with a few Black, Latino/a, Asian, and Native American people in town, located in an area of the United States without many UU congregations. We (the town of Idaho Falls and the congregation of UUCIF) are on the land of the Shoshone and Bannock Native American tribes. There is one other UU congregation an hour away, and beyond that, the other closest congregations are 3-4 hours away by car. The members of my group are mostly older, cisgender women who identify as white.

The Back Story: How the story began

To begin, I need to tell you where this curriculum came from. To do that, I first need to tell you about *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* and *Rise Up and Call Her Name*. For simplicity, let’s call them *Cakes* and *Rise Up*.

Cakes is a product of second-wave feminism. It is explicitly for women, not men, and it makes no mention of trans people and has no understanding of gender beyond the binary. It introduces a group of women to the pre-Christian goddesses of Europe and the Middle East.

Rise Up is more of the same, but focuses on women saints and Mary, mother of Jesus.

In 2016, I first set out to hold a *Cakes* group at the request of my then-minister, Rev. Lyn Stangland-Cameron, now retired. We ran through it in the first year, *Rise Up* in the second year, and then I asked the group if they wanted to keep meeting. They did, so I looked for another

curriculum to come after *Rise Up*, but there was not another curriculum about women in the history of the world or in religion.

I began collecting stories of women to share with my group and putting together a few group activities for us to do together. That took us through another program year, and the retirement of Rev. Lyn and the coming of an interim minister, Rev. Jacqueline Ziegler, known to our congregation as Rev. Jackie. My group really liked the stories and activities I was putting together, and they suggested I write a full curriculum using them.

At that time, I only held a quarter-time position of Director of Religious Education & Exploration at the congregation. Rev. Jackie suggested I write a grant to cover the costs and my time for writing such a curriculum. I wrote a grant proposal and sent it to the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, publisher of *Cakes and Rise Up*.

To my astonishment and delight, they accepted my proposal! As I wrote it, I shared each session with my group and incorporated their suggestions. I write this in the second year of the covid-19 pandemic, and we have continued to meet over Zoom each month, though our meetings are simpler and have fewer activities these days.

When Rev. Jackie came to my congregation, when I was just beginning to discern how I would format the new stories and activities I was putting together, she suggested that I might find inspiration in Judy Chicago's work. Rev. Jackie planned to have women in the congregation make plates similar to Judy Chicago's work at a paint-your-own pottery business to celebrate women important to women in the congregation during Women's History Month and thought it would be appropriate to tie in the learning the congregation's women were doing in my class.

I did not inquire deeply into the critiques of *The Dinner Party*, which say that it is racist and non-inclusive for its focus on white women, as well as being racist in the way that the only Black woman in it, Sojourner Truth, is depicted. I regret not asking more deeply about it or using more diverse and inclusive sources. When I first wrote this curriculum, I used it as the initial session in my curriculum to set the stage, and then moved onto other women not represented in *The Dinner Party*. This version of the curriculum that you are reading does not center Judy Chicago in the first session, but you can find a biography of her and some activities about *The Dinner Party* in [Appendix D](#) at the end of the curriculum.

I did use one aspect of *The Dinner Party* to frame my curriculum. Judy Chicago chose women from 3 different eras for *The Dinner Party*. For each session of my curriculum, I tried to choose women from 3 different time periods, from pre-history, from history, and from modern times. I was not able to always find women who fit the session's theme who were widely spaced in time. This also means that many worthy women are not included with biographies because there was not room. In the More to Explore section in each session, I list more women who fit the session's theme and whom you may wish to read more about. I did try to choose women throughout the curriculum with whom you may not be familiar, with the goal of increasing awareness of women's contributions throughout history.

The Women of Dreamers, Devisers, and Doers: Who is included in the story?

The three sections of this curriculum each feature three women. It was very difficult to choose just three women for each section. There are so many more women who made important contributions to knowledge and to the world than could be included here. After each session introduction, I have included a few more women to also explore their contributions, either in the

class or on your own. This section is called More to Explore. I have tried to include women that are less well known to bring attention to their work. I also included more biographies and activities in [Appendix D](#) as well. These lists are not exhaustive in any way. There are many, many more women to learn about, especially as we look at the past through an inclusive lens.

For example, as I write this, we (people in the United States who read about archaeology) are learning about a young woman warrior of the Scythian culture.² Her body was found in an archaeological dig years ago, but the assumption was made that she was a young man, because the original archaeologists who wrote about the finding of her burial site assumed a young woman would not be buried with the trappings of a warrior.

I want to caution you against assuming that the women in this session (or any session) are feminist simply because they are women or are included in this curriculum. Feminism has been defined and re-defined many times in the United States, as we strive for full equality for all. In fact, I am finding this to be a difficult time to write about gender as there seem to be currently as many ways to describe gender, gender identity, and gender expression as there are people. This is a fluid time for definitions.

² "Scythian Warrior's Genome Analyzed." *Archaeology*. June 17, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.archaeology.org/news/8802-200617-scythian-mummy-genome>

On Gender: Who is the story for?

This is a trans-inclusive, woman-centered curriculum.

When I say 'trans-inclusive,' I mean that this curriculum is meant to include transgender women, trans women, demigirls, genderqueer, agender, two-spirit, genderfluid, non-binary, gender non-conforming, bigender, third gender, transfeminine, or androgynous people or any other people with a non-man gender that is not named in this list as well as cis women.

Men are welcome to read the curriculum, and use it to learn more about women, but it is not written for men. Cis men, trans men, or transmasculine people are mostly not mentioned in the curriculum, because this curriculum is about women.

Gender expression is not the same as gender identity. People can wear masculine clothing and identify as women, people can wear feminine clothing and identify as men, and vice versa in both cases. I discuss gender expression and gender expectations more fully in the introduction to [Session 5, Transforming Gender](#).

In my understanding, in the white cultures currently living in the United States and Europe, there has been and, in many places still is, a rigid understanding of gender as binary. There have lived people who did not conform to this binary understanding, and at various times, those non-conforming people have been visible or less visible in the larger culture. The larger culture has often suppressed knowledge of these people who did not conform to the gender binary.

Sometimes in the history of the United States and Europe, people assigned female chose to wear clothing associated with male identity. If those people chose to continue presenting as men and not return to wearing women's clothing, and live as men in their world, I have not included them in this curriculum, because they are men and this curriculum is about women. If the people wearing men's clothing sometimes also wore women's clothing and said they were women, I have included them in this curriculum. They may have been men, but they were expressing their lives as women. I have made the best decisions that I can in light of how difficult it has been in the United States and Europe to behave in ways that did not conform with the majority's expectations of gender and how little made it into the historical record.

In other cultures, there has been a different understanding of gender as a spectrum, not a binary. To name some, not all, of the cultures with an understanding of more than two genders, I name Native American peoples, the Bugi people of Bali, ancient Greece, and ancient Egypt. This list is not exhaustive.

Further Reading on Gender in Other Cultures

Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America. Roscoe, Will. 1998. ISBN: 0-312-17539-6.

Sulawesi's Fifth Gender: What if there were not just two genders, but five? In Indonesia, there are. Graham, Sharyn. Retrieved from: <https://www.insideindonesia.org/sulawesis-fifth-gender-2>

Gender Diversity in Indonesia: Sexuality, Islam and Queer Selves. Graham Davies, Sharyn. 2010. ISBN: 978-0415375696.

For the Trans, Non-Binary, and/or Queer Reader

I want to tell you, the reader, that I am a cis woman, and I do not understand what it is to be trans, non-binary, or queer. I have come to realize that the experience that cis people have of gender is not the same experience that trans people have of gender. The experiences seem to me to be so different that I am not certain that a cis person can fully explain their experience of gender to a trans person, or vice versa.

That said, I have written this curriculum to be welcoming and inclusive to the best of my ability. I hope that everyone reading this curriculum will feel welcome and included. If at any time you do not feel welcome or included in this curriculum, I apologize. It is a failure of mine, not of you.

Racism and White Supremacy: Who is not included, and why?

This is meant to be an inclusive curriculum, decentering white women from the texts and differentiating itself from the prequels. I have included at least one woman of color in every session as one of the three featured women. However, I have not succeeded in being fully inclusive, partly hindered by white supremacy and the repression of non-white sources, and partly because I am still learning and overcoming bias.

In general, there is very little recorded history on the contributions of women to the world, and even less about the contributions of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other women of color, regardless of being the global majority who are not white. I have struggled with finding good sources of information on women of color, especially Black women.

A note on sources for this curriculum

I have tried to avoid using Wikipedia as my sole source of information for a person, as it can be edited very easily to include misinformation. I tried to use mainly books and peer-reviewed journal articles as sources, keeping in mind that they are not equally accessible to all authors, so I have used other sources on the internet as long as I could verify authorship or found the website to be trying to exclude misinformation (using the website's About page to guide me in these decisions). I also tried to avoid using as my sole source a website that is no longer active or accessible. I did use Wikipedia as a source for the Internet Resources in each session, because it is reliable and free, but the facilitators should check each Wikipedia page before sending out the Internet Resources to the participants, in case incorrect information has been added since I wrote this curriculum.

I know that, as a white woman, I need to take care not to perpetuate white supremacy even as I write about anti-racism and ending white supremacy. As the Rev. Dorothy May Emerson wrote, "In writing this, I realize that I, as a white woman, am still wrestling to free myself from the racism that permeates our world."³ I am trying. I hope I have succeeded in some small measure.

Practical Notes for Facilitators

³ Source: *Boston Women Who Worked for Racial Justice: Eliza Lee Cabot Follen, Lydia Maria Francis Child, Maria Weston Chapman, Mary Ashton Rice Livermore, Maria Louise Baldwin, Florida Ruffin Ridley*. Emerson, Dorothy May. Occasional Paper #6, Unitarian Universalist Women's Heritage Society. June, 1993.

Materials Lists

Each session has a materials list for that session. There is also a complete materials list for the entire curriculum in [Appendix A](#) at the end of the book. The Materials lists include the additional articles needed for discussions in some sessions. You can also find a complete list of the additional articles in [Appendix B](#).

Journals

A journal for each person in the class is required. Every session will utilize this journal. A larger size journal is recommended so printed handouts can be directly taped or glued in. If you use smaller journals, you may also want to provide a folder or paper binder for each class member to keep the handouts for easy reference in the future.

Group members may take their journals home and bring them back for each session. Some people may not feel comfortable taking their journals home, or it may not be safe for them to do so. Offer your group a confidential place for the journals to be stored by facilitators between sessions. Each session does have homework for group members to do between sessions. If journals are not going home, make arrangements for group members to do that work where the journals are stored (perhaps the facilitator could come into the congregation's building at another time for some or all class members) or adapt the homework activities in another way that best fits your group's needs.

Suggestions for how to best use the curriculum

The sections are written for a facilitator or facilitator team to directly address the group. Notes in underline are just for the facilitator(s). The session introduction and the biographies are intended to be shared as written with the group.

Your group may prefer for the facilitator(s) to provide the introduction and biographies for each session to the group as handouts. Your group may prefer to have group members take turns reading the introduction and biographies. If you choose to have group members read aloud, remember that not everyone feels comfortable reading aloud in a group and ask for volunteers instead of having each person read in turn. Please adapt your mode of delivery as you find it helpful for your group as you share this information, but remember to share all the information and not omit portions to make your group more comfortable – comfort is a trap of white supremacy.

Every session has an activity to do after the session is over, titled 'Homework.' Part of the intended work of this curriculum is to break down white supremacy, and to do that, we must take what we learn out of the classroom so we can begin to embody and manifest the learning. These exercises are intended to help with that process. As I mentioned above, it may not be possible for all group members to do this work at home. Please try to find a way to ensure the homework activities are completed, whether it is at home, at another time at the congregation, or in another way that works for your group.

The sessions imagine the group sitting in a circle formation for ease of discussion and directness, but there are many ways to hold a discussion (see below), so do what works best for the group.

Each session is designed to last between one and two hours. Some will be a little shorter than others and some will be a little longer. They should take no more than 2 hours.

Handouts

The Maps and Timeline orient us to the women of *Dreamers, Devisers, and Doers*, our characters, in time and space. The maps are Handouts 2a and 2b, and the timeline is handout 3. All of these are covered in Session 0.

You will also find a handout for the suggested covenant and for the Memory Match Game of Session 10.

Possible Discussion Modes

The activities are written with the expectation that the group will be using Mutual Invitation as the primary discussion mode. If your group chooses to use another discussion mode, please be aware that not all participants will feel comfortable and included.

Mutual Invitation: The facilitator invites one person to share. They are welcome to share, pass completely, or pass for now. After the first person has done so, a second person is invited she invites another woman to share, and so on until everyone has been invited to share at random.¹ This is the recommended and preferred discussion style for this curriculum. In some cultures, people teach that one should be invited to speak before doing so, and in others, it's okay to jump right in. The practice of mutual invitation helps make sure everyone is heard.

Around the circle: Each person shares or passes, going around in one direction of the circle. It can be done with the facilitator inviting each person in turn. It can feel very hierarchical and people at the end of the circle must wait a while for their turn. It can also be done with the preceding person passing their turn to the following person when they are done speaking.

Popcorn style: Each person speaks when they feel moved. Although this style may work in some groups, this can result in some people speaking more often, and others feeling uncomfortable about jumping in.

Raising hands: Each person raises their hand when they wish to speak and is called on by a facilitator. This is another option that can feel very hierarchical and limiting, but may work for some settings and some discussions.

Each session contains:

- A materials list
- Prep ahead, including Internet resources
- Opening reading;
- Introduction making connections between the 3 women and with the topic (possibly discussing other women as well)
- More to Explore section for additional women who made important contributions;
- Biographies of 3 women (or groups of women);
- 4 activities that generally conform to this pattern (though there are exceptions):
 - One discussing the 3 women (Discussion #1),

- One deepening spirituality (Activity #1),
- One regarding the 8th principle, (Discussion #2). You may wish to explicitly draw the group's attention to this activity and let them know it is intended to teach about anti-racism and the need for the 8th principle;
- And one more activity to deepen understanding of the topic (Activity #2);
- Homework/take home work to work on before the next session; and
- Closing reading.

These can be shared with the group members, or not, as the facilitator(s) chooses. I recommend that the Internet resources from the Prep Ahead section be shared with group members in the reminder email that the facilitator will send before each class.

What is “Prep Ahead” and what will I find in it?

“Prep Ahead” is a section in each session detailing what facilitators do ahead of time to prepare for this lesson. Read this section at the time of the preceding lesson to give plenty of preparation time for the session. Up to a month in advance is fine. Sessions 2, 8, and 11, in particular, require time and energy spent before the session to adequately prepare.

A week before each meeting, if monthly, or a couple days in advance, send out an email reminding the group of the next meeting, of anything they need to know about the meeting, and the internet resources to read ahead of time.

Internet Resources

Found in the “Prep Ahead” portion of each session, these are websites that introduce each woman in the upcoming session. These can be provided to the group ahead of time so they can come feeling somewhat prepared for a discussion. This is not required, however. Please note that the internet resources are easy to read and find resources, such as Wikipedia, and are not as vetted, as scholarly articles would be. Facilitators should verify that resources are still available and appropriate for the class before sending the reminder email.

Additional Biographies and Activities (Appendix D)

Some of the sessions have additional information in [Appendix D](#) that can be used to supplement the session material. Look for this note in the Prep Ahead section to alert you to the additional information: ****Additional information in Appendix D****

These additional resources are not intended to supplant the session material in any way but provide additional information on the topic. Please do not use the Appendix D information to decenter Black women.

Sample checklist for reminder email

- Meeting date, time, and place

- Childcare is provided (if you offer this; highly recommended)
- Food arrangements (provided by host/meeting location, potluck, etc)
- Internet resources to read up on this session's featured women
- Homework to bring back (if they were supposed to bring something for the next lesson)
- Journal to bring back to use again (if the journals are going home)
- Any other materials for your group's particular location and situation

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Anita Carpenter, Rev. Jacqueline Ziegler, Rev. Catherine Buck Clarenbuch for the courage to find my own voice, Roberta Cartmell, Melissa Syria, Ella Elizabeth Truchot (artwork), Rev. Lyn Stangland-Cameron, my fellow LREDA members, especially Christina C.C. Fernandez, and the women of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Idaho Falls. Thank you to my readers, Amanda Alice Uluhan, Rev. Elizabeth Mount, and Marsha Thrall. Thank you especially to the UU Women's Fellowship for the grant that made it all possible.

Author Biography

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Session 0: Beginnings

Note for Session 0

What is a 0 session? In computer programming, 0 is used to denote something that needs to come before the beginning of a list. So Session 0, this session, is an initial, introductory session that can either stand on its own as a short session to introduce the workshop session, or it can be combined with Session 1, making one long session. Session 0 is missing many of the sections found in the other sessions, including discussion activities and the More to Explore section.

If you combine with Session 1, be sure and do the Prep Ahead for both sessions prior to the first meeting. The Closing Reading for Session 0 may be included or skipped but do not extinguish the chalice. The Reminder of Next Meeting for Session 0 should be skipped -- move straight into Session 1. The Opening Reading for Session 1 should be included but you do not need to relight the chalice.

Materials List

- Chalice
- Chime
- Journal or pad of paper for each class member
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Newsprint pad
- Easel (optional)
- Copies of Handouts #1, #2a, #2b, and #3, enough for each person in the the group
- Folder or paper binder for each class member (optional)
- Tape or glue (optional)

Prep Ahead

****Additional information in Appendix D****

Print out enough copies of the handouts for each member of the group to have one.

[Handout #1](#)

[Handout #2a](#)

[Handout #2b](#)

[Handout #3](#)

Read this website: Guidelines for Effective Cross-Cultural Dialogue (<https://fusn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Guidelines-for-Effective-Cross-Cultural-Dialogue.doc-1.pdf>) and share it with the group, preferably by email ahead of time or via print during the class.

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we are starting a new curriculum, *Dreamers, Devisers, and Doers*. A sequel to *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* and *Rise Up and Call Her Name*, this curriculum will introduce us to many historical and still-living women who lived inspirational lives.

The purpose of *Dreamers, Devisers, and Doers* is to teach about women, both cis and trans, and non-binary and genderqueer people who dared to dream of a better way, who devised a method or a pathway that would support needed change, and who through their actions, contributed to the betterment of our society.

Covenant

What is a covenant? A covenant is an agreement we share together about this time we will spend together, and a living agreement for each person to fulfill during our time together.

This is the covenant we will be using. Show the printed Covenant ([Handout #1](#)) from the Resource section. Give a copy to each class member, along with a copy of the Guidelines for Effective Cross-Cultural Dialogue if you did not already share them via email.

We agree:

- The words and stories shared in this group will stay in this group, though we will carry our learning into the world -- stories stay, ideas leave.
- We will do our best to be anti-racist and anti-oppressive.
- We will treat others as they wish to be treated.
- If we fail in this, we will accept the word of the group member who calls our attention to the mistake.

Are there any additions or subtractions from this covenant?

Do you all agree to abide by this covenant?

Check in

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,⁴ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. For this first class, you may also want to ask them to share why they have joined the class. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Opening Reading

⁴ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading: "When You Come to Me," by Maya Angelou

When you come to me, unbidden,
Beckoning me
To long-ago rooms,
Where memories lie.
Offering me, as to a child, an attic,
Gatherings of days too few.
Baubles of stolen kisses.
Trinkets of borrowed loves.
Trunks of secret words.
I CRY.⁵

Activity #1

As we work together as a group, every session will include some time to work in a journal and expand our experience through drawing and writing. Here is a journal for each of you. Pass out journals. At this session, you will decorate the cover (or first page) in a way that is meaningful to you. Pass out the markers or colored pencils. Allow around 5 minutes for working. Please take a few minutes to make this journal yours.

Activity #2

In *Dreamers, Devisers, and Doers*, we will be learning about women from all over the world and from many different time periods. There are 2 maps and a timeline provided to learn where and when these "dreamers, devisers, and doers" lived and worked. Pass out copies of Handouts #2a and #2b, and Handout #3. Look over these handouts and familiarize yourself with them.

Do you have any questions? Please keep these pages with your journal so you can refer to them as we learn about each of the people in the different sessions. If you have a paper binder or folder for the handouts, you can pass them out now, or offer tape or glue for the handouts to be pasted in the journals.

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

⁵ From *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I DIIIIE*. Angelou, Maya. 1971.

