

Orientation to the Spirit Play Center: Session 1 (BLB)

As modified for Second Unitarian of Chicago by Susan Frances.

Materials: None

Presentation:

WELCOME To the Spirit Play Room.

My name is _____, and I will be your teacher this whole year. This is _____, and she will be our doorkeeper for the beginning of the year. This year we will be learning and sharing many things together....which will be great fun!

Sometimes, though, it is hard to start something new- especially when you may not know anyone else here.

[For the Promises Room: I brought a friend with me...(insert name you want to call your puppet)...he's feeling a little shy.....tell him your name.]

[For the Sources Room: Let's go around the circle and everyone can share his or her name.]

*Go around the circle and have each child say her or his name.
[For Promises Room, put Herbie back on the shelf.]*

The Spirit Play Room is a very special place. In some ways it looks just like a school- maybe even like yours. Or like your class last year here at church. We have books, shelves, art materials, teachers and circle time. But in some ways it is different.

This is a place to be together to discover the spirit of love and mystery that some people call God. In this place we have all the time we need. So we don't need to hurry. We can walk more slowly. And we talk more softly, because others might be talking with the Spirit, and we don't want to disturb them.

This is a special place to be in community, to talk to and listen and feel the Spirit in our hearts.

We will hear many of the stories of Love and the Mystery and stories told by great teachers around the world. We can also ask questions and search for answers together.

Everyone in this room will also be treated fairly and kindly.

Since this is such a special place, we need a way to get ready to listen and talk. You can get ready all by yourself. You don't need me to tell you to get ready. But I can show you how to get ready.

1) We Walk More Slowly

When we come into this room we have all the time we need. So we can walk more slowly. Watch, I will show you how to walk.

Demonstrate.

Now I wonder if you can show me how to walk in this room?

Let children practice.

2) We Sit in a Circle

In the Spirit Play room, we have another way to get ready to hear the stories of the Spirit of Love and Mystery is to sit on a carpet square in a circle. We have a special way to sit. We cross our legs. And we put our hands in our lap. Watch.

Demonstrate.

Now I wonder if you can show me the special way to sit in this room?

Let the children practice.

In the Spirit Play room, we will start each class by ringing chimes and listening to them until we can't hear any more sound.

Get the worship tray off the shelf. Ring the chimes.

3) We Speak More Softly

Another way to get ready is to speak with a soft voice. We speak softly because we do not want to disturb someone who may be talking with the Spirit.

I can say my name softly. Listen: My name is _____.

Demonstrate.

Now I wonder if you can show me how you can say your name softly?

Let the children practice.

4) We Talk to the Spirit

There are different ways to talk to the Spirit, and to express the mystery of love.

One way to express the mystery of love is to light a candle. Each time you come to the Spirit Play room we will light the candle in our Chalice. I will pick one child to walk to the altar with me and light the Chalice. Watch.

Walk to altar and light Chalice candle. Sit down.

One way to talk to the Spirit, and to express the mystery of love is singing. When we are with the Spirit, we're so happy that we just have to use our voices to sing our thanks. Here's a song we can sing.

Sing "Rise Up O Flame" one time. Then have children sing with you one time.

Another way is saying a poem together.

Say the "We are Unitarian Universalist" poem with hand motions one time. Then have children say it with you one time.

5) We Work with the Stories of the Mystery

[Option A for if stories for the year are done and will be on the shelves all year: When you walked into the room today, you probably saw some things on the shelves. Each of these things is really a story- a gift that we will share with each other. Each week I will share one story with you, and then you will be able to tell the story to each other.]

[Option B for if stories for the year are not complete or teachers have decided to bring the stories out one at a time: When you walked into the room today, you probable saw a lot of empty shelves. These shelves will house our stories. Each week I will share one story with you, and then you will be able to tell the story to each other.]

The first story I will tell you is the one about our chalice.

Show the Chalice Story tray with materials.

I won't tell it today. Today we are learning about the Spirit Play room.

After I tell you a story, we will extinguish the flame from the Chalice. I will put the story back on the shelf and the child who lit the candle will come to the altar with me and extinguish the flame. Watch.

Walk to the altar and extinguish the flame with the candlesnuffer. Sit down.

Then we will pass the basket around for an offering. If you brought money, you can put your money in the basket. If you don't have money, you can blow a wish into the basket.

Talk the basket from the worship tray and pass it around.

Then it will be time for our work.

Each time we meet in the Spirit Play room, we will have time to work with the stories or the art supplies in the room.

Point to the art supplies in the room and the shelf where the Flaming Chalice story is located.

Our work will be something different for each person. Our work may be telling a story or creating art with the art supplies. Our work may even be reading a book in the story corner or doing yoga with the yoga mat. Each of you will have a special place in the room. A place where no one will bother you.

When your work is the yoga mat, the mat is your space. When your work is a story, then the underlay – the piece that goes on the floor under the story – is your space.

