

UU Identity & History

Lesson 10: How Do We Live Our Faith? Prophetic Women of UUism

5.02.2021

Objectives: Introduce UU faith through lives of prophetic women.

Materials: Teachers should download lesson plan and attachments onto their desktop.

Time allotments: Suggested for 60 minute online class.

1. Zoom Welcome (as youth arrive into the breakout classroom)

- Teachers and youth are expected to log on to zoom at 11:15am (15 min before class begins at 11:30am) so that everyone can be organized into correct breakout classrooms. We want to make sure there is an attentive adult in each breakout classroom with youth.
- Greet youth and ask everyone to correct their display name as needed. Ask everyone to select “gallery view” to see everyone else.
- Staff will take attendance.

2. Opening Discussion (5 minutes, begin while waiting for everyone to arrive)

- Who was able to attend the Coming of Age (COA) service last Sunday?
- From the service, what is one thing that stood out to you or you found meaningful?
- In your own words, what is COA? Will you be an “ager” next year?
- What is something you look forward to about writing your own credo (statement of belief)?

3. Chalice Lighting: Light the chalice, saying these words together: *“We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith; the light of truth and the warmth of love.”*

Teacher reads: (from 2015 speaker at the General Assembly of the UUA, Cornel West)

“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.”

4. Brief Check-in (5 minutes)

Continue weekly ritual/check-in (e.g. sharing a joy or sorrow so that everyone feels present in class).

5. Prophets Who Live the Faith (15 minutes)

Screen share lesson attachment 10a (Prophetic Women of Unitarian Universalism).

- Invite volunteers to read portions aloud.
- Stop at the end of page three, before “Dorothea Dix.”

Questions for Discussion:

- What do these women share in common?
- What do you think it means to call these women “prophets”?

Teacher summarizes: Our second UU Source from which our faith tradition draws inspiration and wisdom is: *Words and deeds of prophetic women and men that challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.* Consider four definitions of prophets from the dictionary.

- a) One who utters divinely inspired revelations.
- b) One gifted with more than ordinary spiritual or moral insight
- c) One who foretells future events.
- d) One who speaks truth to people in power.

Questions for Discussion:

- What definition/s are you already familiar with?
- What definition do you think UUs primarily use?

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, prophetic men and women are not confined to a single religious tradition. In fact, they are not confined to religion at all. Wherever women and men from any walk of life—secular, religious, political, musical, educational—**speaking truth to those in power** and challenge us to stand up to evil and expand justice, peace, and love, we seek their wisdom. We are concerned not only with the *founders* of the faith but deeply concerned with those who *carry that work forward* in any generation, including ourselves. Ours is a way of unfolding revelation, or of never-ending revelation, where every generation and every person can be a prophet and hero.

6. Dorothea Dix (15 minutes)

Screen share lesson attachment 10a again. Scroll down to page four and read section titled, “Dorothea Dix.”

- Invite volunteers to read portions aloud.
- Stop at the end of page five, before “Clara Barton.”

Questions for discussion:

- A prophet “speaks truth to [those in] power,” a phrase that originates from our Quaker friends. What were Dorothea Dix’s truths and who were the powerful people to whom she spoke them?
- Where does such prophetic courage come from? Where did it come from for Dorothea Dix?
- Dorothea Dix made extraordinary choices for herself and worked to offer the same degree of choice to others. What are some important choices you have made? What are important choices you would want for everyone to have?
- Today, some prophetic voices have said “we have countless options but fewer and fewer choices that really matter.” What do you think this means?

7. Clara Barton (10 minutes)

Screen share lesson attachment 10a again. Scroll down to page six and read section titled, “Clara Barton.”

- Invite volunteers to read portions aloud.

Questions for discussion:

- A prophet holds an extraordinary spiritual or moral insight. What do you hear in her letter to Fannie that is an unusually insightful moral perception? (leads into next question)
- Clara Barton offers a powerful insight in her letter: from not participating in war to having no vote to having no voice to loss of citizenship to having no rights to submission to wrongs to being nobody to not knowing anything to silencing and disabling any dissent. What is she trying to say here? (connects with next question)
- Clara Barton may be pointing out something that Martin Luther King, Jr. famously pointed out: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” How are injustices linked, not only across geographical distance, but linked from one injustice to another injustice?

8. Unitarian Universalist, a Prophetic Tradition (10 minutes)

Screen share lesson attachment 10b (“Prophets” #565).

- Read together, alternating between teachers reading a sentence in unison and youth reading sentence in unison.

Questions and discussion:

- In your own words, what is this reading saying?
- Is there a prophetic insight or voice that speaks to you? And if so, how do you hope to honor that insight?

9. Announcement: The end of the semester is near. We have two more classes, one regular lesson and one closing celebration.

10. Extinguish the chalice, saying together: *“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”*

11. Leave zoom breakout classroom: wait until all youth have left, click “Leave” then “Leave Meeting.”