Reading from *The Two Offers*, by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

Introduction to this reading: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was a Black abolitionist and suffragist who lived in the mid-to-late 19th century. Session 4 contains her biography. This reading is from a short story she wrote, entitled *The Two Offers*, about a young woman who must choose between the two men courting her. The words need some translation for our time, but the underlying meaning is what I want to convey as we move into this curriculum.

“Talk as you will of woman’s deep capacity for loving, of the strength of her affectional nature. I do not deny it; but will the mere possession of any human love, fully satisfy all the demands of her whole being? You may paint her in poetry or fiction, as a frail vine, clinging to her brother man for support, and dying when deprived of it; and all this may sound well enough to please the imaginations of school-girls, or love-lorn maidens. But woman—the true woman—if you would render her happy, it needs more than the mere development of her affectional nature. Her conscience should be enlightened, her faith in the true and right established, scope given to her Heaven-endowed and God-given faculties.”⁶

Reminder of next meeting

Since this is the first meeting, make sure the group agrees on your next meeting (date, time, and place) before dispersing.

⁶ From *The Two Offers*. Harper, Frances Ellen. Retrieved from: <http://fullreads.com/literature/the-two-offers/>

Session 1: Seeking to Understand the Mysteries of Existence: Philosophers & Mystics

Materials List

- Chalice
- Chime
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Newsprint pad (optional)
- An item brought by each class member to share about a woman⁷ who inspires the class member
- Small foamcore or posterboard pieces (each approximately 5 x 8 inches), enough for each person in the group to have one
- A large piece of foamcore, big enough to attach all the smaller pieces with some space between each piece (you may need 2 large pieces)
- Glue or double-sided foam tape
- Small bowls (one for each class member), preferably white or clear
- Pitcher with enough water to fill each bowl halfway
- Eyedropper
- Olive oil
- Saucer

Prep Ahead

****Additional information in Appendix D****

Before class, gather the materials and make sure you can easily use the eyedropper to drop one drop of oil in a bowl of water. Check with class members about allergies and make sure no one in the group is allergic to olive oil. If there is someone with an allergy to olive oil, please substitute another oil as available.

Ask each class member to bring information about a woman who inspires the class member. The woman can be anyone in history or still living who identifies as a woman, either cis or trans. A non-binary person may also be included, if that non-binary person would feel comfortable being included. For further clarification regarding who is intended to be included in this exercise, I would refer you to the section in the Introduction entitled, [On Gender](#). The person chosen may be a relative of the class member, or not.

Internet resources for this session:

Rābi'a of Basra: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabia_of_Basra

St Hildegard of Bingen: https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=3777

Sophie Bosede Oluwole: <https://guardian.ng/opinion/sophie-bosede-oluwole-1935-2018/>

⁷ See the Prep Ahead section for more details.

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we are discussing women who spent time trying to connect with their God and reach deeper into their religion, including Rābi'a of Basra, Muslim mystic; St. Hildegard of Bingen, Catholic saint; and Sophia Bosede Oluwole, 'the first Nigerian woman to earn a doctorate in philosophy from a Nigerian university.'⁸

Check In

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,⁹ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading from *Scivias*, by St Hildegard of Bingen

(Scientia Dei)¹⁰ denotes the Knowledge of God, for she watches over all people and all things in heaven and on earth, being of such radiance and brightness that, for the measureless splendor that shines in her, you cannot gaze on her face or on the garments she wears. For she is awesome in terror as the Thunderer's lightning, and gentle in goodness as the sunshine. Hence in her terror and her gentleness, she is incomprehensible to mortals, because of the dread radiance of divinity in her face and the brightness that dwells in her as the robe of her beauty. She is like the sun, which none can contemplate in its blazing face or in the glorious garment of its rays. For she is with all and in all, and of beauty so great in her mystery that no one could know how sweetly she bears with people, and with what unfathomable mercy she spares them.¹¹

Introduction

Today we are going to discuss philosophers and mystics who have spent their lives in contemplation of higher powers at work in our lives. This is by no means an exhaustive list -- you will find, in later sessions, more women who also spend their lives in this way, and there are many more women not included here.

⁸ From "Sophie Bosede Oluwole (1935 – 2018)" in The Guardian, Nigeria, by the Editorial Board. <https://guardian.ng/opinion/sophie-bosede-oluwole-1935-2018/>

⁹ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

¹⁰ Scientia Dei is St. Hildegard of Bingen's phrase for an aspect of God she describes in this reading.

¹¹ Source: *Scivias* III.4.15, p. 401, by St. Hildegard of Bingen, quoted in *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* by Newman, Barbara. 1987 with new preface in 1997. ISBN: 978-0-520-21162-9.

Sometimes I could not include women in this session because I could not find enough information on them and their ideas. Sexism and racism have prevented women's contributions to philosophy from being adequately recognized. For example, Joyce Mitchell Cook was a Black woman who was the first woman to obtain a PhD in philosophy in the USA, but she is not included here because she was unable to ever publish any works besides her dissertation, and unable to obtain a professorship in philosophy, due to sexism and racism, so there is very little publicly available about her ideas or works and I have been unable to find out anything more than those basic facts from a reliable source (that is, not Wikipedia, which is fine for quick references but not trustworthy enough for research purposes).

I was lucky enough to find a book in a bookstore all about women philosophers. *The Philosopher Queens: The lives and legacies of philosophy's unsung women*, edited by Rebecca Buxton and Lisa Whiting¹², has biographies of twenty women philosophers, and lists more in the resources at the end of the book. I list a few of the women in More to Explore, and used the book as inspiration for this chapter.

From the introduction to *The Philosopher Queens*:

The history of philosophy has not done women justice. To see this, you only have to look at some of the recent books published on the topic. In *Philosophy: 100 Essential Thinkers* only two women feature, with Mary Wollstonecraft and Simone de Beauvoir taking the seats of honour. In *The Great Philosophers: From Socrates to Turing*, no women made the cut. Each chapter in that particular book was written by a contemporary philosopher, all of whom are also men.

More to Explore

Hannah Arendt

Ban Zhao

Antoinette Brown Blackwell

adrienne maree brown

Octavia E. Butler

Joyce Mitchell Cook

Kimberlé Crenshaw

Angela Davis

Diotima

Roxane Gay

Zora Neale Hurston

Lucretia Mott

Judith Sargent Murray

Alice Walker

Biographies

Rābi'a of Basra

Date: Circa 8th century CE

Location: Basra, (now) Iraq

¹² *The Philosopher Queens: The lives and legacies of philosophy's unsung women*. Buxton, Rebecca, and Whiting, Lisa, editors. 2020. ISBN: 978-1-78352-801-1.

Rábi'a of Basra lived in Basra, which is now part of Iraq, in the 8th century CE. Much is unknown about her life. She left no writings that can be definitively ascribed to her, and many of the stories of her life take place with people who were most likely very old or dead when she was young. She was born about the year 717 CE, to a family so poor they could not afford lamp oil, nor swaddling clothes for her. She was the fourth daughter, and so her parents named her, for Rábi'a means fourth.

Áṭṭār tells us that on the night of her birth, there was no oil in the house, no lamp or swaddling clothes in which to wrap the newborn child. . . . The mother asked her husband to go and ask for oil for the lamp from a neighbour, but he had made a vow that he would never ask anything of any creature (*i.e.* as a true Súfí he would depend only on God to supply his needs), and so he came back without it. Having fallen asleep in great distress at the lack of provision for the child, he dreamt that the Prophet Muḥammad appeared to him in his sleep.

Source: *Muslim Women Mystics: The Life and Work of Rábi'a and Other Women Mystics in Islam*. Smith, Margaret. 2001. ISBN 1-85168-250-3.

In the dream, the Prophet directed him to write to the Amír of Basra, telling him that he has neglected the Prophet in his prayers and as penance must give the bearer of the letter four hundred dínárs, not stolen. The Amír did so, with a further donation to the poor as well.

When Rábi'a was young, her parents died. She was sold as a slave by an unscrupulous man. She worked as a slave until her master found her praying to God one night, surrounded by holy light and he was rendered unable to interrupt her, frozen in place until dawn. He freed her the next morning. She lived in a hut, asking for nothing from anyone but God. She would not take charity, because it came from people, not from God. Throughout Rábi'a's life, she rejected food and money that people tried to give her. Once, a rich man gave her a house and much money, but she gave it back after she found herself admiring the artwork in the house rather than praying to God and contemplating God.

Early Sufi mystics, such as Rábi'a, believed that poverty (*faqr*) and renunciation (*zuhd*) helps people get closer to God.

The first stage of *zuhd*, to the Súfí, is initiatory and represents the purgative life, through which the novice must pass before setting foot on the mystic Way. But where the soul has been purified from all sensual desires, and the mystic "pure from Self as flame from smoke" sets forth upon his journey towards God, then he passes beyond this early degree of *zuhd* and aims at the last stage, renunciation of all but God, attained only by the adept.

Source: *Muslim Women Mystics: The Life and Work of Rábi'a and Other Women Mystics in Islam*. Smith, Margaret. 2001. ISBN 1-85168-250-3.

Rábi'a lived in fear of not being able to be with God forever after her death, and spent her life in contemplation of God, praying to him, and hoping she was worthy to spend eternity with God.

Source: *Muslim Women Mystics: The Life and Work of Rábi'a and Other Women Mystics in Islam*. Smith, Margaret. 2001. ISBN 1-85168-250-3.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

Date: 12th century CE

Born: 1098 CE

Died: September 17, 1179 CE

Location: Bingen am Rhein, (now) Germany



St. Hildegard was born in 1098 CE in Bimersheim bei Alzey, (now) Germany. Her noble parents dedicated her, and three of her ten siblings, to the church as a tithe. They may have chosen her because she seemed fragile and had visions, but there is no record of how they picked the children they dedicated to the church.

At age eight, in 1106, Hildegard moved into a hermitage at Bingen am Rhein with a noble hermit, Jutta of Sponheim. Jutta taught her to read Latin. A monk, Volmar, was responsible for the rest of Hildegard's education. They would become lifelong friends. Hildegard took her monastic vows in her teens, and after her patron, Jutta, died, the other nuns of what had become a monastery, St. Disibod Monastery, elected her their superior.

Hildegard experienced visions and premonitions from a young age, but stopped sharing them in her teens as she learned that no one else could see what she saw. In 1141, she began writing down her visions with the help of Volmar, but it wasn't until 1147 that she began sharing them widely, after receiving higher ecclesiastical approval from cardinals and the Pope.

Her monastery became very popular with people wishing to become nuns, and so she founded a new monastery at Rupertsberg. The monks at St. Disibod were unhappy, since it meant the loss of visitors, but Hildegard was permitted to move the monastery in time.

Once she began to write, Hildegard became a prolific writer, creating several books of her visions, medical treatises, music, and other writings as well as carrying on a voluminous correspondence. We heard a brief quotation from her writings with the chalice lighting. Read the chalice lighting again if the group would like to hear it. She spent much time preaching around Germany and visiting with nobles with whom she corresponded. She was able to effect political change through her noble connections and her correspondence.

Hildegard is still noted in Europe, and Germany especially, for her work with herbs and medical treatments.

Towards the end of her life, Hildegard was caught up in a controversy that resulted in her monastery's temporary excommunication, including the right to sing ecclesiastical music. It began when she gave shelter at the monastery to an excommunicated nobleman. During his time there, he repented of his sins and Hildegard welcomed him back into the Church. He then passed away, and she had him buried in consecrated ground. Men of the Church did not believe her that he had repented and insisted that Hildegard and her monastery be placed under interdict. This was very distressing to Hildegard and her nuns. Fortunately, the ban was lifted six months before Hildegard's death and she was able to die peacefully.

The original copy of Hildegard's most famous book, known as *Scivias*, was unfortunately taken to Dresden for safekeeping during World War II and has been lost. There is a copy that was made by nuns in the 20th century.

Source: *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* by Newman, Barbara. 1987 with new preface in 1997. ISBN: 978-0-520-21162-9.

Sophie Bosede Oluwole

Date: 20th century CE

Born: May 12, 1935

Died: December 23, 2018

Sophie Bosede Oluwole was born in Nigeria in 1935. Named Bosede by her family, when she was eight years old, the headmaster of her school suggested that her father rename her Sophia, to acknowledge her intelligence and wisdom. Later in life, she changed it to Sophie.

Professor Oluwole spent her life showing that African philosophy existed, and was every bit the equal of Western philosophy. She wrote a bestselling book, entitled *Socrates and Orunmila: Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy*, comparing Socrates to the originator of Yoruba philosophy, Orunmila.

She spent 1963 to 1967 as a trailing spouse to her first husband, as he studied in the USSR and the United States. Upon returning to Nigeria in 1967, she enrolled in the University of Lagos, where she received a bachelor's and master's degree in philosophy. She received her doctorate in philosophy from the University of Idaban in 1984.

Professor Oluwole researched and analyzed African epistemology found in oral traditions to demonstrate that the oral knowledge of Yoruba (the largest tribe in Nigeria) qualified as philosophy.

She wrote six books, lectured at the University of Lagos, and travelled extensively.

She passed away in December 2018 following an exhausting trip to Brazil.

Sources: “Sophie Bosede Oluwole.” by Salami, Minna in *The Philosopher Queens: The lives and legacies of philosophy’s unsung women*. Buxton, Rebecca, and Whiting, Lisa, editors. 2020. ISBN: 978-1-78352-801-1; “Sophie Bosede Oluwole (1935 – 2018)” in The Guardian, Nigeria, by the Editorial Board. <https://guardian.ng/opinion/sophie-bosede-oluwole-1935-2018/>

Discussion #1

Using the practices of Mutual Invitation, discuss the similarities and differences between Rabi’a of Basra, St Hildegard of Bingen, and Sophia Bosede Oluwole.

Thoughts to Guide Discussion (in no particular order)

1. Rabi’a of Basra believed God was more than humans could comprehend.
2. St Hildegard of Bingen believed God was more awesome and terrible than humans could comprehend.
3. Sophie Bosede Oluwole devoted her life to showing that African philosophy was the equal of Western philosophy. “Her first major publication (was) *Witchcraft, Reincarnation and the Godhead*. Thereafter came other works discussing the oral philosophical literature, the Ifa corpus, African womanhood in relation to Western feminism, amongst others. A few years ago she stunned the intellectual community with a controversial work that compared Socrates of Athens and Orunmila of Ile-Ife.”¹³

Activity #1

Communicate the following instructions to the group in the facilitator’s own words:

1. Break the group into pairs, using whatever system works best for the group, whether that’s counting off by numbers or sharing with the person in the neighboring seat.
2. Pass out small foamcore pieces and markers.
3. Each person should share with their partner the item they brought about a woman who inspires them.
4. As they share, they should write notes and sketches on the foamcore piece (only on one side). Put the name of the woman being discussed at the top in large letters.
5. A separate piece of foamcore should be used for each person talked about.
6. Allow 5 minutes for each person to share.

After all sharing is done, attach the small pieces of foamcore to the larger piece(s) in an attractive way.

¹³ From “Sophie Bosede Oluwole (1935 – 2018)” in The Guardian, Nigeria, by the Editorial Board. <https://guardian.ng/opinion/sophie-bosede-oluwole-1935-2018/>

Discussion #2

One reason this curriculum is necessary is because white supremacy has led to the suppression of much history about people of color, even into the current day, as I mention in the introduction to this session. One of the goals of this curriculum is working to break down white supremacy. In furtherance¹⁴ of that goal, an exploration of the 8th principle is woven throughout this curriculum.

The 8th Principle Project is a plan to add an 8th principle to the Principles of Unitarian Universalism, a principle that explicitly asks us to be anti-racist.

The 8th principle reads:

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

The 8th principle has its own website, <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>, with an exploration and explanation of why it is needed.

On your device, pull up the webpage on the background of the 8th principle for your group, <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>.

The 8th principle website has a section devoted to exploring the background of the 8th principle. Read each question with your group (aloud or each person can read silently), and click through to the answers provided. Read the answers (aloud or each person can read silently) and discuss them as a group. The goal here is to introduce the principle and answer questions.

This is not a discussion for white people to decide whether or not this is needful. Start the discussion from the assumption that this is asked because we have not yet done these things and it is hurting people of color who are also UUs.¹⁵

This discussion activity was developed for a congregation that hasn't adopted the 8th principle, or knows little about it. Please adapt for your own congregation and take into consideration any discussions your congregation has already had about the 8th principle.

Activity #2

Pass out bowls to each participant and pour water into the bowl halfway. Make sure each person has a comfortable place to sit and look at the water. Ideally, they will hold the bowl of water, but some people may need a small table in front of them to hold the bowl. Also make sure now each person has their journal and a few colored pencils. If you would like to listen to St Hildegard's music during this activity, you can find a link in the curriculum section, [St Hildegard's Music](#).

Speaking calmly and clearly, say: This is a meditative activity designed to help you explore the world and your mind in the same way that mystics do. Each of you has been given a bowl of water. Make sure you can look comfortably down into the bowl. I will now place an oil droplet

¹⁴ Furtherance means advancement. Merriam-Webster Dictionary: www.merriam-webster.com

¹⁵ Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for the wording of this paragraph.

into the water. Watch the oil disperse through the water until you hear the chime. Try to keep your mind clear and concentrate on watching the oil disperse through the water. Pay attention to images that may arise in your mind as you watch. Drop the oil in the water. Wait 5 minutes. Ring the chime.

Now, pick up your journal and draw what you saw in the water and in your mind as you watched the oil.

Homework

Not all women who make important contributions end up on 'Most Famous' lists. Next month, bring information about a woman who defied expectations or fought back against injustice. Come prepared to talk about her life, what she did, and why she inspires you. You do not have to bring a biography of her -- it can be a book she's written, a painting she made, an image of other artwork she made, or something else. This person chosen does not have to be a cis woman. You are welcome to choose any person who fits with the purpose of this curriculum. For more information on gender and who is included in this curriculum, please see the Introduction section entitled, [On Gender: Who is the Story For?](#) and its subsections, [Further Reading on Gender in Other Cultures](#) and [For the Trans, Non-Binary, and/or Queer Reader](#).

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston

(The pear tree) had called her to come and gaze on a mystery. From barren brown stems to glistening leaf-buds; from the leaf-buds to snowy virginity of bloom. It stirred her tremendously. How? Why? It was like a flute song forgotten in another existence and remembered again. What? How? Why? This singing she heard that had nothing to do with her ears. The rose of the world was breathing out smell. It followed her through all her waking moments and caressed her in her sleep. It connected itself with other vaguely felt matters that had struck her outside observation and buried themselves in her flesh.¹⁶

Reminder of next meeting

Make sure the group agrees on your next meeting (date, time, and place) before dispersing.

¹⁶ Source: Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 1937. First Perennial Library edition, 1990. ISBN: 0-06-091650-8.

Session 2: Artists: Looking through the Window of the Soul

Materials List

- Chalice
- Chime
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Newsprint pad
- Easel (optional)
- Printed out copies of Adrian Piper's statement on retiring from being Black: http://www.adrianpiper.com/news_sep_2012.shtml (optional)
- Small amounts of paint in all the shades of skin
- Index cards
- Shallow bowls or saucers for mixing paint
- Cotton swabs

Prep Ahead

Familiarize yourself with the paint and pouring out a small amount at a time.

You may want to print out Adrian Piper's statement on retiring from being Black: http://www.adrianpiper.com/news_sep_2012.shtml or prepare to project it for the whole class to see. This is optional, but read [Discussion #2](#) ahead of time to decide how you want to present this material.

Internet resources for this session:

Artists of Mithila: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhubani_art

Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/international-womens-day-elisabeth-louise-vigee-le-brun>

Adrian Piper: <http://www.adrianpiper.com/>

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we will be discussing artists, including the artists of Mithila, Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun of 18th century France, and Adrian Piper from the United States of America, currently living in Germany.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading from *American Smooth*, by Rita Dove

I HAVE BEEN A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

Life's spell is so exquisite, everything conspires to break it. —Emily Dickinson

It wasn't bliss. What was bliss
but the ordinary life? She'd spend hours
in patter, moving through whole days
touching, sniffing, tasting . . . exquisite
housekeeping in a charmed world.
And yet there was always
more of the same, all that happiness,
the aimless Being There.
So she wandered for a while, bush to arbor,
lingered to look through a pond's restive mirror.
He was off cataloging the universe, probably,
pretending he could organize
what was clearly someone else's chaos.
That's when she found the tree,
the dark, crabbed branches
bearing up such speechless bounty,
she knew without being told
this was forbidden. It wasn't
a question of ownership—
who could lay claim to
such maddening perfection?
And there was no voice in her head,
no whispered intelligence lurking
in the leaves—just an ache that grew
until she knew she'd already lost everything
except desire, the red heft of it
warming her outstretched palm.¹⁷

Check in

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,¹⁸ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Introduction

Women have always created art, but they have not always been recognized as artists, by others or sometimes not even by themselves. Cave art has been found all over the world, but when modern people first found it, they assumed it was created by men. One feature of cave art is handprints. It has been shown that men and women have different size ratios of their hands,

¹⁷ Source: Dove, Rita. From the volume "American Smooth," 2004.