Creating art is another way to talk to the Spirit and to express the mystery of love. When your work is creating art with the art supplies, you need to get a rug to create special place. I will show you how to get a rug. Watch.

Demonstrate.

When you work on this rug, no one will bother you. I will show you how to walk around a rug that someone else is using. Watch.

Demonstrate.

If you want to work together with a friend with a story or sharing the art supplies, you can put two rugs together. Watch.

Demonstrate.

When you are finished working, you can put the rug away all by yourself. I will show you. Watch.

Now I wonder if you can show me how to get a rug to make a special place to work?

Let children practice rolling out the rugs and then putting them away.

Note, there isn't time to do work during Orientation Session 1.

I want to show you two more things. This is what to do if you want to talk to me or need help. Look to see where I am in the room, and then walk to me and touch me on my shoulder.

Ask 2 children to demonstrate.

If I am helping another child, you may stand or sit by us and wait. When I am done helping the other child, I will listen to you.

When I want to talk to one of you, I will look to see where you are in the room, and then walk over to you and talk to you.

When it is time to finish telling a story or creating art with the art supplies, I will flicker the lights off and on and say “May I see everyone’s eyes”. And then I will tell you that “It is time to stop working. You don’t need to hurry. You have plenty of time. But you need to start putting away what you are working on.”

Let’s try that now. Flicker the lights while talking to them.

It will be time to put your work away and get ready for a snack. **We will call snack our FEAST.**

Have children sit down in the Feast circle.

After we put our work away it is time to get ready for a feast. First we get ready by crossing our legs, so we will always know where they are when the food comes. Let’s cross our legs now.

Let children practice.

Now we will need a table for our feast. I will show you how to make a table. Watch.

Doorkeeper will hand a napkin to Storyteller. Storyteller will unfold and smooth out a napkin. Doorkeeper will pass out a napkin to each child.

Now you can show me how to make a table for your feast.

Let children practice.

Today our feast is..... You may have _____ of each. Put them on your table like this and wait until everyone is served. Watch.

Doorkeeper will pass the snack to Storyteller. Take snack and place on napkin.

Doorkeeper will pass the snack to each child.

Every time we have Feast we will have a glass of water to drink.

Doorkeeper will place cup of poured water on Storyteller’s napkin, then place a cup on the napkin of each child. Doorkeeper will leave the pitcher of water next to the Storyteller for refills.

Before we eat our Feast together, we wait for each child to have a snack and water. Then we say “We are thankful for being together and thankful for all that we share.” Then we get to eat and drink together.

Have children practice before they eat Feast.

Now I will show you how to put away your table. We fold up the napkin. If our cup is empty, we put the napkin in the cup and carry the cup to the trashcan. If the cup has water, then we carry the napkin and the cup to the trashcan. Watch.

Fold up napkin with crumbs, put it in cup, and throw away.

When it is time for you to leave, the Doorkeeper, who is _____ today, will tell me that your adult is here to get you. I will tell you, and then it is time to say goodbye to me. We have a special way to say goodbye. I will open my hands and we will say to each other “Go Now in Peace”.

Open hands to each child and make comment about her or his day or work completed.

Then say “Go Now in Peace”.

Then you can go say goodbye to the doorkeeper and leave.

There may be extra time; if so, let the children talk and share.

Make sure each child practices saying Go Now in Peace when his or her adult arrives.

Orientation to the Spirit Play Center: Session 2 (BLB)

As modified for Second Unitarian of Chicago by Susan Frances.

Materials: None

Presentation:

Use text from Session 1 and when you get to work time, insert the following.

Another way that we can come close to the spirit of love and mystery is through ARTWORK.

We can draw or paint our thoughts, feelings, say thank you and ask questions or just enjoy putting paint or crayon on the paper. This is how we get ready to feel the Spirit through our artwork. First you will need a special place. You can make a special place with a rug. I will show you how to get a rug. Watch.

Demonstrate getting a rug.

Each person can take a tray for their materials to put on the rug.

Demonstrate getting a CLAY TRAY. Then demonstrate getting a WATERCOLOR TRAY with water jar.

Sometimes, though, even when we are very careful, we might get a spill. Watch how I can clean it up.

Go the shelf and get sponge in water.

Demonstrate how to blot with sponge and paper towel squares.

Go around the room and point out all the art supplies the children may use.

Sit back down in the circle.

Another way that we come close to the Spirit of Love and Mystery is by becoming very quiet and listening.

Pause.

Quietness comes from inside you, not from someone telling you to be quiet. You can get quiet all by yourself. Some people like to sing to help them get quiet. Some people like to make their bodies very quiet. This is how. Close your eyes and listen to the quietness. Breathe in and out very slowly.

Now we can practice our work time.

Go around the circle and dismiss children one at a time to get art supplies.