¹⁸ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

and analysis of the ratios of the cave handprints show that 75% of the handprints were left by women.¹⁹

Like most areas of human endeavor, men in Western culture assert that they are the only gender capable of creating great art. Women have struggled to be recognized as equally capable. Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun is a good example of this, and we will hear more about her struggles later.

The artwork created by the women in this lesson is important for understanding them and their place in history. Please consider taking some time to explore the online galleries of their work, linked in the internet resources and in their biographies.

More to Explore

Rita Dove

Artemisia Gentilisch

Frida Kahlo

Georgia O'Keefe

Elisabetta Sirani

Suzanne Valadon

Women's Camouflage Reserve Corps

Biographies

Artists of Mithila

Date: Pre-history to modern times

Location: India

Since before recorded history, the women of Mithila have painted beautiful pictures of myths and legends, gods and goddesses on the plaster walls of their houses. They paint for holy days, for the beginning of the month, for the end of the month, for birthdays, for ritual days, and for days to mark life milestones. Only women paint, and the girls learn from the older women. The plaster paintings are ephemeral, and so the skills are not lost as each new generation of girls watch their mothers and grandmothers paint the walls often.

A distinctive feature of Mithila (or Madhubani) art is that every bit of the surface is filled in with figures -- people, animals, plants, or insects. No part is left empty, unlike in most other art forms we are familiar with.

In modern times, the women of Mithila have sometimes been exploited as Western art dealers bought the art on paper for a pittance and then resold it in Western markets at much higher prices. Raymond Owens, a Western anthropologist, in an effort to help the women and preserve the art techniques, started buying up the art at good prices from the women, and then giving them back the profits when it was sold to art collectors. He then started the Ethnic Arts Foundation²⁰ that trains new artists and gives back to the community through the Mithila Art Institute, now one of several art training institutions throughout the area.

¹⁹ Source: "Were the first artists mostly women?" Hughes, Virginia. *National Geographic*. October 9, 2013.

²⁰ An early reader of the curriculum asked if this foundation is an example of white saviorism. I do not believe it is -- as far as I can tell, this foundation ensures artists receive an income for their work (so they are able to spend time creating instead of working another job) and helps the artists train the next

Source: *India and Nepal's Mithila Art Is Having a Feminist Renaissance* on Atlas Obscura.
Taormina, Tricia. Nov. 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/india-nepal-mithila-art-feminism>

The image below should print if you print this curriculum and is for you to share with the group. There are links to more digital images of the artwork below, if you and your group would like to see them.



Kohbar by artist Padma Shri Sita Devi via Wikipedia
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhubani_art)

There are more images of this artwork at the Wikipedia page:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhubani_art

Madhubani artists have received awards from the state of Bihar (where Madhubani and the former kingdom of Mithila are located) and from the national government of India.

Source: *Artists of Madhubani*. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhubani_art

Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun

Date: Late 18th century CE

Born: April 16, 1755

Died: March 30, 1842

Location: France, Italy

Born to a portrait painter in Paris, France, in 1755, Élisabeth Louise lost her father at the age of 12. To support herself, she began painting portraits. Formal training was not available to girls. Despite this, she had a small number of clients by the time she was 15. When she was 19, her

generation of artists so the art techniques are preserved. All profits from the sale of the art goes back to the artists and the work of the foundation. I believe this is an example of a white person asking a community what the people in the community need and helping them get that which they need. That said, I am not an expert, and I am relying on publicly available information and articles about the foundation -- if those are inaccurate, then this note is also inaccurate.

portraits became so famous that her painting materials were seized because she did not belong to an artists' guild or academy. She soon joined the Académie de St Luc and then established herself at court as a favorite of Queen Marie-Antoinette. She married an art dealer, Jean Baptiste Le Brun and had one daughter with him. The marriage was unsuccessful due to Jean Baptiste's gambling. Soon after that, Élisabeth Louise fled to Italy with her daughter to avoid the Revolution. She maintained a successful career painting portraits of European royalty and nobility while raising her daughter single handedly.

Find her artwork here: <https://www.theartstory.org/artist/vigee-le-brun-elisabeth-louise/>

Source: National Gallery, United Kingdom, Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun. Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/international-womens-day-elisabeth-louise-vigee-le-brun> and The Art Story, Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun. Retrieved from: <https://www.theartstory.org/artist/vigee-le-brun-elisabeth-louise/>

Adrian Piper

Date: 20th century CE

Born: 1948

Location: United States of America, Germany

Adrian Piper is a trained artist and philosopher whose formal education lasted 27 years, starting in childhood. She was born in the United States and currently resides in Berlin, Germany. She has won many awards for both her artwork and her philosophy. She is the editor of *The Berlin Journal of Philosophy*. Her philosophy focuses on Kant and metaethics. For more information about Adrian Piper and her education as an artist, share this webpage with your group: <http://www.adrianpiper.com/biography.shtml>

Explore Adrian Piper's art here: <http://www.adrianpiper.com/art/index.shtml>

Source: *Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation: Berlin*. <http://www.adrianpiper.com/>

Discussion #1

Questions for discussion:

1. How were these women encouraged to make art as children?
2. How did that affect their work as artists as adults?
3. Has society changed in its ability to recognize woman artists? Why or why not?

Activity #1

Think about your early experiences with art. Were they positive or negative? Were you encouraged to make art, or discouraged from expressing yourself? As you think about these experiences, write or draw in your journal how you feel about art and how it was shared with you as a child.

Discussion #2

In 2012, Adrian Piper publicly retired from being Black. Please review the words she wrote on this topic with the class: http://www.adrianpiper.com/news_sep_2012.shtml. Please read her statement in its entirety with the class – her specific words make a huge difference in the perception of this action. You may wish to print out her statement ahead of time for each class

member, or project it with your electronic device. She now wishes to be known as The Artist Formerly Known as African-American, with a nod to The Artist Formerly Known as Prince. (Please be mindful of each other's lived experiences as you engage in this discussion. White people may not have the same understanding of this as Black or Brown people.)

Questions for discussion:

1. Can one give up one's race? Is this what Adrian Piper did?
2. Why might Adrian Piper have retired from being Black?
3. There have been white women who claim to be Black, such as Rachel Dolezal.²¹ For a white person, taking on the identity of a minority race is appropriative. How is Adrian Piper's action different?²²

Activity #2

Hand out a shallow bowl, 2 cotton swabs, and 2 index cards to each class member. Have each person write their own name on each card. Have each person pour a small amount of the paint that best matches their skin color (use the back of the hand) into the bowl. Then add small amounts of other colors as needed to match their skin color. Mix the paint using a cotton swab. Write down on the index cards the names of the paint colors they used. Then use a cotton swab to dab a bit of the final color onto the index cards. One index card is for the class, to look at each person's skin color and name the colors. The other card is for the person to keep, and tape into their journal once the paint is dry.

Homework

Find a piece of artwork by a woman artist you are not familiar with. Research this artist. Write about them in your journal. Plan to bring a picture of the artwork to the next session.

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading from *Rationality and the Structure of the Self* by Adrian Piper

Buffeted and bruised by the currents of desire and longing for once to ride the wave, we may cast about for some buoyant device from which to chart a rational course; and, finding none, ask ourselves these questions:

Do we at least have the *capacity* ever to do anything beyond what is comfortable, convenient, profitable, or gratifying?

Can our conscious explanations for what we do ever be anything more than opportunistic *ex post facto* rationalizations for satisfying these familiar egocentric desires?

If so, are we capable of distinguishing in ourselves those moments when we are in fact heeding the requirements of rationality, from those when we are merely rationalizing the temptations of opportunity?

²¹ "How to make sense of Rachel Dolezal, the NAACP official accused of passing for black." by Desmond-Harris, Jeneé. <https://www.vox.com/2015/6/12/8770273/rachel-dolezal-white-black-naacp>

²² These thoughts are a guide for the answers: The power of a white person versus that of a Black person and the context of claims.

I am cautiously optimistic about the existence of a buoyant device – namely reason itself – that offers encouraging answers to all three questions. Without hard-wired, principled rational dispositions – to consistency, coherence, impartiality, impersonality, intellectual discrimination, foresight, deliberation, self-reflection, and self-control – that enable us to transcend the overwhelming attractions of comfort, convenience, profit, gratification – and self-deception, we would be incapable of acting even on these lesser motives. Or so I argue in this project.²³

Reminder of next meeting

Make sure the group agrees on your next meeting (date, time, and place) before dispersing.

²³ Source: Opening passage from *Rationality and the Structure of the Self*, Chapter I. General Introduction to the Project: The Enterprise of Socratic Metaethics. Piper, Adrian. Retrieved from: <http://www.adrianpiper.com/removed-and-reconstructed-en.wikipedia-biography.shtml>

Session 3: Speaking Out

Materials List

- Chalice
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Newsprint pad
- Easel (optional)
- Pencils
- Artwork samples from session 2's homework

Prep Ahead

Remind the women to bring the picture of the artwork from session 2's homework.

Internet resources for this session:

Mahapajapati: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahapajapati_Gotami

Ray Frank: <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/frank-ray>

Wilma Mankiller: <https://www.biography.com/activist/wilma-mankiller>

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we will be discussing Mahapajapati, the first Buddhist nun, Ray Frank, the first Jewish woman rabbi in the United States, and Wilma Mankiller, the first woman to be principal chief of the Cherokee nation. These women all spoke out for themselves and their people.

Check in

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,²⁴ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading by Sumangalamata.

²⁴ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

At last free,
at last I am a woman free!
No more tied to the kitchen,
stained amid the stained pots,
no more bound to the husband
who thought me less
than the shade he wove with his hands.
No more anger, no more hunger,
I sit now in the shade of my own tree.
Meditating thus, I am happy, I am serene.²⁵

Introduction

Today we are learning about women who speak out -- women who refuse to take no for an answer, who refuse to sit quietly while men go about the business of the world -- women who insist on participating and taking their seat at the table.

More to Explore
Annie E. Brown
Anna Julia Cooper
Elizabeth Freeman
Molly Ivins
Toni Morrison
Cecilia Rabideaux
Sumangalamata

Biographies

Mahapajapati

Date: circa 5th century BCE
Location: India

Mahapajapati was the aunt and foster mother of the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. Her older sister, Maya, died shortly after his birth. Maya and Pajapati (Maha is an honorific) were both married to the chief of the Sakyan clan, so Pajapati raised Siddhartha as her own son. After

²⁵ Poem by Sumangalamata. Source: *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women*. Hirshfield, Jane; editor. 1994. ISBN: 0-06-016987-7.

Siddhartha achieved enlightenment and began teaching, Pajapati and her husband, Suddhodana, Siddhartha's father, became converts to their son's teachings. Women came to join her at the court of Suddhodana, asking her advice. Soon Suddhodana died, leaving Pajapati alone in the world.

More women without kin came to join her, and after a while she had many women following her. She went to the Buddha and asked him if women could be nuns and renounce the world, like men. He turned her away. Pajapati went to the Buddha three times and asked this. Every time, he turned her away.

Pajapati followed the Buddha to Vesali and stood outside the place where he was teaching, weeping with swollen feet. The Buddha's venerable disciple, Ananda, saw her standing there. When he discovered what she wanted, he went to the Buddha and asked if women could be nuns and renounce the world. The Buddha turned him away. Three times Ananda went to the Buddha and asked this of him, and three times the Buddha turned Ananda away.

Then Ananda went to the Buddha, and asked him if women were able to understand the precepts of renouncing the world and becoming enlightened, and the Buddha said yes. Ananda said that if this were so, then since Pajapati had been so good to the Buddha and cared for him when his own mother was dead, then it would be good to allow the women to become nuns, and the Buddha agreed. He said that if Pajapati accepted the Eight Special Rules for nuns, that would be her ordination. And so women could be nuns and renounce the world.

Source: *First Buddhist Women: Poems and Stories of Awakening*. Murcott, Susan. 1991. ISBN: 9780938077428

Ray Frank

Date: 19th-20th Century CE

Born: 1861

Died: 1947

Location: San Francisco, California and Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, United States

Ray Frank was born in San Francisco in 1861 to a liberal Orthodox Jewish family. After graduating from high school in 1879, she moved to Ruby Hill, Nevada, to teach school. She taught there for 6 years, before returning to Oakland, California, where her family had moved. She started work in the Sabbath School of First Hebrew Synagogue, and began to write for newspapers and magazines about Judaism and being a Jewish woman. As her journalism grew, she began to travel for research. In 1890, she traveled to Washington state, and was in Spokane (then Spokane Falls) on the eve of Rosh Hashanah. Looking for a synagogue, she was told there was no local synagogue, due to rifts in the local Jewish community.

“When Frank expressed her dismay, a prominent member of the community — knowing her by reputation — offered to arrange for Rosh Hashanah services if she would give a sermon. Frank readily agreed.

At five o'clock that afternoon, a special edition of the *Spokane Falls Gazette* announced that "a young lady" would preach to Spokane's Jews that evening at the Opera House. Intrigued, the townspeople — Christians as well as Jews — flocked to the theater. Frank did not herself conduct the service; a woman preaching from the pulpit on the High Holidays was extraordinary enough in the late nineteenth century. But the impassioned sermon she delivered after the service made a deep impression on the audience. Speaking on "The Obligations of a Jew

as Jew and Citizen," she entreated her listeners — for their own sake and that of their children — to overcome the differences between Reform and Orthodox ritual and to form a permanent congregation. A Christian man in the audience was so deeply inspired by Frank's words that, at the conclusion of the service, he offered to donate land for the construction of a synagogue.

Frank so impressed Spokane's Jews that they invited her to remain throughout the High Holidays." *from the Jewish Women's Archive*²⁶

This chance event in Spokane led to a new career for Ray Frank. She soon found herself in demand as the 'lady preacher'²⁷, talking in synagogues up and down the West Coast of the United States, speaking on spiritual and religious topics. Although referred to in the popular press as a woman rabbi, and she did attend seminary for a while, she was never ordained and probably never wanted to be. Despite arguing that Jewish women should have more rights and be more involved in their communities and synagogues, and that single women had the right to a career, she thought married women should not work outside the home, and that women did not need the vote.

In 1898, Ray Frank traveled to Europe for an extended stay and a rest. While there, she met Simon Litman, an economist, and married him in 1901. They moved back to the United States in 1902, where he taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and then at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

Ray Frank Litman continued to be involved in her local community until she died in 1947.

Source: *Ray Frank: Jewish Women Archive*. Retrieved from: <https://jwa.org/womenofvalor/frank>

Wilma Mankiller

Date: 20th Century CE

Born: November 18, 1945

Died: April 6, 2010

Location: Oklahoma, United States

Born on November 18, 1945, in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, Wilma Pearl Mankiller was an enrolled member of the Cherokee tribe. She was also of Dutch and Irish descent. She grew up on Mankiller Flats, located near Rocky Mountain, Oklahoma, before moving with her family in the mid-1950s to San Francisco, California, as part of a relocation program for Native Americans run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Unfortunately, the family still struggled greatly in their new home due to dwindling finances and discrimination.

In 1963, at age 17, Wilma Mankiller married Hector Hugo Olaya de Bardi and had two daughters with him.

In the 1960s, Mankiller became an activist -- she was inspired by the women's movement and joined the occupation of Alcatraz by Native Americans. Always passionate about helping her people, she decided to return to Oklahoma with her daughters in the mid-1970s, not long after filing for divorce from Olaya de Bardi. Soon after returning to her home state, she began

²⁶ See source referenced at the end of the biography.

²⁷ Frank was often called the 'lady preacher.' See source referenced at the end of the biography.

working for the government of the Cherokee Indian Nation as a tribal planner and program developer.

In 1979 and 1980, Mankiller suffered a series of health setbacks, including many surgeries following a serious car accident and a diagnosis of myasthenia gravis.

Wilma Mankiller ran for deputy chief of the Cherokee Nation in 1983 and won, serving in that position for two years. Then, in 1985, she was named the tribe's principal chief—making history as the first woman to serve as principal chief of the Cherokee people. She remained on the job for two full terms thereafter, winning elections in 1987 and 1991. A popular leader, Mankiller focused on improving the nation's government, and health-care and education systems. Due to ill health, she decided not to seek re-election in 1995.

After leaving office, she continued her activism on behalf of Native Americans and women. Wilma Mankiller died on April 6, 2010, at the age of 64, in Adair County, Oklahoma.

Sources: "Wilma Mankiller." Retrieved from: <https://www.biography.com/activist/wilma-mankiller>

"Wilma Mankiller - 1945." part of *Notable Native Americans*, published by American Indian Education Fund. Retrieved from:
http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=aief_hist_nna_wilmamankiller

Mankiller. Retrieved from: <http://www.mankillerdoc.com/>

Wilma Mankiller. National Women's Hall of Fame. Retrieved from:
<https://www.womenofthehall.org/inductee/wilma-mankiller/>

Just doing "what I could," Wilma Mankiller changed Native America. Carrillo, Sequoia. August 11, 2017. National Museum of the American Indian. Retrieved from:
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-indian/2017/08/11/just-doing-what-i-could-wilma-mankiller-changed-native-america/>

Discussion #1

Using Mutual Invitation, discuss the three biographies shared in this session.

Questions for discussion

1. Why would these women speak up? Mahapajapati had a secure life as the widow of the clan chief. Ray Frank could have continued on as a Sabbath and school teacher -- she did not need to begin to write and then to preach. Wilma Mankiller could have stayed quiet -- if she had stayed a quiet housewife, she might not have gotten divorced from her first husband.
2. What compelled them to speak up?

Activity #1

Write about a time when you spoke up. Allow 5-10 minutes for writing.

Questions to guide your writing

1. What happened?
2. Why did you decide to speak up?
3. Did it make a difference?

Discussion #2

Discuss what you have written in the previous activity. Use Mutual Invitation practices to guide the discussion.

Questions to guide the discussion

1. How do you think your actions were affected by your social status(es) within the space in which you acted? Consider all the social statuses you hold as you answer.
2. How do you think you would have acted differently if you had different statuses? Consider race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, ability, and any other status relevant to the situation as you answer.

Activity #2

Bring out the pictures of artwork from session 2's homework. Have each group member share, as they are invited and comfortable doing so, what they have brought and a little bit about the artist who created it. In your journal, reflect on the similarities and differences between the art and the artists, including the race and ethnicity of each artist.

Questions to guide journal reflections

1. Is the artwork brought by each class member of a similar art style?
2. Are the artists of each art piece of the same or different races and ethnicities?
3. If all the artists are white, why do you think that is?
4. If there is only one piece of art by a non-white artist, how do you think the class member who brought it feels? (If it is you, how do you feel? Please take care of yourself, however you best can in your situation.)

Homework

Continue your writing on a time when you spoke up. Include reflections on the group discussion.

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading by Mahapajapati

Homage to you Buddha,
best of all creatures,
who set me and many others
free from pain.

All pain is understood,
The cause, the craving is dried up,
The Noble Eightfold Way unfolds,
I have reached the state where everything stops.

I have been
mother,
son,
father,
brother,
grandmother,

knowing nothing of the truth
I journeyed on.

But I have seen the Blessed One;
this is my last body,
and I will not go
from birth to birth
again.

Look at the disciples all together,
their energy,
their sincere effort.
This is homage to the buddhas.

Maya gave birth to Gautama
for the sake of us all.
She has driven back pain
of the sick and dying.²⁸

Reminder of next meeting

Before adjourning, remind the group of the next date, time, and place for the group to meet.

²⁸ Poem by Mahapajapati. Source: *First Buddhist Women: Poems and Stories of Awakening*. Murcott, Susan. 1991. ISBN: 9780938077428

Session 4: Writing Her Truth

Materials List

- Chalice
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Pencils
- Newsprint
- Markers
- Copies of “Coiled in every human heart” <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uu-views-evil>

Prep ahead

Make sure you have enough copies of “Coiled in every human heart” for each class member.

Internet resources for this session

“Coiled in every human heart” <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uu-views-evil>

Lady Xu Mu: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Xu_Mu

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop2/arc>

Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt: <https://www.sksm.edu/people/rosemary-bray-mcnatt/>

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we are talking about Lady Xu Mu from ancient China, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, an abolitionist from the 19th century United States, and Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, a contemporary Unitarian Universalist theologian.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

Apparent failure may hold in its rough shell the germs of a success that will blossom in time, and bear fruit throughout eternity.²⁹

Check in

²⁹ Source: Frances Harper in “Frances Harper Bends the Arc.” *Tapestry of Faith*. York, Jessica. Retrieved from <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop2/arc>.

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,³⁰ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Introduction

Women who write have always defied expectations. The women we know of who are recorded as writers is a fraction of the numbers of women who have been writers. They say that the victors write history, and well, men have been the victors throughout recorded history. Men around the world have done everything in their power to destroy women's writing, either deliberately or through neglect, and when they couldn't do that, hide it.

The women we are learning about in this session have been able to overcome societal expectations, both external and internalized, that they would not write, and also fortunate that their writings have been saved and shared. It has been easier for women in modern times to write, but there have still been many obstacles to overcome. An excellent book about this topic is *How to Suppress Women's Writing* by Joanna Russ.

There are many, many more women writers than I have been able to include in this session, even with the More to Explore section below. Please keep reading -- this list is not exhaustive in any way at all. I could fill pages with more writers to learn about and read.

³⁰ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

More to Explore

Tomi Adeyemi
Maya Angelou
Nellie Bly
Alice & Phoebe Cary
Julia Rush Cutler
Lucille Boynton Skaggs Edwards
Louise Erdrich
Margaret Fuller
Paula Gunn Allen
Lucretia Hale
Lorraine Hansberry
Joy Harjo
bell hooks

E. Pauline Johnson
Jane Johnston Schoolcraft
Rupi Kaur
Ursula K. Le Guin
Ada Limón
Audre Lorde
Toni Morrison
Arundhati Roy
Joanna Russ
Shraya
Sheree Renee Thomas
Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins
Zitkala-sa

Biographies

Lady Xu Mu

Date: 7th century BCE

Location: Wei, China

Lady Xu Mu was born in Wei in 690 BCE. Her father was the ruler of Wei. These were unsettled times, and as she grew older, she wished to marry the emperor of Qi, to solidify diplomatic ties and protect Wei. Her parents insisted she marry the Duke Xu Mu. Xu was far from Wei, and the Lady Xu Mu wrote several poems about homesickness, which seem to have been either lost or not translated into English since I cannot find copies of them. Later, Wei was invaded. Lady Xu Mu took a chariot from Xu to call on neighboring states to rescue Wei. She was stopped by court officials from Xu, but Qi came to the aid of Wei.

Source: *The Most Influential Female Writers*. Cunningham, Anne. 2018. ISBN 978-1508179665.

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

Date: 19th century CE

Born: September 24, 1825

Died: February 22, 1911

Location: Maryland & Ohio, United States

Frances Harper was born in 1825 in Baltimore, Maryland, a free Black woman. She was raised in her uncle's household. Her uncle was an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) minister and an abolitionist. Harper became an educator, an abolitionist, and a writer. Her first book of poetry was published at age twenty. Later in life, she also published the first book of short stories by an African American writer. When the Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1850, making it dangerous to be a free black person in Maryland, Harper moved north, to Ohio and then Philadelphia, where she ran part of the Underground Railroad. Harper co-founded the National Association of Colored Women and went on the lecture circuit, teaching on the topic of freedom and the need for women to be free to be more than mothers and wives. She took her daughter on the lecture circuit with her after her husband passed away. In 1870, Harper joined a Unitarian church in

Philadelphia, frequently reading poetry from the pulpit, though she kept her membership in an AME church and taught Sunday school there.

Frances Harper passed away in 1911, having seen the end of slavery but not having seen the 19th amendment passed, the right of citizens to vote, not being denied or abridged based on sex.

Adapted from: *Tapestry of Faith: Frances Harper Bends the Arc* by Jessica York. Retrieved from <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/call/workshop2/arc>

Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt

Date: early 21st century CE

Location: New York & California, United States

Rev. Rosemary McNatt was born and raised in Chicago. Graduating from Yale University and Drew Theological School, she was the senior minister for The Fourth Universalist Society in New York City until she became president of the Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California, on July 1, 2014.

Source: *Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt*, Starr King School for the Ministry. Retrieved from: <https://www.sksm.edu/people/rosemary-bray-mcnatt/>.

Activity #1

Hand out the reading (“Coiled in every human heart”) and then read Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt’s section to the class. Another class member can read if they wish.

Write in your journal about the nature of evil.

Discussion #1

Using the principles of Mutual Invitation, discuss the reading from Activity #1.

Questions to guide discussion

1. What do you think when Rev. McNatt says that the source of evil is the forgetting of relationships?
2. We all feel hopeless at times. What are some ways that you have counteracted hopelessness and turned to good?

Activity #2

Sit quietly and contemplate the nature of evil, as discussed in the reading, *Coiled in Every Human Heart*, and its relationship to racism. Ring the chime at the end of the meditation time.

Questions to contemplate

1. How do evil and racism rely on each other?

2. What was there first?

Discussion #2

Using the practices of Mutual Invitation, discuss the relationship of racism and evil.

Homework

Write further on the nature of evil.

Questions to guide your writing

1. Where can you observe evil showing up in your thoughts and actions?
2. What about in the world around you?

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading, "Speeding Chariot," by Lady Xu Mu

The wheels turn fast, the horse trots on,
I return to my brother in Wei,
A long, long way the carriage has come,
To Caoyi, my homeland to stay.

The Lords who follow me, far and long,
Have caused no little dismay.
Harshly, though you may judge me,
From my course I will not veer.

Compared to your limited vision,
Do I not see far and clear?
Harshly, though you may judge me,
My steps you can never stay.

Compared to your limited vision,
Am I not wise in my way?
I walk the land of my fathers,
The wheat fields are green and wide,

I'll tell the world of my sorrow,
All friends will be at our side.

O listen, ye Lords and Nobles,
Blame not my stubbornness so!
A hundred schemes you may conjure,

None match the course that I know.³¹

Reminder of next meeting

Before adjourning, remind the group of the next date, time, and place for the group to meet.

³¹ *Speeding Chariot*. Lady Xu Mu. (stanza breaks added for clarity) Source: Rebel Women Embroidery. Retrieved from:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20170629043806/https://rebelwomenembroidery.wordpress.com/2015/06/04/xu-mu-%e8%ae%b8%e7%a9%86%e5%a4%ab%e4%ba%ba-b-690-bce-kingdom-of-wei-china/>

Session 5: Exploring the Beauty & Poetry of the World (Scientists)

Materials List

- Chalice
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Pencils
- Newsprint
- Markers
- Salt
- Water
- Vegetable oil
- Food coloring
- A large transparent glass or jar

Prep Ahead

****Additional information in Appendix D****

Gather the materials for the science experiment. You should probably try it ahead of time to make sure it works as you expect it to.

Internet resources for this session:

Khana: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khana_\(poet\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khana_(poet))

Mary Golda Ross: <https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=26040>

Dr. Gladys West: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladys_West

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we are discussing Khana from ancient Bengal; Mary Golda Ross, the first Native American aerospace engineer, and Dr. Gladys West, inventor of GPS from the United States.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading by Anita Carpenter

We come together at this time to study, to learn, and to gain knowledge. Let us be grateful to those who have shared their talents with us despite the challenges they faced. May we use this knowledge to gain wisdom to bless and sustain our world.³²

Check in

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,³³ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Introduction

Today's lesson will focus on three women who have made historical contributions in the area of science. Khana was a poet and astrologer writing between the ninth and 12th centuries about mainly agricultural themes and giving advice on life that is still used today in Bangladesh. Mary Golda Ross was the first Native American aerospace engineer. Dr. Gladys West is a mathematician and was a member of the team that provided data which served as the groundwork for the Global Positioning System (GPS) - a feature that's probably on your cell phone.

Each of these women faced adversity as they pursued their work. For Khana, it led to her death. Ms. Ross was the only woman and the only Native American on her elite engineering team and the work they did was so secret she couldn't tell anyone else about her work. Dr. West faced racial discrimination as a black woman in a white male dominated naval organization. These three women also shared a belief in what they knew to be true, the courage to speak the truth and dedication to their work.

³² Written by Anita Carpenter for this curriculum

³³ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

More to Explore

Sarah Boone

Yvonne Young Clark

Susan Fenimore Cooper

Emily Frances Fletcher

Dr. Andrea Gehz

Jane Hinton

Mary Jackson

Shirley Ann Jackson

Hedy Lamarr

Rita Levi-Montalcini

Dr. Valerie L. Thomas

Madam C.J. Walker

Star Mapping Nuns: Sister Emilia Ponzoni, Sister Regina Colombo, Sister Concetta

Finardi and Sister Luigia Panceri

Biographies

Khana

Date: between the 9th and 12th centuries CE

Location: Bengal (Bangladesh)

The story of Khana comes from Bangladesh which is a small country surrounded on three sides by India and on one side by Pakistan. There is little documentation to verify her story but there is legend passed down through the ages.

One account has Khana being born to Anacharya in West Bengal. It was believed that she lived in a monastery for a period of time. However, a different account has her being born to the king of Sri Lanka.

Around the same time, the wife of an astrologer named Varaha gave birth to a boy named Mihir. When Varaha read the boy's horoscope, it indicated he would die shortly so his father put him in a pot and sent him out to sea. He was found by the king of Sinhala who brought him up and later arranged his marriage to Khana.

Both Mihir and Khana became astrologers. Khana was known for giving very practical advice about the weather, when to plant crops, astrology and productivity. One such quote is: "He who owns oxen, but does not plough, his sorry state lasts twelve months of the year." Her advice such as "A little bit of salt, a little bit of bitter, and always stop before you are too full" is considered timeless.

One day Mihir and his father were trying to solve a problem in astrology. Khana came forward and solved the problem. Since Mihir and his father were both famous astrologers, this did not look good for them. It threatened Mihir's scientific career. Legend has it that then Mihir's father or perhaps Mihir himself ordered Khana to cut off her tongue to silence her. This brought about her death.

A poem was later written by Mallika Sengupta entitled Khana's Song.

"Listen o listen hark this tale of Khana

In Bengali in the middle ages

Lived a woman named Khana, I sing her life

The first Bengali woman poet

Her tongue they severed with a knife.”

Source: *Khana* on Banglapedia: The National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh. Retrieved from: <http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Khana>

Mary Golda Ross

Date: 20th century CE

Born: August 9, 1908

Died: 2008

Mary Golda Ross was born in Park Hill, Oklahoma, on August 9, 1908. She was Cherokee, and the great-granddaughter of a famous chief, John Ross. She was sent to live with her grandparents in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, to attend better schools. After graduating, she attended Northeastern State Teachers' College, where she earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1928, and then Colorado State Teachers' College, where she earned a master's degree in 1938. She then taught school in rural Oklahoma. When the United States entered World War II in 1941, she moved to California and was hired by Lockheed to work in their aerospace engineering development.

During WWII, Ms. Ross worked on the development of the P-38 Lightning, a fighter plane used a lot during the war. The problems she solved with her research on pressure helped the plane be more efficient at high speed flight. After the war, Lockheed sent her to the University of California Los Angeles for an engineering certificate.

After the war, Ms. Ross was invited to join a top secret project development team at Lockheed, formally known as Advanced Development Projects, informally known as Skunk Works. She worked on space travel, including research for interplanetary travel, and missiles. She retired from Lockheed in 1973 after achieving the rank of senior staff.

“In celebration of the opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in 2004, then 96-year-old Ross asked her niece to make her a traditional Cherokee dress. The green calico dress was the first traditional dress that Ross ever owned, and she wore it as part of procession of 25,000 Native Americans during the museum's opening ceremony. Ross also left an endowment of \$400,000 to the museum upon her death at the age of 99 in 2008. She was proud to be able to contribute to the museum's ability to "tell the true story of the Indian — not just the story of the past, but an ongoing story.”

Source: “Mary Golda Ross: The First Native American Aerospace Engineer and Space Race Pioneer” on *A Mighty Girl*. Retrieved from: <https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=26040>

Dr. Gladys West

Date: 1930-present

Born: October 27, 1930

Location: Virginia, USA



The GPS, or Global Positioning System that's probably in your car or on your telephone is something we all rely on daily. But few of us probably know that a Black woman was behind the creation of it.

At the age of 87, Dr. Gladys West was finally recognized for her contribution to this important scientific tool when she was inducted into the Air Force Space and Missile Pioneers Hall of Fame during a ceremony at the Pentagon.

But her beginnings were much more humble. She grew up in Dinwiddie county near Richmond Virginia in the 1930s and 40s. She knew she didn't want to work in the fields nor in the factories which were the most common job opportunities at that time. She discovered that if she could be valedictorian in her school she would get a scholarship to the University. So she worked hard and got that scholarship. She went on to study mathematics. After getting her degree she taught for a couple of years and then returned to school to get a masters degree.

Dr. West was hired to work as a mathematician for the Naval Proving Ground in 1956 and she continued to work on computing for the US military during the 1950s and 60s. This was just before the military began to introduce a wave of electronic systems. Dr. West was one of a small group of women working in this field. That group was later depicted in the movie "Hidden Figures."

Part of Dr. West's work involved using information from satellites to create a mathematical model of the shape of the earth which is called geoid. This model led to the development of the GPS.

Source: *100 Women: Gladys West - the 'hidden figure' of GPS*. Butterfly, Amelia. May 20, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-43812053>

Discussion #1

Using the practices of Mutual Invitation, discuss that each of these women saw a scientific problem in the world and tried to solve it.

Questions to guide discussion

1. Were they successful in solving the problems they saw? What got in their way?
2. What scientific problems have you experienced in your own life?
3. Have you tried to solve them?
4. Did you succeed at solving them?

Activity #1

DIY Lava Lamp

What you'll need: Salt, water, one glass of vegetable oil, food coloring, a large transparent glass or jar.

Experiment: Fill the large glass 2/3 full of water. Pour the vegetable oil into the water. The oil will float on the surface. Add food coloring. Finally, slowly pour one teaspoon of salt into the glass.

How it works: Because oil is lighter than water, it floats on the water surface. When salt is added to the glass, the salt grains drag the oil to the bottom. Then, once the salt grains have

dissolved, the particles of oil are free once again to rise to the surface. The food coloring helps to make the experiment visually exciting.

Source: “14 Simple Scientific Experiments That Even Adults Will Find Astonishing” from *Bright Side*. Retrieved April 2020 from <https://brightside.me/article/eight-awesome-scientific-experiments-for-kids-85405/>

Activity #2

Record in your journal what you expected to happen when the salt was added to the oil and water. You may draw or write. How do your expectations differ from what actually happened?

Discussion #2

Questions for discussion:

1. Were you encouraged as a child to explore the world around you and ask questions?
2. If not, how did you know you weren't encouraged?
3. How do you think things have changed for people perceived as female these days?

Homework

Find something in the natural world to explore. Record your observations in your journal.

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading by Maria Mitchell

Small as is our whole system compared with the infinitude of creation, brief as is our life compared with the cycles of time, we are so tethered to all by the beautiful dependencies of law, that not only the sparrow's fall is felt to the uttermost bound but the vibrations set in motion by the words that we utter reach through all space and the tremor is felt through all time.³⁴

Reminder of next meeting

Before adjourning, remind the group of the next date, time, and place for the group to meet.

³⁴ Found in *Women's Worship Resource Packet*. Unitarian Universalist Women's Heritage Society. Revised May 1997.

Session 6: Relieving the Suffering of Others (Medical)

Materials List

- Chalice
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Pencils
- Newsprint
- Markers

Prep Ahead

****Additional information in Appendix D****

Invite a woman in the medical profession to talk with the group.

Internet resources for this session:

Sisters of Hotel-Dieu: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%B4tel-Dieu,_Paris

Mary Stepp Burnette Hayden: <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/18/1081291769/midwife-slavery-storycorps>

Ruth Coker Burks: <https://arktimes.com/news/cover-stories/2015/01/08/ruth-coker-burks-the-cemetery-angel>

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we are learning about the Sisters of Hotel-Dieu, Mary Stepp Burnette Hayden, and Ruth Coker Burks.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

The sisters endured with cheerfulness and without repugnance the stench, the filth, and the infections of the sick, so insupportable to others that no form of penitence could be compared to this species of martyrdom.³⁵

³⁵ Source: Helyot, P. *Histoire des ordres monastiques*. Vol. 3. Paris, France: N Gosselin; 1718:185. found in "Women Healers of the Middle Ages: Selected Aspects of Their History." Minkowski, William L. *American Journal of Public Health*. February 1992, Vol. 82, No. 2.

Check in

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,³⁶ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Introduction

Today we are learning about women who practice medicine. Healing has often been the purview of women, a natural extension of the work they do caring for their families. Men often find themselves threatened by the power women gain by being healers, and make it difficult or unsafe for women to be healers. Many women burned as witches in the Middle Ages were midwives or healers. Women also find themselves accused of 'doing it wrong' and men insisting that their way is the only way to care for others. This session is about the women who persisted in the face of this oppression and overcame many other difficulties to help others.

More to Explore

Dr. Adele Darlene Allen
Caroline Still Wiley Anderson
Dr. Virginia Apgar
Clara Barton
Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell
Rebecca J. Cole
Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler
Louise Cecilia Fleming
Dr. Justina Ford
Róża Maria Goździewska
Dr. Eliza Ann Grier
Salaria Kea
Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte
Florence Nightingale
Georgia E. L. Patton
María Sabina
Dr. Emma Rochelle Wheeler

Biographies

Sisters of Hotel-Dieu

Date: Middle Ages-present

Location: Paris, France

³⁶ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

In a time when women practicing medicine were regarded with contempt at best and suspicion and persecution at worst, the nursing Sisters of the Hotel-Dieu built their hospital from a small hospice near St Christopher's Church into a world-renowned hospital today.

While not a religious order, most nurses in medieval France were treated like nuns.

The work at the Hotel-Dieu was rigorous and difficult. Any mistakes were punished with public discipline such as eating on the floor or corporal punishment. The nurses spent their entire lives within the hospital grounds, only occasionally leaving to visit a wealthy patron. The day nurses arose at 5 am and began work on the wards after ablutions and chapel. The night nurses reported for duty at 7 pm. One of their most important duties was to escort patients to the latrines -- bedpans had not been invented yet. The hospital provided a cloak and a pair of slippers to every 2 patients for latrine visits. Until 1487, there was no lamp at the latrine and accidents were common. The nurses were expected to clean up those accidents.

Linens, from sheets to bandages to surgical dressings, were managed in the linen room by younger nurses and able-bodied patients. Every day, and round the clock in times of epidemic, the linens in daily use were washed by the linen nurses in the Seine river. Every six weeks, all the linen was washed in a 'great wash.' The nurses had to wade into the river with the clothes to wash them. When the river was in flood, a boatman was hired to catch laundry and nurses that might be swept away.

An older, experienced nurse managed the 'drug room.' Medicines were made from plants and formed into lotions, drinks, and enemas.

There were regularly more beds than patients, and epidemics demanded 6 patients to a bed -- three heads at one end, three heads at the other end.

The hospital was also responsible for infants abandoned at the hospital door, infants left behind when the mother didn't survive childbirth, and infants whose mothers couldn't care for them after giving birth at the hospital. The nursing sisters were required by law to provide seven years of care to these babies. They often couldn't keep up with the need as the hospital might be home to up to one hundred babies and children at a time, so the nurses would ask able-bodied patients to help care for the children. This led to high rates of infant mortality, since the babies were in the sick wards.

When the Black Death came to Paris in 1348, the sister of Hotel-Dieu stayed at the hospital and continued to care for patients even as doctors and other nurses fled Paris.

Source: *Women Healers of the Middle Ages: Selected Aspects of Their History*. by Minkowski, William L. in American Journal of Public Health. February 1992, Vol. 82, No. 2.

Mary Stepp Burnette Hayden

Date: mid 19th century to mid 20th century

Born: around 1858

Died: 1956

Born into slavery on a plantation in Black Mountain, North Carolina, Mary Hayden was freed at the age of 7 in 1865 when the Civil War ended. She became a midwife and an herbalist, learning from her mother, who started delivering babies as a teenager. Mary Hayden delivered babies until she was 90 years old, and passed away in 1956, at the age of 98.

Her granddaughter, Mary Othella Burnette, and her daughter, Debora Hamilton Palmer, Mary Hayden's great-granddaughter, did a StoryCorps interview about their ancestor in early 2022. Ms Palmer says that she, her sister, and a cousin are all in the medical field (a pharmacist, a nurse, and a medical doctor, respectively) and the desire to help others seems to have been passed down from Mary Hayden.

Ms Burnette says, "She probably weighed not more than 110 pounds. She was about 4 feet, 11 inches tall, and her hair hung well below her waist. She had deep-set eyes, and a fierce look, as if she were looking right through you. Back when Granny started, there were no hospitals for black people to go to, and poor people had no money to pay for professional medical care. So if you had a disease that could not be treated by a midwife, you died at home. Houses could be several miles apart, and bears commonly roved the neighborhoods. But she walked. If somebody needed help — Granny was going. Black and whites alike, it made no difference to her."

Source: "A granddaughter passes on the legacy of 'Granny Hayden,' a midwife born into slavery," on NPR Morning Edition. Corona, Jo and Bowman, Emma. February 18, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/18/1081291769/midwife-slavery-storycorps>

Ruth Coker Burks

Date: 1980s

Born: March 19, 1959

Location: Arkansas, USA

In 1984, a young white woman named Ruth Coker Burks, went to a hospital in Arkansas to visit her friend who was suffering from cancer. As she walked down the hall she noticed that the door to one of the rooms was closed and had a large red bag hung over it. She also noticed that there were nurses standing outside the door and they appeared to be drawing straws to see who would go in. She went on to visit her friend but as she was leaving she thought about that door with the red bag hanging over it. She went into the room and there she found a young man who was pale and emaciated and obviously close to death. He was asking for his mother.

Ruth went to the nurses' station to ask for the number for the young man's mother. The nurse, seeing her coming from that room, asked her if she had gone in there. Ruth said yes, she had gone in the room and she needed the number of the young man's mother as he was asking for her. The nurse said that his mother was not coming. She said that he had been here for six weeks and that no one was coming. Ruth turned and started back towards the room as the nurse called out to her that she could not go in there! But she did. As she walked into the room the young man, whose name was Jimmy, mistook her for his mother. She sat down beside him, took his hand in hers and stayed with him for the next 13 hours until he died.

No one was coming for Jimmy. Ruth called all around and couldn't find any funeral home that would take his body. Only one who said they would cremate him but they would not touch the body and would not bury him. So she took it upon herself and took his ashes and put them in the cookie jar that a friend had given her. She took the cookie jar and placed it in her father's grave in their family plot.

Jimmy was Ruth's first AIDS patient. Ruth was just 25 years old and had a young daughter, yet during the next 10 years she became known as the Cemetery Angel. She was sought out by others who had heard of her kindness and her compassion for the young men who had been abandoned by their families during the 1980s, a time when AIDS was considered by many to be a shameful death sentence.

Ruth buried more than 40 men in her family cemetery. They weren't all young men but she showed them the love and compassion that a mother would show her child. She once said that it was her privilege to carry these men over the river of death to reunite them with their loved ones and with God. She had access to her family plot because years before, Ruth's mother had an argument with her brother and in order to prevent her brother and his branch of the family from being buried in their family cemetery, she bought all 42 remaining plots. Upon her mother's death, Ruth inherited the cemetery plots.

During her life, Ruth helped over 1000 AIDS patients. She helped them with medical, financial, and legal concerns. She drove them to their appointments. She visited them. She gave them unconditional love when others abandoned and shunned them. She buried them. She kept their memories alive. Her work was not always well received by others. A racist organization, the Ku Klux Klan, burned crosses in her yard. And in later years, Ruth suffered a stroke.

Ruth served on an advisory committee to President Clinton and she was recognized by many organizations for her tireless support for AIDS patients. She passed away recently but the unconditional love, the compassion and the courage she demonstrated remain her legacy.³⁷

Sources: *All Her Sons: The Cemetery Angel*. Retrieved from: <https://youtu.be/ajm3M8qvXK8> and "Ruth Coker Burks, Cemetery Angel." Koon, David. *Arkansas Times*. January 8, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://arktimes.com/news/cover-stories/2015/01/08/ruth-coker-burks-the-cemetery-angel>

Activity #1

Introduce the special visitor. Have her talk about where she works, what she does, and why she chose her profession.

Discussion #1

Invite the group to ask questions of the guest.

Activity #2

Write in your journal about the women we have learned about today and how you see yourself reflected in their lives.

³⁷ Biography written by Anita Carpenter

Questions to guide your writing

1. Have you ever been motivated to devote your whole life to a person or cause? Why?
2. What was the cause?
3. How did that work out for you?

Discussion #2

Using the practices of Mutual Invitation, and reflecting on your writing in the previous activity, discuss the women we have learned about today.

Questions to guide discussion

1. What do you think motivated the women who worked at Hotel-Dieu?
2. Why would they agree to spend their lives on the grounds of the hospital, doing such hard work?
3. Mary Stepp Burnette Hayden and Ruth Coker Burks also gave their health and their lives up in the service of others. Why?

Homework

Research disparities in health care between races in the USA and write about your findings in your journal. If you're not sure where to start, think of a health issue that's important to you, and begin researching racial disparities there.

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading from Memorial to the Legislature of Dorothea Dix

If I inflict pain upon you, and move you to horror, it is to acquaint you with suffering which you have the power to alleviate, and make you hasten to relief of the victims of legalized barbarity.³⁸

Reminder of next meeting

Before adjourning, remind the group of the next date, time, and place for the group to meet.

³⁸ Excerpted from Memorial to the Legislature of Dorothea Dix, Boston, Munroe & Francis, 1843. Found in "I Tell What I Have Seen" – The Reports of Asylum Reformer Dorothea Dix, American Journal of Public Health, April 2006, Vol. 96, No. 4.

Session 7: Fighting back: Fierce Warriors

Materials List

- Chalice
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Newsprint pad
- Easel (optional)

Prep Ahead

Internet resources for this session:

Boudicca: <https://mandascott.co.uk/boudica-boudicca-boadicea-whats-in-a-name/>

Queen Nzinga: <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/queen-nzinga-1583-1663/>

Lozen and Dahteste: <http://crisostoapache.com/lozen-and-dahteste/>

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we are learning about fierce women warriors -- women who would fight to their last breaths for their land and their people.

Check in

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,³⁹ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading from "The Women of Dan Dance with Swords in Their Hands to Mark the Time When They Were Warriors," by Audre Lord

I did not fall from the sky

nor descend like a plague of locusts

³⁹ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

to drink color and strength from the earth
and I do not come like rain
as a tribute or symbol for earth's becoming.
I come as a woman
dark and open
some times I fall like night
softly
and terrible only when I must die
in order to rise again.⁴⁰

Introduction

Women have fought to defend their homes and families since the beginning of time. Men have tried to keep women home, but that hasn't always worked.

Sometimes women have disguised themselves as men to be able to fight in wars, such as during the American Civil War. That was not a unique war, but it is one of the best documented and one of the last wars where people enlisted without detailed physical examinations.

Sometimes they went to fight because they believed in the cause, sometimes they went to fight to follow a male relative or lover. They often were not discovered until they were injured. Most gave up their male identity after the war was over, but some continued to live as men.⁴¹

There followed a time in the United States when women were not permitted to enlist in the military, or not allowed to fight if they were allowed to enlist, but that has also changed. Women are now able to enlist in the military, and as of this writing, the first women fighter pilots for the U.S. Air Force have just been commissioned.

The women we are learning about in this session lived openly as themselves -- they lived and fought as women.

Boudica, Queen Nzinga, and Lozen are three women from three very different times and places who all fought against the invaders of their homelands -- men who wanted to kill and enslave their people. Let us take a closer look at these three women.

⁴⁰ Source: excerpted from "The Women of Dan Dance with Swords in Their Hands to Mark the Time When They Were Warriors." Lord, Audre. *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*. 1997. ISBN: 0-393-31972-5.

⁴¹ Source: *'I Wanted to Do My Part': Women as Soldiers in Civil War America*. Jabour, Anya. Feb. 13, 2017. Retrieved from: <http://www.pbs.org/mercy-street/blogs/mercy-street-revealed/i-wanted-to-do-my-part-women-as-soldiers-in-civil-war-america/>

More to Explore

Queen Amina (Zaria a.k.a. Nigeria)

Mary Elizabeth Bowser a.k.a. Ellen Bond (American Civil War)

Dahomey Warriors (Dahomey a.k.a Benin)

Sarah Emma Edmonds, a.k.a. Pvt. Franklin Thompson (American Civil War)

Dr Olivia Hooker (US Coast Guard)

Carlota Lukumi a.k.a La Negra Carlota (Cuba)

Grace O'Malley (medieval Ireland)

U.S. Air Force, first women fighter pilots (2020)

WASPs of WWII (USA)

Biographies

Boudicca (or Boudica or Boadicea or Boudega)

Date: circa 30-61 CE

Location: Briton, British Isles

When the Romans came to ancient Briton, in the course of their attempt to conquer all of Europe, they found an island covered in small kingdoms and chiefdoms of the Celtic tribes. One of the larger tribes was the Iceni. Their king was Prasutagus, and the Romans allowed him to continue to rule his not-insubstantial kingdom.

Prasutagus had a wife. The name she was given at birth around the year 30 CE has been lost to history, for the events at the end of her life eclipse all that went before.

Prasutagus and his wife had two daughters. Prasutagus loved his daughters, and was very proud of them. He wanted them to rule his kingdom after he was gone. He made a will, leaving his kingdom to his daughters and the Roman emperor. He died believing that they would be the rulers of the Iceni, with their mother, since his daughters were still young.

The Romans thought otherwise.

They annexed the kingdom, calling in loans, and ousting the minor chiefs from their seats. They raped the princesses, and beat their mother. The Iceni were incensed. The mother of the princesses gathered the people to her, and they rose up against the Romans. The Iceni bestowed a battle name upon their queen, Boudega. Mistranslated, we know her now as Boadicea or Boudicca. Boudega means Bringer of Victory.

With the Iceni and their allies, Boudega destroyed three Roman cities, including the capital of Rome in Briton. When she attacked a fourth city, she was defeated in about 60 or 61 CE.

No one knows what happened to her daughters. She died after the lost battle. Some say she took poison, some say she was ill.

She would go down in history as the woman who tried to save Briton from the Romans.

Source: Boudica, Boudicca, Boudega – what's in a name? by Manda Scott. Retrieved from www.mandascott.co.uk

Queen Nzinga

Date: 1583-1663 CE

Location: Angola, western Africa



Over a thousand years after the brave queen Boudega died, in lands far to the south, there was another brave queen. She was born Nzinga in the year we call 1583 CE, and her father was king of the Mbundu, in the country now known as Angola. She was the younger daughter, and her older brother was destined to be king.

Another kingdom from far to the north was out exploring and stealing in the lands of the Mbundu and their neighbors. Portugal had too many restless young men -- a father's lands went entirely to the oldest son, and younger sons were expected to enter the military or the priesthood. Portugal also wanted to rival its larger neighbor, Spain. So Portugal sent out many ships to explore, trade, establish colonies, and to steal people for slaves. While Nzinga's father was king, Portugal established a trading and slaving arrangement, including a treaty, with the kingdom to the north of Mbundu, the Kongo.

Then, in 1617, the Portuguese established a fort and settlement at Luanda. Luanda was on Mbundu land. The Mbundu objected to this encroachment on their land, and attacked the Portuguese. In 1622, the Portuguese were tired of being at war in this area and invited the king, now the brother of Nzinga, Mbande, to a peace settlement. He sent his sister, Nzinga, as his trusted representative.

In the meeting room, there was only one chair, for the Portuguese governor, Governor Corria. Nzinga had one of her servants get down on hands and knees to serve as a chair for her, to establish equality for herself.

Despite that rocky start, in a series of meetings, Nzinga and the Portuguese made accommodations with each other. She converted to Christianity and was baptized in the name of the governor's wife, who became her godmother. So Nzinga is also known as Dona Anna de Souza. The Portuguese agreed not to take slaves from Mbundu land.

By 1626, however, the Portuguese were pushing for concessions regarding the slave trade. Mbande committed suicide when he could not see how to keep his people free. Nzinga became queen and forged alliances with former rivals, and attacked the Portuguese with her army in 1627. This was the beginning of a thirty-year war against them, in which she exploited European rivalries to ally with the Dutch and temporarily defeat the Portuguese in 1647. This alliance came to an end when the Dutch were defeated by the Portuguese in 1648. This was not the end to Queen Nzinga's struggles, however. She led troops into battle into her 60s, and initiated guerilla warfare against the Portuguese.

This resistance continued after her peaceful death in her eighties on December 17, 1663, and ultimately inspired the armed resistance in the 20th century that finally resulted in Angolan independence in 1975.

Source: *Queen Nzinga (1583-1663)*. Snethen, J. (2009, June 16) Retrieved from <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/queen-nzinga-1583-1663/>

Lozen of the Chiracahua Apache (and her partner, Dahteste)

Date: circa mid-late 19th century CE

Location: southwestern North America



Sometime between 1830 and 1845, a baby girl was born to the Chiracahua Apaches in the desert Southwest of North America. She went by the name of Lozen, meaning Little Sister,

because her big brother became a famous warrior as their band fought the United States Cavalry to stay in their homeland. Lozen probably never played with the other little girls or followed the women around, learning to do their work. She followed her brother, Victorio, around, learning how to fight and how to use a bow. By the time they were grown, he called her his 'right hand' for she had special abilities, through a ceremony, to find the enemy and to know the direction of the enemy's travel.

As Lozen came to adulthood, her tribe came into conflict with the United States government. The US government wanted all Native American tribes to move away from their homelands, and onto poor land elsewhere -- reservations. Lozen's tribe refused to go. After fighting with the US cavalry, they did agree to go to the reservation, but they could not stay there as there was no food and it was not good farmland even if they wanted to farm.

During this unsettled time, Lozen met a young Apache woman, Dahteste (pronounced TAH-dahtse). Dahteste worked as an interpreter for the US cavalry and was married. Lozen and Dahteste partnered as friends and warriors and became inseparable. We don't know if they were lovers, but we do know that they spent all available time together until the Apache finally surrendered to the US government and they were taken to Alabama, where Lozen died of tuberculosis. Dahteste survived to go to Florida and eventually was allowed to move back home to New Mexico where she died of old age.

Sources: *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives*. Perdue, Theda; editor. 2001. ISBN: 978-0-19-513081-2. from Chapter 6: *Lozen: An Apache Woman Warrior* by Laura Jane Moore.

Activity #1: Journaling

The women we just learned about fought for better lives for their people.

Write in your journal about either:

a) A time when you were wrongly treated -- what happened, what did you do about it, and how did you feel about it?

or

b) Choose one of the three women we learned about today. Write about how she felt when confronting the invaders of her land. What compelled her to fight back?

Discussion #1

Using the practice of Mutual Invitation, and remembering that each woman can pass if she so desires, talk about what each woman wrote during the journaling activity. Note on newsprint any themes that emerge.

Questions for discussion:

1. Do any themes appear among these women? What do they have in common? What makes them different?

2. How are the women here the same as the women in the group? How are they different?
3. Who do you want to learn more about? Why?

Activity #2

Draw in your journal something that speaks to you about one of the three women we learned about today, perhaps a scene from her life, or a symbol of the struggle she endured.

Discussion #2

The women we discussed above are all actual warriors, but women can fight for what they need and for their communities without being actual warriors. Name and discuss some contemporary women who fight for their community without actual battles and bloodshed. Some suggestions: Ruby Bridges, Rosa Parks, Stacey Abrams, Erin Brockovich. What about other women you've learned about in this group?

Homework

Continue to learn about women who fight for their communities, and write about them in your journal.

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice while reading. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading "Boudica" by Elizabeth Cogliati

A proud and angry woman seeks
Revenge
Raped and beaten
She is still a queen

Revenge
Against the invaders
She is still a queen
Standing tall and proud, she gathers an army

Against the invaders,
She will prevail
Standing tall and proud, she gathers an army
Death, the alternative

A proud and angry woman seeks revenge
Raped and beaten

She will prevail
The alternative, death.⁴²

Reminder of next meeting

Before adjourning, remind the group of the next date, time, and place for the group to meet.

⁴² Written for this curriculum by Elizabeth Cogliati

Session 8: UU Women in the Past, Present, & Future

Materials List

- Chalice
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Newsprint pad
- Easel (optional)
- Memory Match game ([Handout #4](#))

Prep Ahead

Print out the Memory Match game ([Handout #4](#)) and cut it apart. You'll need 2 copies of the 1st page (with the images) and 1 copy of the 2nd page (biographies). Make sure you have a flat surface in your meeting room large enough for all the picture cards laid out.

Please note, the frames for the images and the biographies match, so you can easily tell which biography goes with which image.

Pictures of every woman were not available. For those women whose pictures were not available (Ella Matilda Wallace Brown and Maria Cook), I chose images that seemed best to fit them.

If you like, you can easily 'lamine' these cards with contact paper. Lay out a sheet of contact paper, sticky side up. Lay out the cards on the contact paper, with ½ inch between each card. Gently press each card onto the contact paper. Lay another sheet of contact paper over this, sticky side down. Press carefully on and around each card to seal the contact paper. Cut out between each card. This works best in small batches. Each sheet of contact paper should be 8-10 inches wide for best results.

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we are learning about our intellectual ancestors, the Unitarian, the Universalist, and the Unitarian Universalist women who have gone before us.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading by Rev. Ada C. Bowles

Rise up! rise up! oh, woman,
No longer sit at ease,
The banner of thy freedom,
Is lifting to the breeze.
Be ready for the morning,
That breaks thy long, dark night.
Up, ignorance and bondage
And hail the coming right.⁴³

Check in

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,⁴⁴ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Introduction

We have spent the last 9 sessions learning about influential women in the past and into today. Some of those women were Unitarians and Universalists. This session will introduce us to more women who were Universalist, Unitarian, or Unitarian Universalist.

Prior to May 1961, there was a Universalist faith and a Unitarian faith. These two denominations kept close company in liberal religion in the United States, although they did not always agree. But the people who belonged to them had two different experiences of their religion, depending on their home. In the West, on the frontier (in the late nineteenth century, as far East as Iowa), women worked to nourish their congregations and care for the whole community. There was a shortage of men in the West, and women found it easier to be ministers and to lead congregations.

One notable contribution of these Western ministers was a move to non-traditional buildings and sanctuaries -- away from the traditional white clapboard building with a steeple and a wood panelled sanctuary and to modern designs with white, spare sanctuaries. The shift was intended to move away from the old, patriarchal religions.

Meanwhile, in Boston and other parts of the East Coast, where men continued to dominate the pulpit, women worked for abolition and racial justice as lay activists.⁴⁵

In the present time, Unitarian Universalism continues to struggle (as Unitarians and Universalists did before the merger) with fully including people of all colors and races. The three

⁴³ Source: Rev. Ada C. Bowles as quoted in *Prophetic Sisterhood: Liberal Women Ministers of the Frontier, 1880-1930*. Tucker, Cynthia Grant. 1990, 2000. ISBN: 0-595-00681-7.

⁴⁴ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

⁴⁵ For more information, please refer to this book: *Prophetic Sisterhood: Liberal Women Ministers of the Frontier, 1880-1930*. Tucker, Cynthia Grant. 1990, 2000. ISBN: 0-595-00681-7.

modern women highlighted in this session are just three of the many women working to make Unitarian Universalism an anti-racist faith.

More to Explore

Mary Louise Baldwin

Sofia Betancourt

Olympia Brown

Maja Capek

Maria Weston Chapman

Leslie Mac

Lydia Maria Francis Child

Maria Cook

Lydian Jackson Emerson

Eliza Lee Cabot Follen

Mary Ashton Rice Livermore

Florida Ruffin Ridley

Christina Rivera

Fannie Barrier Williams

Elandria Williams

Activity #1

Lay out the picture cards for the Memory Match game facedown.

Set aside the biography cards, face down.

Have class members take turns choosing 2 cards each and turn them face-up. If they match, she wins them and gets to keep them for the rest of the game. Read the biography card of the woman on the cards. The woman who got the match gets another turn. When all the cards are matched, the winner is the woman with the most cards.

When the matching is done, here's some more details about them to consider as you do the next activities.

- Three of the women were chosen because they are wives of men famous in our denomination.
- Three of the women were chosen because they were writers, activists, and preachers in their own right in our past.
- Three of the women were chosen because they are working to effect change in our denomination, right here and now.

Activity #2

Pick one of the women from Activity #1 to write about in your journal.

1. What did she strive for?
2. How was her life hard?
3. How did she overcome her hardships?
4. What did she achieve?

Allow 5-10 minutes for writing.

Discussion #1

Break the group into pairs. Have each woman share with her partner the answers to the questions in Activity #2. Allow each woman 3 minutes to share. Then bring the group back together. Have each pair share the most important thing they learned about each woman they discussed.

Discussion #2

For this discussion, please refer back to the discussion of gender expectations section in the [introduction to session 1](#).

Discuss how the women in this session overcame the expectations for them as women.

Questions for discussion:

1. What were the expectations for women in this time and place, for each woman in Activity 1?
2. How did each of these women defy or go along with those expectations?

Homework

Find another Unitarian Universalist woman you admire. It can be someone you know, or someone in the larger denomination. If you know her personally, do a little interview with her.

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading adapted from Mary Livermore

I became aware that a large portion of the nation's work was badly done, or not done at all, because woman was not recognized as a factor in the political world. In the work of public school education, and municipal government ... men and women should stand shoulder to shoulder, equals before the law; and until this is attained, the highest success in these departments of work and reform can never be accomplished.⁴⁶

Reminder of next meeting

Before adjourning, remind the group of the next date, time, and place for the group to meet.

⁴⁶ Source: Adapted from Mary Livermore in *Boston Women Who Worked for Racial Justice*. Emerson, Dorothy May. Occasional Paper #6, Unitarian Universalist Women's Heritage Society. June, 1993.

Session 9: Reimagining Gender

Materials List

- Chalice
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Pencils
- Newsprint
- Markers
- Several copies of “What does it mean to be a woman? It is not just about femininity” by Allison Gallagher <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/02/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-woman-it-is-not-just-about-femininity>
- Several copies of the Gender Unicorn page: <https://transstudent.org/gender/>
- [Handout #5: Gender Unicorn Coloring Page](#) (enough copies for every class member to have one)

Prep Ahead

****Additional information in Appendix D****

Make sure you have enough copies of the essay in the Internet Resources for every class member, or the ability to share the digital version during class. There are additional essays and articles for this session in [Appendix B: Discussion Articles](#). Before class, review all the resources and decide if you wish to share any of the additional resources with the class.

You'll also need several copies of the Gender Unicorn page: <https://transstudent.org/gender/> and enough copies of [Handout #5: Gender Unicorn Coloring Page](#) for every class member.

I have rearranged the activities and discussion and removed a discussion from this session. It is a complicated topic and I want to leave the session somewhat open-ended for groups since I cannot predict what every group will be like. If you need further activities for your group, please see [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix D](#).

Be aware of your particular group and how they will be affected by the discussion. You may wish to talk with group members ahead of time and let them know what to expect.

Internet resources for this session:

“What does it mean to be a woman? It is not just about femininity” by Allison Gallagher <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/02/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-woman-it-is-not-just-about-femininity>

Gender Unicorn: <https://transstudent.org/gender/>

Chevalier d'Eon: <https://www.npg.org.uk/research/new-research-on-the-collection/the-chevalier-deon.php>

Maude Adams: <https://www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/journeys-innovation/historical-stories/out-limelight>

Marsha P. Johnson: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked-marsha-p-johnson.html>

Today's plan (mini-intro)

Today we will be talking about the Chevalier d'Eon from 18th century England & France, Maude Adams from late nineteenth century Utah, and Marsha P. Johnson from New York City in the 1970s.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading from “What does it mean to be a woman? It is not just about femininity” by Allison Gallagher

I want to see a representation of non-conforming gender that doesn't force us to sit within arbitrary margins of what gender looks like. If all we're doing as a society by existing outside of conventional gender norms is splitting ourselves into three discrete, rigid categories – women, men, and non-binary people – then that doesn't seem like enough.⁴⁷

Check in

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,⁴⁸ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Introduction

Today we are learning about women who did not conform to gender expectations of their time.⁴⁹ This was absolutely the most difficult session to write. I have done my best to write about

⁴⁷ Source: “What does it mean to be a woman? It is not just about femininity,” by Gallagher, Allison, in The Guardian, Jan. 1, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/02/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-woman-it-is-not-just-about-femininity>

⁴⁸ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

⁴⁹ Gender expectations change over time and from place to place. For example, women who wore pants in Great Britain or the United States in the late 19th century were considered to be very masculine. Women in most places of Great Britain and the United States are no longer considered to be expressing masculinity by wearing pants.

gender as I understand it, but everyone experiences gender differently and you may have a completely different experience of gender.

There are plenty of cultures and societies across the world where this would be an unnecessary chapter, as those cultures have a non-binary way of looking at gender and more ways for people who do not match with traditional Western concepts of gender to fit into society. So the women in this session are exclusively from the Western world which has a longtime understanding of gender as binary, fixed, and rigid. I am still learning about gender in the world and culture I live in -- I do not feel at all able to write about people defying gender expectations in cultures I do not understand. I don't want to get it wrong. There are some books in the [Bibliography](#) that I used to better understand Native American and Indonesian cultures that you may find interesting if you wish to read further.⁵⁰

I want to be clear that, as for all the sessions, there are women in other sessions who could easily fit into this session as well. Just because they were a good fit for other sessions does not mean that they could not have been in here as well.

In the Western world, there have always been transgender and non-binary people, and people who did not perform their gender in expected ways but it wasn't until very recently that they have made an impression on the larger society as being trans or non-binary. It is difficult, though not impossible, to find historical women for this session, as they were repressed by society and history at large.

Anne Lister, otherwise known as Gentleman Jack to the locals in her area, was a landowner and industrialist of the nineteenth century from Yorkshire who could easily be included in this session. In 1834, she celebrated and recorded the first-ever known British marriage between two women. She would be entirely lost to history if she had not been a prolific journal-writer, who wrote in her diaries for a minimum of an hour each day. Her diaries were rediscovered in the twentieth century in her former home and her life was turned into an HBO documentary.⁵¹

We know that there were women who fought in the American Civil War and other wars wearing men's clothing. Please see the introduction to [session 7](#) to learn more about them.

More to Explore

Lucy Hicks Anderson

Gladys Bentley

Charity Bryant & Sylvia Drake

Stormé DeLarverie

Miss Major Griffin-Gracy

Andrea Jenkins

Anne Lister

Ozaawindib

Sylvia Rivera

Eleanor Roosevelt

⁵⁰ *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America*. Roscoe, Will. 1998. ISBN: 0-312-17539-6 and *Gender Diversity in Indonesia: Sexuality, Islam and Queer Selves*. Graham Davies, Sharyn. 2010. ISBN: 978-0415375696.

⁵¹ Source: *Gentleman Jack: The Real Anne Lister*. Choma, Anne. 2019. ISBN: 9780143134565.

Biographies

Chevalier(ère) d'Eon

Date: 1728-1810 CE

Born: October 5, 1728

Died: May 21, 1810

Location: France & England

Charles d'Eon was born in 1728 in Tonnerre, France. We now know that d'Eon was assigned male at birth and was raised as a boy and entered the military. d'Eon had a distinguished military and diplomatic career. In 1766 she⁵² encountered a personal political crisis. If she did not successfully navigate it, she would be imprisoned or killed. She pulled off a legal and political coup and navigated the crisis by getting declared by king and judicial courts to be legally a woman. D'Eon did this by claiming that she had actually been assigned female at birth and had been forced by her father to live as a boy so her father would have an heir, and then d'Eon had decided to keep living as a man in order to serve king and country. This story was accepted at face value by the king and judicial courts. d'Eon then lived out the rest of her life as a woman.

After transitioning, d'Eon had a religious revelation and converted to Christianity (having been an atheist before). D'Eon justified her transition to the feminine with her religious beliefs and a radically different interpretation of Christianity.

For d'Eon, her transition to womanhood and her Christian beliefs were fundamentally intertwined. She believed that humans are fundamentally asexual, like God, and that God created men and women in order to give humanity different experiences. She also believed that men are less able to achieve spiritual perfection like God because their stronger bodies entice them to focus on the vainglorious temptations of the world. d'Eon wrote, "Men, who by their strength and their gallantry seem like lions and tigers, have seized authority, all political positions, all honors, all worldly riches, leaving women only the pain brought by having babies."

For the time she lived in (and for many people today), D'Eon had a completely different and radical way of looking at our lives -- it is not at all about the sexual apparatus or even the body. D'Eon sees that the spirit is not sexual.

When d'Eon died in 1810, at the age of 81, her housemate discovered the fact that d'Eon was anatomically male. The revelation shook the elite of France, and many of d'Eon's ideas were dismissed with the idea that d'Eon had been a liar.

Source: Kates, Gary. "The Transgendered World of the Chevalier/Chevalière D'Eon." *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 67, no. 3, 1995, pp. 558–594. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2124220 . Accessed 31 Mar. 2020.

Maude Adams

Date: late 19th-mid 20th century CE

Born: November 11, 1872

⁵² Using she/her/hers pronouns since Charles d'Eon transitioned late in life.

Died: July 17, 1953

Location: Utah, California, and New York

Maude Adams was born Maude Ewing Adams Kiskadden in 1872 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Her mother's family was part of the first company of Mormons to enter the Salt Lake valley with Brigham Young in 1847. Her father was a miner and a banker, and died when she was young.

Maude used her mother's birth name, Adams, on stage. Maude first appeared on stage at the age of two months, in her mother's arms. Her mother moved with her to California when Maude was very young, and Maude acted extensively as a child in California. She returned to Salt Lake City as a teenager and lived with her grandparents while she attended school.

When she was done with school, she moved to New York and worked as an actor. She appeared in many of J. M. Barrie's plays, and was the first person to play Peter Pan on stage in the United States. She appeared on stage as Peter Pan over a thousand times. This was very non-gender-conforming for the time, since the role required Maude to dress in typical boy's clothing. J. M. Barrie cast Maude as Peter Pan because she was small and boyish-looking, but strong enough to wear the harness required for Peter Pan to 'fly,' and able to work long hours, unlike a child or teenage boy.

Maude Adams also worked to improve stage lighting and was known for the innovations in lighting that she created, including staging outdoor pageants with casts of thousands who seemed to glow onstage, the end of gas lighting in theaters, and the largest incandescent bulb invented up to that time, developed with General Electric. She could as easily appear in the next chapter of this curriculum on scientists as in this chapter.

In 1918, she caught the Spanish flu. It took her a long time to recover, and she stopped appearing on stage for decades. In that time, she worked with General Electric as their lead researcher to create better, brighter stage lighting. She also became head of the theater department at Stephens College in Missouri in 1937. She would teach and direct plays there until 1950.

Maude Adams never had a romantic relationship with a man, but lived with two separate women, each until that woman's death. We have no direct evidence of how those women felt about the relationships, since Maude Adams destroyed almost all her correspondence, with the exception of her letters with J. M. Barrie, but accounts from friends confirm that Lillie Florence and Louise Boynton were Maude Adams' significant others. Maude Adams and Louise Boynton are buried next to each other in the cemetery of a New York convent.

Sources: *The gay and lesbian theatrical legacy: a biographical dictionary of major figures in American stage history in the pre-Stonewall era*, edited by Harbin, Billy J., Marra, Kim, and Schanke, Robert A., 2005. ISBN: 978-0-472-09858-3; "Out of the Limelight," by the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Retrieved from: <https://www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/journeys-innovation/historical-stories/out-limelight>

Marsha P. Johnson

Date: mid 20th century CE

Born: August 24, 1945

Died: July 6, 1992

Location: New York City, USA



Marsha P. Johnson was born in New Jersey in the mid-1940s, and assigned male at birth. She moved to New York City after high school.

She was an important part of the Stonewall Riots on June 28, 1969 and she was an activist for transgender equality, fighting against intersectional oppression. She and her friend, Sylvia Rivera, founded Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) after Stonewall to help other young transgender people.

Marsha loved to make drag queen outfits from found materials. She especially loved wigs and hats with bright colors and artificial fruit.

She struggled with her mental health and spent a lot of time in and out of mental health institutions. She was often combative and frightening to people who encountered her on the streets of the city.

Her friend Sylvia did much to help her and keep her on an even keel.

Shortly before her death in early July, 1992, she admitted in an interview that she was HIV positive. "They call me a legend in my own time, because there were so many queens gone that I'm one of the few queens left from the '70s and the '80s," she said.

Marsha's death was initially ruled a suicide, but the case was later reclassified as drowning from undetermined causes, and the case officially remains open with the New York Police.

“Marsha’s ability to mix flamboyant joy with determined activism is a central part of her legacy.

“As long as gay people don’t have their rights all across America,” she once said, “there’s no reason for celebration.””⁵³

Source: *Marsha P. Johnson: A transgender pioneer and activist who was a fixture of Greenwich Village street life* by Chan, Sewell. New York Times, March 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked-marsha-p-johnson.html>

Activity #1

Review the Gender Unicorn⁵⁴ page (<https://transstudent.org/gender/>) with the class. Pass out [Handout #5: Gender Unicorn Coloring Page](#). Give the class 10 minutes to work on filling it out. This is an optional activity – no one has to finish it if they don’t want to.

Activity #2

Read aloud “What does it mean to be a woman? It is not just about femininity” by Allison Gallagher <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/02/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-woman-it-is-not-just-about-femininity>.

The group may choose to read the essay in turns, or have one person read the whole essay. If you choose to have group members read aloud, remember that not everyone feels comfortable reading aloud in a group and ask for volunteers instead of having every person read in turn. You may also choose to display the essay digitally as you read to assist people who have trouble processing information read aloud.

As the essay is read aloud, please write in your journal any words or phrases that seem significant to you. These will be shared after the reading.

After the essay has been read, have each member of the group call out one word or phrase they wrote down during the reading. You may go around the circle, or use popcorn style (see [Possible Discussion Modes](#) in the Introduction). It is always acceptable for someone to pass when it is their turn. As each word or phrase is called out, write it down on the newsprint.

⁵³ *Marsha P. Johnson: A transgender pioneer and activist who was a fixture of Greenwich Village street life* by Chan, Sewell. New York Times, March 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked-marsha-p-johnson.html>

⁵⁴ The Gender Unicorn uses a Creative Commons License. This means you can share the infographic with credit, even for commercial purposes. You do not have to request permission to use it. Citation: Trans Student Educational Resources, 2015. “The Gender Unicorn.” <http://www.transstudent.org/gender>.

After all the words have been written down, make sure that everyone in the group understands them and there are no questions about what the words mean. If you need a reference to define unfamiliar terms, try this [Glossary of Terms & Definitions](#) created by Trans Lifeline.⁵⁵

Discussion

Allison Gallagher writes about her experience of being a woman and how it may or may not involve being feminine or fitting into expected stereotypes.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What has been your experience of gender in your own life?
2. How has your experience of gender changed over your lifetime?
3. How are the experiences of the people we've learned about in this session (Chevalière d'Eon, Maude Adams, Marsha P. Johnson, Allison Gallagher) similar or different to your experiences?

Please be aware that not everyone is ready to talk about gender and allow people to sit quietly and not participate in the discussion. As the discussion continues, be mindful of others' lived experiences and do not diminish them or insist that your experiences are the only right way.

This is the only discussion for this session. It is a complicated topic and I want to leave the session somewhat open-ended for groups since I cannot predict what every group will be like. If you need further activities for your group, please see [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix D](#).

Homework

Paste the Gender Unicorn into your journal. If you did not complete it in class, do so now if you are comfortable.

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading from "Moon for Our Daughters," by Annie Finch

These are our bodies' own voices,

Powers of each of our bodies,

⁵⁵ Trans Lifeline is a grassroots hotline and microgrants 501(c)(3) non-profit organization offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis – for the trans community, by the trans community. Find more information on their website: <https://translifeline.org/>

Threading, unbroken, begetting⁵⁶

Reminder of next meeting

Before adjourning, remind the group of the next date, time, and place for the group to meet.

⁵⁶ from “Moon for Our Daughters” by Finch, Annie. Retrieved from <https://poets.org/poem/moon-our-daughters>

Session 10: Rethinking Race

Materials List

- Chalice
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Newsprint pad
- Easel (optional)
- “Call of Something More.” Valentin, Marta I. <https://www.uuma.org/mpage/BSE2017e>

Prep Ahead

Share the poem “Call of Something More” by Rev. Marta I. Valentin with the class before meeting. Allow enough time for them to read and contemplate it. The poem is available here: <https://www.uuma.org/mpage/BSE2017e>

Discussion #1 is an intense activity that comes with trigger warnings. It is a look at a list of historical Unitarians and Universalists, including people who were slave owners, people who abused children, and people with other behaviors we do not find acceptable today. This final category is a catch-all category because I could not make a separate note for each objectionable behavior due to space. Some of these behaviors were acceptable at the time the person was alive, some were not. All the people on this list were found to be acceptable enough to be put on the list I found from the mid-twentieth century. You are encouraged to read about each person on the list and consider their whole lives before you share this list with your group.

Be aware of your particular group and how they will be affected by the discussion. You may wish to talk with group members ahead of time and let them know what to expect. **Do not modify this activity just so white people feel comfortable. Please modify this activity only to avoid triggering members of minority groups or people with trauma.** If you do need another activity, I recommend this one on the Empowerment Controversy from the UUA Tapestry of Faith curriculum, *Resistance and Transformation*: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/resistance/workshop12/182661.shtml>

I have chosen to use this list, and have this discussion, even though it is difficult, because I think it is important not to gloss over our history. Unitarians and Universalists were not perfect, they were human and flawed and often chose comfort over justice and liberation.⁵⁷

Today’s plan (mini-intro)

Today we are discussing the proposed 8th principle for Unitarian Universalism. We have spent much time learning about women who strived to make a contribution despite oppression. For our faith to truly include everyone (as we imply it should in the first 3 principles), then we need an explicit commitment to anti-racism and an end to oppression.

⁵⁷ Thank you to my LREDA colleagues, especially Christina C.C. Fernandez, for helping me think this through and giving me advice.

Opening Reading

Light the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading the 8th principle

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.⁵⁸

Check in

Go around the group and have each participant introduce themselves, share pronouns, if they are comfortable doing so,⁵⁹ and ask each member of the group to share how they are doing and what has happened in their life recently. Keep it to 1-2 minutes per person.

Introduction

This session will discuss the proposed 8th principle and breaking down racism. You may be wondering why we are discussing racism in a curriculum on women. No one is free until we are all free, and all women cannot be free as long as people of color are oppressed by racism. In a truly just society, everyone must truly have equality. It is not enough to ask for equality, or expect that it will happen as a matter of course. We must actively break down white supremacy, racism, and oppression. This session is a beginning, not an end.

Unitarian Universalists have Six Sources upon which we draw our Principles that compose our living tradition. These Six Sources are drawn from the major religions of the world, as well as humanism and paganism.

These are the six sources our congregations affirm and promote:

- 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;
- Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;

⁵⁸ Source: *The 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism*. Retrieved from: <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>

⁵⁹ Cis people are encouraged to share pronouns whether or not they are comfortable doing so to be welcoming and make space for trans people, but there may be those in the group who do not have pronouns they are comfortable with, may be in transition about the pronouns they claim, and those who do not feel safe sharing the pronouns they claim, so hold space for them as well. Thank you to Rev. Elizabeth Mount for helping me clarify this wording.

- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.⁶⁰

The wonderful thing about these Sources is that they ground us, and our faith, in the rich religious history from which we spring, and help us to find inspiration even as we grow and change in our faith.

The danger of these Sources, and it can be an insidious one, is that as we use them for inspiration so much that we move from appreciation and inspiration into appropriation. It is a fine line between appreciation and appropriation, and we often have found ourselves on the wrong side of that line. Learning about a culture or religion that you find inspiring is one thing. Celebrating its holidays is quite another.

You will probably also find it useful as you move through this session to refer to our existing Principles:

1. [1st Principle](#): The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. [2nd Principle](#): Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. [3rd Principle](#): Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. [4th Principle](#): A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. [5th Principle](#): The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. [6th Principle](#): The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. [7th Principle](#): Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.⁶¹

Activity #1

Before class began, you were asked to read the poem, “Call of Something More,” by Rev. Marta I. Valentin. In your journal, reflect on the poem.

Questions to guide reflection

1. Do you see yourself in the poem?
2. If you are white, are there ways you have been less than welcoming or inclusive of people not like you at your congregation? How can you do better in the future?
3. Does reading this poem change your expectations of Unitarian Universalism?

Have available a computer on which you can access the poem for people to read if they need to review it. The poem’s copyright requests no duplication without permission, so we ask you not to print it out if at all possible.

Discussion #1

Trigger warning: This list of historical Unitarians and Universalists includes people who were slave owners, people who abused children, and people with other behaviors we do not find acceptable today.

⁶⁰ *Sources of Our Living Tradition*. Retrieved from: <https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/sources>

⁶¹ *The Seven Principles*. Retrieved from: <https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/principles>

Do not modify this activity just so white people feel comfortable. Please modify this activity only to avoid triggering members of minority groups or people with trauma.

I researched the people of the list and marked the list to give an overview of notable behavior (positive and negative). I cannot promise that my research turned up every example of problematic behaviors or people. I strongly recommend doing at least a little research on each person on the list before holding this session. Review the list ahead of time so you can discuss the people on it with the class. You may find it helpful to bring a device to class so you can look people up during class.

Historic List of Famous Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists

This list dates from the mid-twentieth century and was originally part of a curriculum⁶² on Famous Unitarians and Universalists. This is the only place in this curriculum where you will find a discussion of men. I thought it was important to include the entire list as I found it, so the class can see how relatively few women and people of color were included on the list. This exercise again asks that you approach with your critical thinking skills. Who does history remember and who does history erase?

Conventions for alphabetizing names have changed since the list was made. List entries were moved as needed to conform to current alphabetization conventions.

Annotations for actions and behavior were added and obvious mistakes in names were corrected.

Index for the annotations

* = made public racist comments or held pro-slavery views

** = owned enslaved people

A = Abolitionist (only for people alive prior to the U.S. Civil War)

I = Issues: problematic actions or beliefs by our modern standards in ways not already mentioned here

M = Minister

P = Pedophile

S = Worked for women's rights

Alive only post-Civil War

Read the list to the class. Note the number of men, the number of women, and the number of people of color. (Hint: There is only one person of color on the list. I have deliberately not annotated this person's race or ethnicity for the purposes of the discussion.) The discussion will go over these notations in-depth.

John Adams* ^{[L][SEP]}	Adin Ballou ^{[L][SEP]} A M	Henry Bergh ^M
John Q. Adams ^{[L][SEP]} A	Hosea Ballou ^{[L][SEP]} M	Elizabeth Blackwell ^{[L][SEP]} I
Louisa May Alcott ^{[L][SEP]} A	George Bancroft ^{[L][SEP]}	Olympia Brown ^{[L][SEP]} M S
Horatio Alger, Jr. ^{M P}	Clara Barton ^{[L][SEP]} S	Percival Brundage ^{[L][SEP]}
Susan B. Anthony* ^{[L][SEP]} S	Henry Whitney Bellows ^{[L][SEP]}	William Cullen Bryant ^{[L][SEP]} A

⁶² I do not know where this curriculum came from -- I found it in the curriculum library at my congregation without any author, publisher, or copyright information. It is titled Famous Unitarians and Universalists. It may pre-date the formation of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The font, the paper, and the binder it was in seem similar to other examples I have seen from the 1950s. If anyone has more information on this curriculum, I would be happy to add it here.

John C. Calhoun**
 Alice Cary
 Phoebe Cary
 William Ellery Channing
 Peter Cooper
 Charles Darwin
 George de Benneville
 Dorothea Dix
Frederick May Eliot
 Ralph Waldo Emerson
 Millard Fillmore
 Margaret Fuller
Erwin N. Griswold
 Edward Everett Hale
 Lucretia Hale
 Bret Harte
 Nathaniel Hawthorne
 Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.
 Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

Julia Ward Howe
 Samuel Gridley Howe
Quincy Howe
 Thomas Jefferson
 James R. Killian, Jr.
 Thomas Starr King
Willard Kiplinger
 Mary A. Livermore
 Jenkin Lloyd Jones
 Henry W. Longfellow
 James Russell Lowell
 Horace Mann
 John Marshall
Frederic Melcher
 Samuel Morse
 John Lothrop Motley
 John Murray
 Florence Nightingale
 Theodore Parker
 Francis Parkman

Elizabeth Peabody
 William H. Prescott
 Joseph Priestley
 Paul Revere
 Benjamin Rush
Leverett Saltonstall
Charles Edward Scripps
Rod Serling
Clarence Skinner
Ted Sorenson
Charles P. Steinmetz
Adlai Stevenson
 Charles Sumner
William Howard Taft
 Henry David Thoreau
Hendrik Willem Van Loon
 Daniel Webster
Paul Dudley White
Frank Lloyd Wright
Whitney M. Young, Jr.

Questions for discussion:

- There are 14 women on the list and 60 men, for a total of 74 people on the list. Eighteen percent of the list is women.
 - What do you think this reflects about the people who made the list?
 - How do you feel about this list now?
- There is one person of color on the list.
 - Did you find this person when you read the list?
 - What does it say about your group and your understanding of race in this country if you did or did not find this person?
 - What do you think this reflects about the people who made the list?
 - How do you feel about this list now?
- There are, understandably, many ministers on this list. There are also many doctors and philosophers, even some inventors. There are not many engineers or laborers on the list. Most of the inventors/engineers/laborers are there because of their additional work in science and/or philosophy. What do you think this says about our culture in the United States and our UU faith?

There are many other things that could be said about this list and our faith, including the few numbers of disabled people on the list (did you find them?), the large number of New England Transcendentalists, and the lack of people from outside the United States and Great Britain. I

⁶³ There are multiple John Murrys. I assume this was the one who founded the Universalist denomination in the U.S. Lived: December 10, 1741 – September 3, 1815

⁶⁴ There are multiple Leverett Saltonstalls. I assume this was the one who was a U.S. Senator and opposed Joseph McCarthy. Lived: September 1, 1892 – June 17, 1979

⁶⁵ There are 4 Adlai Stevensons. I assume this was intended to be the one who ran for U.S. President. Lived: February 5, 1900 – July 14, 1965

hope you will continue to think about this list and the representation, or lack thereof, of minorities, and how that affects us today.

Activity #2

Rev. Marta's poem "Call of Something More," tells us of a "rainbow of faces and cultures" at the margins of our faith and "demands that those who have traditionally held the center – the dominant white culture – turn and rediscover the faith at the edges. There, through the recognition of pain and disillusionment, of voices too long silenced, and of the fierce hope these people embody, all Unitarian Universalists just might find, once again, reason to dance, in body or in spirit."⁶⁶

Write in your journal about what it might be like if UUs answered this call of our faith to rediscover the voices we have silenced. What would change on a Sunday? What would change in the way we relate to each other in the congregation?

Discussion #2

Remember to use the practice of Mutual Invitation with this activity. Use the following questions to guide the discussion. Guide the group towards an understanding of how the existing 7 principles do not explicitly work to break down white supremacy and the importance of naming that work.

Our opening reading was the proposed 8th principle, to be added to the UUA's existing 7 principles. Paula Cole Jones, co-author of this proposal, says, "Our Principles were passed twelve years before we stepped into the antiracist commitment of our Association, and we haven't gone back and really integrated that into our Principles. What does it mean for us to live as an antiracist faith community? We need something explicit around the Beloved Community and our work around dismantling racism and oppression."⁶⁷

Questions for discussion:

1. Have you heard of this proposal before today?
2. How do you feel about adding another principle?
3. Our principles already speak to justice and inclusion. What is missing that this new principle would add?
4. How would the new principle help us break down white supremacy and oppression?

⁶⁶ This paragraph adapted from page 20 in *Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism*. Jones, Nancy Palmer and Lin, Karin. 2019. ISBN: 9781-55896-841-7.

⁶⁷ As quoted in *Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism*. Jones, Nancy Palmer and Lin, Karin. 2019. ISBN: 9781-55896-841-7.

Homework

Keep looking for women contributing to the world. Keep writing in your journal. Keep fighting back against erasure of the contributions of women, especially women of color. Find a way to contribute to the world, even in a small way.

Closing Reading

Extinguish the chalice as you read. You may choose to have other member(s) of the group read.

Reading by Elizabeth Cogliati

Thank you for coming on this journey together.

I hope you have learned about the myriad ways women work to create their best selves in this world.

I hope you have learned about yourself.

Safe travels for the rest of your life's journey.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Written for this curriculum by Elizabeth Cogliati

Resources

Appendix A: Materials list for whole curriculum

Every Session (standard materials)

- Chalice
- Chime
- Journals
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Newsprint pad
- Easel (optional)

Session 0

Standard materials plus:

- Copies of:
 - [Handout #1](#)
 - [Handout #2a](#)
 - [Handout #2b](#)
 - [Handout #3](#)
- Folder or paper binder for each class member (optional)
- Tape or glue (optional)

Session 1

Standard materials plus:

- An item brought by each woman to share about a woman who inspires her (homework from session 1)
- Small foamcore or poster board pieces (each approximately 5 x 8 inches), enough for each woman in the group to have one
- A large piece of foamcore, big enough to attach all the smaller pieces with some space between each piece (you may need 2 large pieces)
- Glue or double-sided foam tape
- Small bowls (one for each class member)
- Pitcher with enough water to fill each bowl halfway
- Eyedropper
- Olive oil
- Saucer

Session 2

Standard materials plus:

- Printed out copies of Adrian Piper’s statement on retiring from being Black: http://www.adrianpiper.com/news_sep_2012.shtml (optional)
- Small amounts of paint in all the shades of skin
- Index cards
- Shallow bowls or saucers for mixing paint
- Cotton swabs

Session 3

Standard materials plus:

- Pencils
- Artwork samples from session 2’s homework.

Session 4

Standard materials plus:

- Copies of “Coiled in every human heart” <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uu-views-evil>

Session 5

Standard materials plus:

- Salt
- Water
- One glass of vegetable oil
- Food coloring
- A large transparent glass or jar

Session 6

Standard materials plus:

- a special guest, a woman who works in a medical profession.

Session 7

Only the standard materials are needed.

Session 8

Standard materials plus:

- [Handout #4](#): Memory Match game

Session 9

Standard materials plus:

- Several copies of

- “What does it mean to be a woman? It is not just about femininity” by Allison Gallagher <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/02/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-woman-it-is-not-just-about-femininity>
- “Has Gender Always Been Binary?” <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/inclusive-insight/201809/has-gender-always-been-binary>
- “Gender Identity and Sexual Identity in the Pacific and Hawai’i: Introduction” <https://guides.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/Pacificsexualidentity>
- “Understanding Gender”: <https://genderspectrum.org/articles/understanding-gender>
- Gender Unicorn page: <https://transstudent.org/gender/>
- [Handout #5: Gender Unicorn coloring page](#) (enough copies for every class member to have one)

Session 10

Standard materials plus:

- “Call of Something More.” Valentin, Marta I. <https://www.uuma.org/mpage/BSE2017e>

Appendix B: Discussion Articles

Session 4:

Coiled in every human heart: Unitarian Universalist ministers reflect on the nature of evil.
Schulz, William F., McNatt, Rosemary Bray, and Caballero, Marisol. UU World, Winter 2018
edition. Retrieved from: <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uu-views-evil>

Session 9:

“What does it mean to be a woman? It is not just about femininity” by Allison Gallagher
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/02/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-woman-it-is-not-just-about-femininity>

“Has Gender Always Been Binary?” <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/inclusive-insight/201809/has-gender-always-been-binary>

“Gender Identity and Sexual Identity in the Pacific and Hawai’i: Introduction”
<https://guides.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/Pacificsexualidentity>

“Understanding Gender”: <https://genderspectrum.org/articles/understanding-gender>

Session 10:

“Call of Something More.” Valentin, Marta I. Retrieved from:
<https://www.uuma.org/mpage/BSE2017e>

Appendix C: Sources for Session 8

Lidian Jackson Emerson

Biography Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lidian_Jackson_Emerson

Image via wikipedia

Ella Matilda Wallace Brown

Biography Source: <https://jamaica-history.weebly.com/rev-e-e-brown.html>

Image by freedesignfiles (Image note: This is a stock image silhouette. There are no pictures of Ella Matilda Wallace Brown available.)

Maja Capek

Biography Source: <https://historicwomensouthcoast.org/maria-maja-capek/>

Image from Underwood & Underwood studio, via <https://essexuu.org/capek.html>

Maria Cook

Biography Source: <https://uudb.org/articles/mariacook.html>

Image from wikimedia (Image note: This is an old-style pulpit. There are no pictures of Maria Cook available.)

Florida Ruffin Ridley

Biography Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida_Ruffin_Ridley

Image via wikipedia

Fannie Barrier Williams

Biography Source: <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/williams-fannie-barrier-1855-1944/>

Image from Tapestry of Faith

Christina Rivera

Biography Source: <https://www.uua.org/careers/re/maclean/recipients/christina-rivera>

Image by Ella Elizabeth Truchot

Leslie Mac

Biography Source: <https://www.lesliemac.com/about-leslie>

Image by Ella Elizabeth Truchot

Sofia Betancourt

Biography Source: <https://www.sksm.edu/people/sofia-betancourt/>

Image by Ella Elizabeth Truchot

Appendix D: Additional Biographies & Activities

These are biographies and activities that I wrote for the main curriculum, but ended up not fitting in. I offer them to you in the hopes that you may find them useful for your group to supplement the materials offered in the main curriculum. I caution you, if you are white in a mostly or all

white group, not to use the white women here to substitute for the Black women in the main curriculum. Beware falling into the white supremacy trap of comfort by centering whiteness.

Biography: Dorothea Dix (session 6)

Note: Do NOT use this biography to substitute for the biography of a Black woman or a woman of color. This is a supplement, not intended to center whiteness.

Date: 19th century CE

Born: 1802

Died: July 17, 1887

Location: New England

Dorothea Dix was born in Maine to white parents with health issues that prevented them from being good parents to her and her two little brothers. When Dorothea was 12, her wealthy grandmother from Boston took all 3 children to live with her and sent their parents to live with other relatives. Dorothea clashed repeatedly with her grandmother. Her grandmother wanted her to be a proper young lady, Dorothea wanted to give away her new clothes to the beggar children at the gate. When Dorothea was 14, her grandmother lost her patience with her and sent Dorothea to live with her sister, Dorothea's great-aunt.

As a young adult, Dorothea reconciled with her grandmother and, with her permission, opened a school for young girls in her home. Sending girls to public school was illegal, but it was permitted for a young woman to teach a few other girls. Dorothea had started with a storefront school a few years before, for only poor girls, but the school in her grandmother's home was for poor and wealthy girls alike.

Dorothea taught for a few years until her health broke down, probably due to tuberculosis. She became a governess to William Ellery Channing's children so she could rest, then traveled to Europe for a year. While in Europe, she first heard about the need for reforms in how the mentally ill were treated. When she returned to the United States, she volunteered to teach a 'dame school' in a local jail, so women in the jail could learn to read. Horrified by the conditions she found there, she went to court to alleviate them and was eventually successful. She then began a survey of all the jails and almshouses in Massachusetts, which resulted in her submitting testimony to the Massachusetts legislature. Being a woman, she was not allowed to testify directly before the Massachusetts legislature, but wrote a 'memorial' that a male politician read on the floor of the legislature.

Her survey of jails and almshouses grew to encompass every state on the eastern side of the Mississippi river. As she traveled, she helped found mental hospitals and nursing schools.

When the Civil War began, Dorothea was asked to be the supervisor of nursing for the Union Army. She was not as successful at this as might have been hoped.

After the Civil War was over, she traveled again to Europe to rest, but soon found herself touring jails and asylums, just as she had in the United States.

At the end of her life, Dorothea entered the State Hospital of New Jersey, which she had helped found, and lived the last years of her life in her own suite of rooms.

Sources: *Memorial to the Legislature of Dorothea Dix*, Boston, Munroe & Francis, 1843. Found in *"I Tell What I Have Seen" – The Reports of Asylum Reformer Dorothea Dix*, American Journal

of Public Health, April 2006, Vol. 96, No. 4. and "Dorothea Dix (1802–1887)." Parry, Manon S. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2006 April; 96(4): 624–625.

Biography: Dr. Joycelyn Elders (session 6)

Date: 20th century CE

Born: August 13, 1933

Location: Arkansas

Dr. Joycelyn Elders was born on August 13, 1933 to sharecroppers in Arkansas. She was the oldest of 8 children. She received a scholarship to Philander Smith College at age 15. She graduated from Philander Smith in 1952 with a bachelor's of science degree.

After graduation, Dr. Elders joined the U.S. Army, where she was a physical therapist. After being discharged from the military, she went back to Arkansas, where she enrolled in medical school and protested against segregation, including refusing to park in the back of a drive-in theater.

She received her M.D. in 1960 from the University of Arkansas. During the subsequent two decades, she worked in medicine, taught at the University of Arkansas as a professor, and published over 100 articles regarding her research.

In 1987, then-Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas appointed her to be the head of the Arkansas State Health Department. She was the first woman and the first Black person to head that department.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton named her the Surgeon General of the United States, the first woman and the first Black person to hold that position. She continued to push for sex education and pro-choice policies, as she had in Arkansas, where the teen pregnancy rate was below the national rate during her tenure at the state health department. Eventually, due to her stance for legal medical marijuana and a comment on masturbation, she was forced to resign. After her resignation, she maintained a presence in the creation of public health policy.

Source: *Joycelyn Minnie Elders (1933-)*. BlackPast.org. Hornsby-Gutting, A. (2008, January 14). Retrieved from: <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/elders-joycelyn-minnie-1933-2/>

Biography: Pauli Murray (session 1)

Date: 20th century CE

Born: November 20, 1910

Died: July 1, 1985

Location: United States of America

Pauli Murray was born in 1910. Orphaned at a young age, she grew up in North Carolina raised by her Aunt Pauline in the home of her grandparents. She taught herself to read by age five, and read voraciously.

As a child, she walked miles across town rather than take the segregated streetcars and avoided movies rather than sit in the balcony.

After high school, sometime in the mid 1920s, she qualified to attend the North Carolina College for Negroes, but refused to attend because she refused to participate in segregated activities. She insisted that her aunt take her to New York City so she could apply to Columbia University, which was integrated. This is where she learned that her life was constrained not only by race, but also by her gender. Denied admission to Columbia because she was a woman, and unable to attend Barnard College because the tuition was too high, Pauli persuaded her family to let her live with a cousin in New York City so she could establish residency there while taking the high school classes she needed to have to later attend Hunter College, a women's college, for free.

She was a student at Hunter College in 1929 when the Great Depression hit. She managed to graduate from college, but it was difficult. After graduating, she drifted in and out of poverty, from one dead-end, low-paying job to another, still being held back by her race and gender. Returning to North Carolina, she again resisted segregation, refusing to move to the back of the bus.

While working to keep a Black man off death row, she met Eleanor Roosevelt, who would go on to become a lifelong friend. At this time, Pauli met some lawyers who persuaded her to attend law school at Howard University. Howard is a private, historically Black, research university, and Pauli was able to attend on a scholarship. Regardless of being at home at Howard with her race, she was the only woman in law school, and none of the men could understand why she was there.

While at Howard University, she had a radical idea. Instead of trying to end 'separate but equal' segregation by arguing that the separate facilities were unequal, what if the argument was that the facilities should not be separate in the first place? She made a bet with her professor, Spottswood Robinson, that the case establishing 'separate but equal' would be overturned within ten years. She won that bet, when Mr Robinson successfully argued *Brown v Board of Education* using Pauli's reasoning.

She spent the rest of her life working for women's rights, a co-founder of the National Organization for Women. Ironically, despite working her whole life for women's rights, she struggled with the concept of gender and never felt like she was a woman. She continued to use she and her pronouns, but she identified as a man, though she was unable to find a doctor to help her transition. Not much is known about Pauli's love life or gender identity because she kept all that out of her autobiography.

In the 1970s, she decided to become an Episcopal priest and was the first black woman to be ordained an Episcopal priest. In 1977, she completed her course work three weeks after the General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted to allow the ordination of women. Episcopal priests are required to retire at age 70. She was never called to a congregation, and gave only a few pulpit supply sermons.

Source: "The Many Lives of Pauli Murray." *The New Yorker*. Schulz, Kathryn. April 10, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/17/the-many-lives-of-pauli-murray>

Biography: Elizabeth Nihell (session 6)

Note: Do NOT use this biography to substitute for the biography of a Black woman or a woman of color. This is a supplement, not intended to center whiteness.

This biography is included to give a sense of what the life of someone who worked at the Hotel Dieu was like.

Born: 1723

Died: May 1776

Born in London, of French Catholic descent, there is little known of Elizabeth Nihell's life until 1740, when she moved to Paris and married a man of Irish Catholic descent who worked as a surgeon-apothecary. While in Paris, Elizabeth trained at the Hotel Dieu as a midwife. In 1754, Elizabeth and her husband moved back to London where she worked as a midwife. She wrote pamphlets and books railing against 'man-midwives,' one of which was entitled, *The danger and immodesty of the present too general custom of unnecessarily employing men-midwives. Being the letters which lately appeared under the signature of 'A man-midwife'*.⁶⁹ Abandoned by her husband in 1771, she was unable to support herself on a midwife's pay, and was forced to turn to the parish workhouse for assistance in 1775. She died a year later.

Source: *Elizabeth Nihell* on Wikipedia. Retrieved from:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Nihell

⁶⁹ Available here from the Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/b30365314/page/n1/mode/2up>

Activity: Exploring The Dinner Party (session 0)

Note: Do NOT use this activity to substitute for an activity that makes your group uncomfortable. This is a supplement, not intended to center whiteness.

Prep for the Activity

As I was reminded by one of my readers, Rev. Elizabeth Mount, Judy Chicago is anti-racism from the white gaze. The question is, what is anti-racism from the Black gaze? There are many answers to that question – you might find it useful to read Angela Davis, bell hooks, Audre Lord, Wanda Coleman, and Toni Morrison as you explore that subject.

However, if you are specifically preparing to discuss Judy Chicago's Dinner Party, I suggest reading Lorraine O'Grady's article entitled *Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity*, which is introduced on Lorraine O'Grady's website as the "first-ever article of cultural criticism on the black female body."⁷⁰

Explore <http://www.judychicago.com/gallery/the-dinner-party/dp-artwork/> and the Resources available on Judy Chicago's website: <https://www.judychicago.com/resources/> and decide which pages to share with your group. *Women represented in the place settings* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dinner_Party#Women_represented_in_the_place_settings) might also be useful.

You might also find it useful to read these articles that discuss the difficulties inherent in centering one gender in discussions of art and culture. From *Slate*, a news site, "Do I Have to Give Up Lesbian History to Participate in Queer Culture?" by Lena Wilson, discussing the issues inherent in balancing second-wave feminism and queer culture,⁷¹ and from *Momus*, an art publication, "Are Sex Differences Getting in the Way?: The Limits of Gender-Based Curating" by Natasha Chaykowski, discussing the problems with sex-segregated spaces for artwork.⁷²

⁷⁰ Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity. O'Grady, Lorraine. 1992 & 1994. Retrieved from: https://lorraineogrady.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Lorraine-OGrady_Olympias-Maid-Reclaiming-Black-Female-Subjectivity1.pdf

⁷¹ "Do I Have to Give Up Lesbian History to Participate in Queer Culture? Millennial lesbianism can sometimes feel like a balancing act between two worlds." on *Slate*. Wilson, Lena. August 16, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://slate.com/human-interest/2018/08/lesbian-history-terfs-and-queer-culture-do-queer-women-have-to-reject-all-second-wave-feminism-to-be-inclusive.html>

⁷² "Are Sex Differences Getting in the Way?: The Limits of Gender-Based Curating" on *Momus*. Chaykowski, Natasha. August 4, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://momus.ca/are-sex-differences-getting-in-the-way-the-limits-of-gender-based-curating/>

Introduction to the Activity

In the mid-twentieth century, a white artist named Judy Chicago embarked on an epic journey of artistry.

Judy set out to create a series of plates, each but one having a representation of a vulva⁷³ on it, representing a different historical woman. One plate, that for Sojourner Truth, has faces, not a vulva. Some critics, such as Alice Walker in Ms. Magazine, argue that this is racist. "Novelist and activist Alice Walker has stated in Ms. magazine, "It occurred to me that perhaps white women feminists, no less than white women generally, can not imagine black women have vaginas. Or if they can, where imagination leads them is too far to go.[...] white women feminists [have] revealed themselves as incapable as white and black men of comprehending blackness and feminism in the same body." The lack of showing a black vulva sustains the notion that many white feminists are blind that race is an integral component of difference within the oppressed." From "you can't sit with us" by Maribelle Bierens on Questions and Art blog.⁷⁴

Judy ended up with 39 plates, 13 each from 3 different eras in history, Pre-History to Roman Era, The Beginnings of Christianity to the Reformation, and From the American to the Women's Revolution. Thirteen was a significant number to her, as there were 13 men at the Last Supper of Christ.⁷⁵ The final product, called *The Dinner Party*, was created by a team of women (and some men) working together for over a decade in Judy Chicago's studio.

Some of the women Judy represented were mythological goddesses, some were women who really lived. She made some effort to include different geographical areas, and included some women of color. Regardless of her effort, her knowledge was limited and her list was fairly white and Eurocentric. There is a complete list of the 39 women available on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dinner_Party#Women_represented_in_the_place_settings She wanted to celebrate women and women's history while at the same time bringing back the idea of the 'Great Mother,' a goddess over all of us whose conception came from the idea of the matriarchal religions of Europe in pre-history.

Activity

The Dinner Party by Judy Chicago used to travel the country so women all over the country could experience this monumental artwork. However, as it ages, it is becoming fragile and is now too fragile to travel. It is now available online. Let's look at it and see what shook the art world in the 1970s. Go to <http://www.judychicago.com/gallery/the-dinner-party/dp-artwork/> on your device and bring it up so the group can see the images. You may also want to bring up this page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dinner_Party#Women_represented_in_the_place_settings with a complete list of the women represented by the 39 place settings.

Use the following questions to stimulate discussion. Not all the questions need an answer. Remember to use the Mutual Invitation practice to facilitate the discussion. If you did not already show the group all the images of the plates, do so now. **Be mindful during the**

⁷³ Judy Chicago used the phrase "butterflies and vaginas" (Lippard, Lucy. "Judy Chicago's Dinner Party". *Art in America* 68 (April 1980): 114–126.) to describe the motif of *The Dinner Party*. Anatomically, the images depicted are vulvas.

⁷⁴ Retrieved from: <https://questionsandart.com/2017/10/23/you-cant-sit-with-us/>

⁷⁵ *Dinner Party: Genesis*. Retrieved from https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascaf/dinner_party/genesis

following discussion that the group discusses white supremacy and does not discount the contributions of Black women or women of color in the group.

1. If you were choosing the women to represent this way, would you have chosen different women or added women? Why?
2. How do these plates make you feel? (This can be emotionally, physically, or some other modality)
3. The art references the Bible, who does this leave out? Who does this include? How do the tapestries make you feel?
4. What message is sent by framing almost all of these women through their imagined vulva?
5. Do we know that none of the women chosen for this installation were trans or intersex and if you think so, how do we know that?
6. How might people without a vulva who are women feel about this artistic framing? What about people with a vulva who are not women? How does this artwork make assumptions that further transphobia and exclusion?
7. What updates or expansions of this project could include more ways of having different bodies and genitalia while being a woman?
8. What do you notice about the women represented in *The Dinner Party*?
9. How do you think these women responded to patriarchal authority and expectations?
10. Why do you think all the women represented are from Western Europe, Northern Africa, or North America?
11. Do you think that women of color are adequately represented in *The Dinner Party*?

Activity: St. Hildegard's Music (session 1)

Note: Do NOT use this activity to substitute for an activity that makes your group uncomfortable. This is a supplement, not intended to center whiteness.

Explore St. Hildegard's music. In the UU hymnal, hymn #27 has words by St. Hildegard of Bingen. If your congregation has a music director, or someone in your group plays the piano, the class could listen to the hymn or even sing it.

There is a short recording of *O Frondens Virga*, a liturgical piece by St. Hildegard, in the Music section of her Wikipedia page. Listen to it here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hildegard_of_Bingen#Music

Activity: Gender Awareness (session 9)

Think of the earliest time in your life when you were aware of gender. Was it a positive or negative experience? Did your awareness or understanding of gender change as you got older? Write about these understandings and experiences in your journal.

Activity: Reverse the Roles in *The Giving Tree* (session 9)

Get *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. Read it aloud to the group, first as the book is written, and then switching the pronouns of the tree and the boy, so the book becomes about a male tree and a girl.

Discussion Questions:

1. How satisfied is each character with their actions?
2. How much did each character take advantage of the other character?
3. Is this book presenting a good lesson for children? Why or why not?
4. Is the book an appropriate gift for a child?
5. Does your opinion on the appropriateness of the book as a gift differ depending on the gender of the child?
6. Would you rather give the book as a gift before or after the pronouns are switched?

Source: Adapted from Gender Activities and Exercises at
<http://jfmuller.faculty.noctrl.edu/crow/activitiesgender.htm>

Handout #1: Covenant

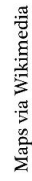
Covenant

We agree:

- What is shared in this group will stay in this group.
- We will do our best to be anti-racist and anti-oppressive.
 - We will treat others as we wish to be treated.
- If we fail in this, we will accept the word of the group member who calls our attention to the mistake.

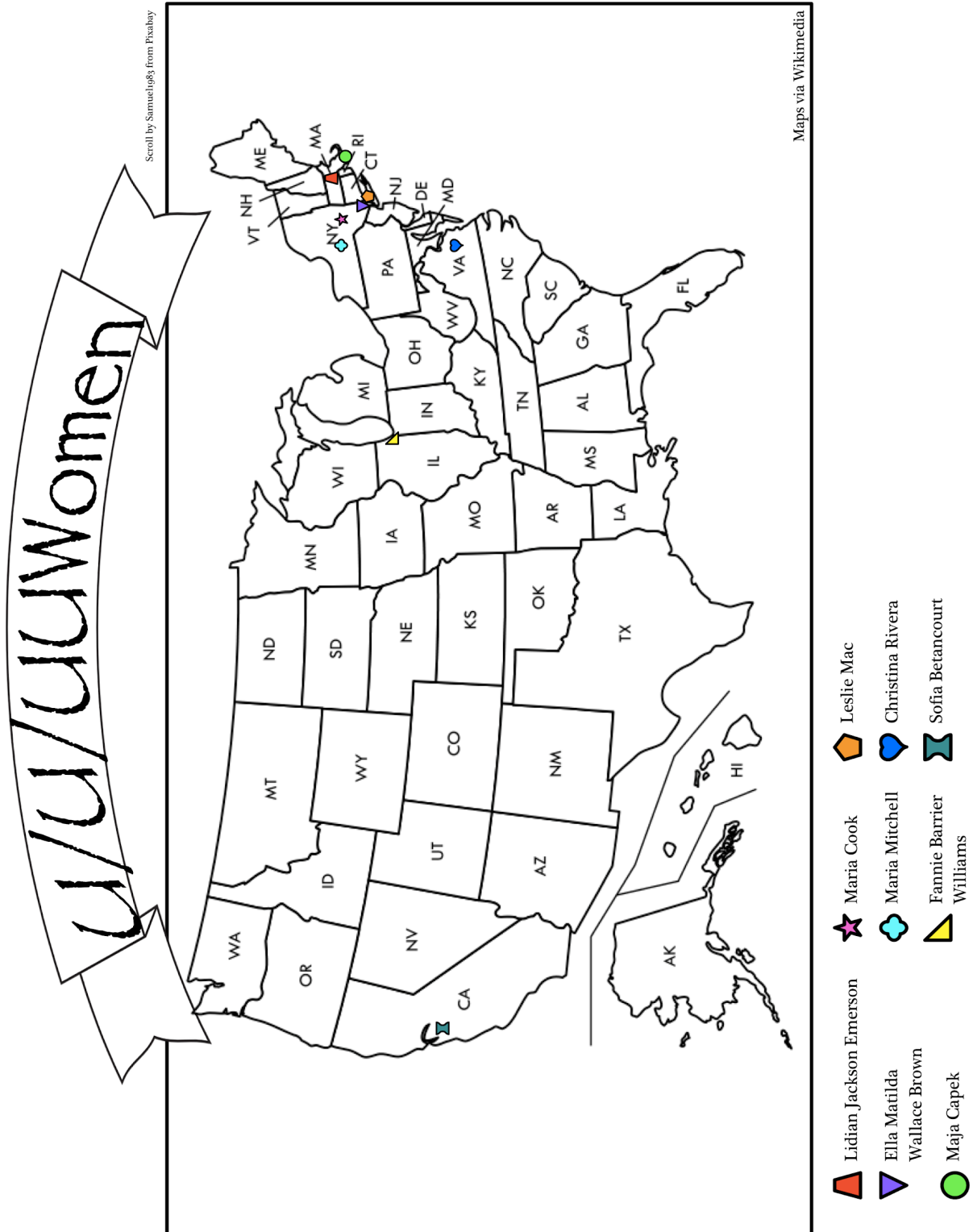
The Women of Dreamers, Devisers, and Doers

Inset



- Chapter 8: see handout 2b

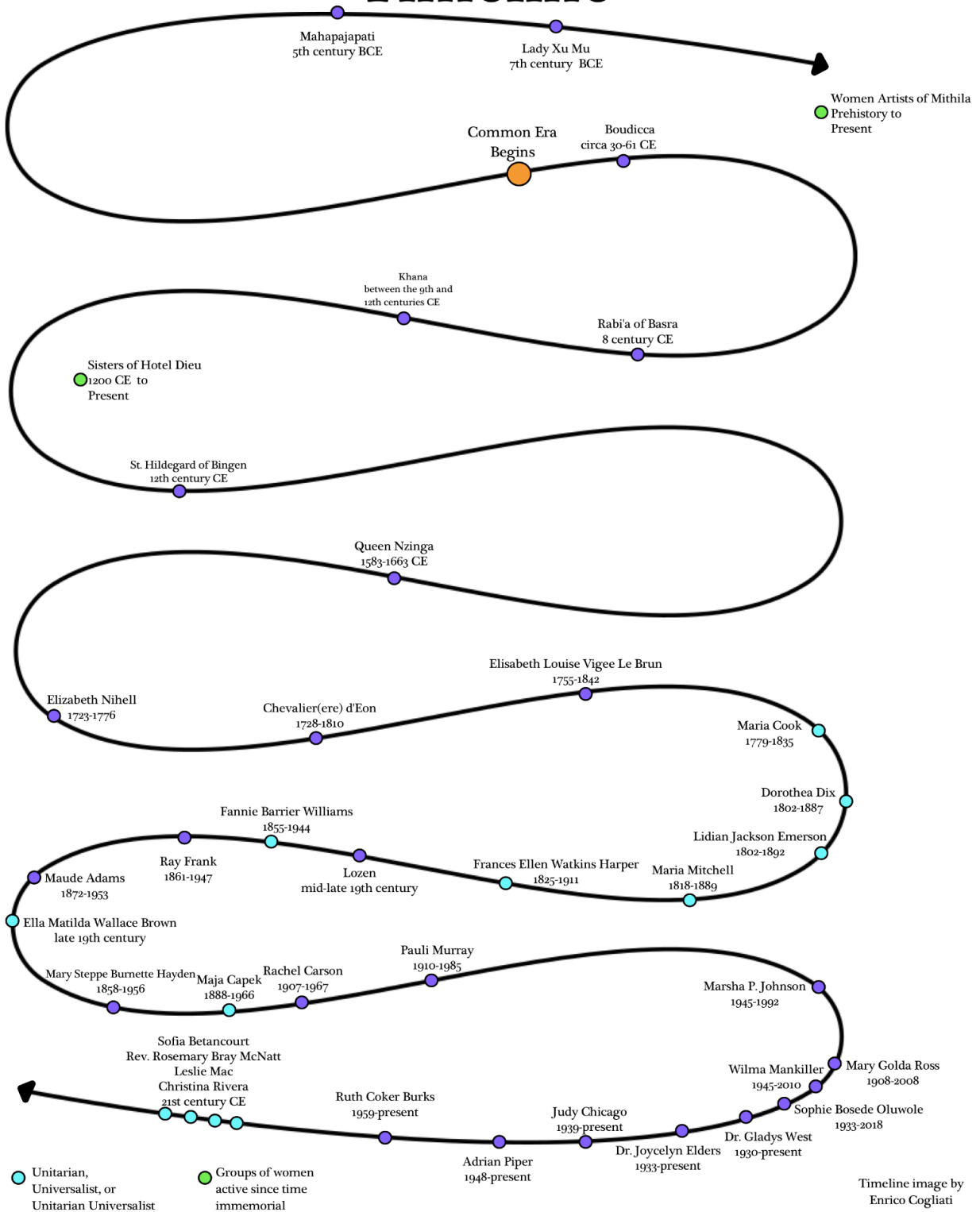
Handout #2b: United States Map



Handout #3: Timeline

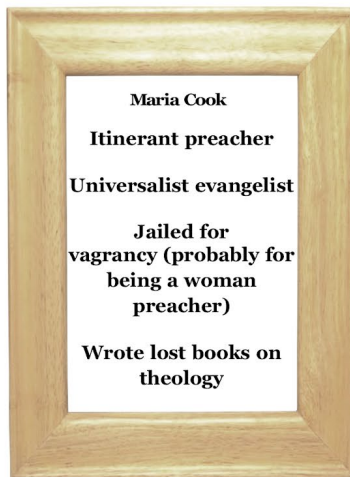
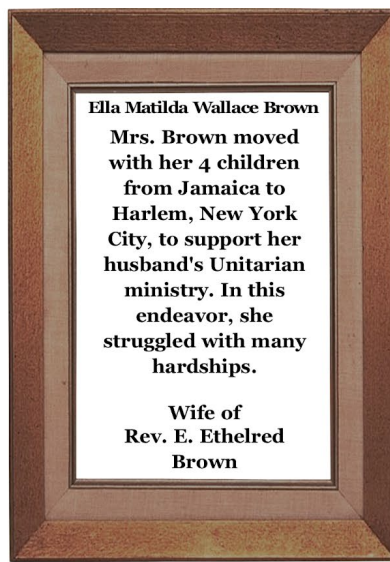
Timeline

Timeline is
not to scale



Handout #4: Memory Match Game





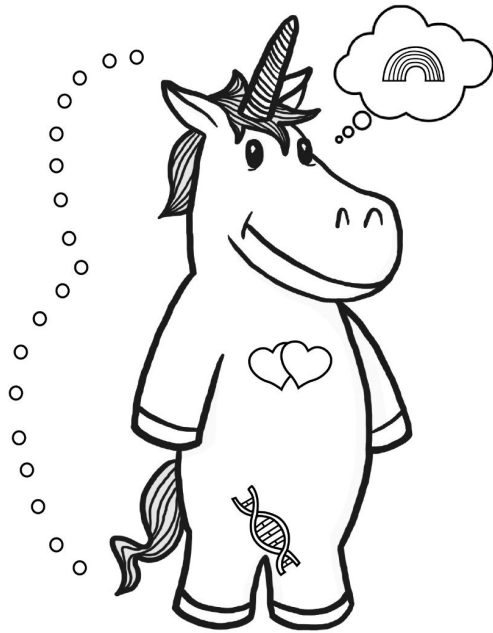
Handout #5: Gender Unicorn Coloring Page

The Gender Unicorn uses a Creative Commons License. This means you can share the infographic with credit, even for commercial purposes. You do not have to request permission to use it. Citation: Trans Student Educational Resources, 2015. "The Gender Unicorn."

<http://www.transstudent.org/gender>.


The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender


Design by Landyn Pan
Illustration by Anna Moore

 **Gender Identity**


☐ Female / Woman / Girl
☐ Male / Man / Boy
☐ Other Gender(s)

☐ **Gender Expression**


☐ Feminine
☐ Masculine
☐ Other

 **Sex Assigned at Birth**

Female ☐ Male ☐ Other/Intersex ☐

 **Sexually Attracted To**

☐ Women
☐ Men
☐ Other Gender(s)

 **Emotionally Attracted To**

☐ Women
☐ Men
☐ Other Gender(s)

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⁷⁶ Monsieur Vequad is racist and his writing is racist. The pictures in this book are beautiful and a good look at this artistry before it was commercialized.

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