

Classroom News

March 2022

Monthly Theme Reflection

By: Ashley Cole

Hello everyone,

I know I just said farewell as of February, however I have decided to prepare the remaining monthly newsletters in advance of my departure, which will be mailed out from the family ministry team each month. If there are current events that are not captured in these newsletters that is why.

This month's theme is the practice of creativity. While not being one of the seven recognized sources of Unitarian Universalism, it has been included in our explorations this year as it is one many in Unitarian Universalist circles widely practice. How does the process and practice of being creative inform our Unitarian Universalist beliefs?

The great thing about Unitarian Universalism is that it is a living tradition, which means that as we continue to learn and grow as individuals and as communities we are able to adapt to the changing world around us. Creativity is one way to express what we are seeing, thinking, feeling and can act as a mirror to the world we live in. Creativity invites us to explore our world and ourselves more deeply.

March Theme - alternative UU Sources

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from our expressions of creativity

Head

Read the attached story *A Barn-Raising in the City*. After you have read it, discuss with your family why you think Amy was so excited to build the playground. Do you think it was important for the children of the school to have a say in creating the playground? If you were to create your own playground what it look like? Have you ever imagined something and then made it become real?

Heart

Colour in the attached drawing and reflect on how you like to express your creativity. Do you like to craft, sing, dance, paint, plant, draw, think up new ideas? How does being creative make you feel? Why do you think it's important to be creative?

If you practice lighting a chalice, use these words by Susan L Van Dreser

Let us sing the magic of imagination by which we know one another and learn the lives of eras gone by.

Let us sing the magic of creation by which we build the world of our soul and teach its wisdom to others, young and old.

Let us sing the magic of our lives together, holding and shaping by the movement of breath from heart to lung all new life that is to come.

Go now with singing. Go now with magic in your fingertips. Touch this world with life.

Hands

Get creative! Make up a card for a friend, create a new song and sing it for your family, pick out a recipe and bake something, go exploring around your house or neighbourhood and build something out of the objects you find. I hope what ever you do, that it brings you joy.

Young and old, rich and poor, skilled and unskilled have gathered at the park, nested in a valley of brick, in what has been called a community barn-raising. In this case, however, the barn is a new playground, scheduled to open tonight when the first child slides down the long stainless steel tail of an "elephant-dragon."

Read or tell the story.

When Amy woke up, she was glad to see the sun shining. Today was the day her family would help build a playground, right in their own neighborhood. An ugly, empty patch of dirt and weeds sat there now, but soon there would be a tree house with swings, a sandbox shaped like a lemon, a bumpy, twisty slide, and even a castle tower. You would be able to climb up the tower on a ladder, and shimmy down on a rope. Or you could roll a wheelchair or a stroller to the top, along a ramp that spiraled gently all the way up.

The playground was going to be right next to Amy's school, in between the tall apartment buildings like the one where she lived, and the stores, and the stone plazas with benches for grown-ups to sit. It would be fantastic!

Amy knew what the playground would look like because she had seen pictures of it. She had even helped to draw and color in some of them. In fact, a lot of the playground's best ideas had come from the children in Amy's school. The children had raised some of the money with a bake sale. Now they were going to help build the playground. Today!

You see, the school had never had a playground, and the parents had been upset about that for a long time. Amy's school had a nice gym inside, and a beautiful art room, and a music room with a real piano, but no place outdoors for the children to have recess. Their teachers did not let them play in the empty dirt yard. There were too many weeds and too much litter. But soon, if enough people came to help, the dirt yard would be a beautiful community playground.

Amy put on her oldest jeans and an old shirt she didn't mind getting dirty. She put on socks and sneakers, too. Then Amy and her mom and dad and her brother Eddie walked over to the empty dirt yard. Everyone was already busy. There was Dr. Jefferson, carrying some flat rubber squares that looked like big puzzle pieces. He said "Hi" to Amy's family. Sharon and Andy Tran, whose mother owned the little grocery store, were helping some grown-ups stack large purple bricks. Amy knew those were for the castle tower. It had been her own idea to make it purple.

Mrs. Jefferson greeted Amy's family. Right away, she handed Amy a fresh new sheet of sandpaper. "Go over and help Zinnia Goldstein sand those blocks," she said. Zinnia was Amy's babysitter, so Amy was happy to work alongside her. Zinnia showed her how to use the sandpaper to smooth the edges of the blocks. After a while, Eddie came over with a wheelbarrow to get the smooth blocks. Amy saw him carry them to Dr. Jefferson and Ms. Murano, from the library. They were painting the blocks purple. "Wow!" Amy said. "The blocks will be part of the castle tower, too!"

It was getting hot and Amy was feeling tired when Pete and his dad came by in their pizza delivery truck. Pete's dad blew a whistle and the hammers and drills and talking quieted down. "Lunch for everyone who's working!" Pete's dad called.

In the afternoon, Amy and her friend Lucy counted out screws, nuts, and bolts. They were sitting in the shade, next to a pile of wooden boards. Amy was glad to have a job where she could sit down for a while. "What do you think these boards are for?" she asked Lucy.

"I don't know," said Lucy. "Maybe for the tree house."

"Well, if someone paints them purple, we will know what they're for," Amy said.

"The castle tower!" both girls said, laughing.

The walk home seemed long that evening. Amy wished her mom or dad would pick her up and carry her, but they looked tired, too. Her mom said, "So many people came to help today, that the playground might be finished this week."

"Well, it won't be more than two weeks, anyway, if the weather holds out," said her dad.

One week, or two. Amy didn't mind if it took three weeks or all summer. She was going to go and help every day. When school started again in September, recess would be something special. Amy would climb the purple castle tower and look all around. She would see her friends playing in a tree house with swings, a sandbox shaped like a lemon, and a bumpy, twisty slide. That would be amazing! But, the best part was that Amy knew that she would always think of even more people every time she went to the community playground — Dr. Jefferson, Mrs. Tran, Zinnia, Pete and Lucy and more. Everyone who had helped.

PREVIOUS: Taking It Home

(<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session16/taking-it-home>)

UP: Session 16: The Gift Of

Community

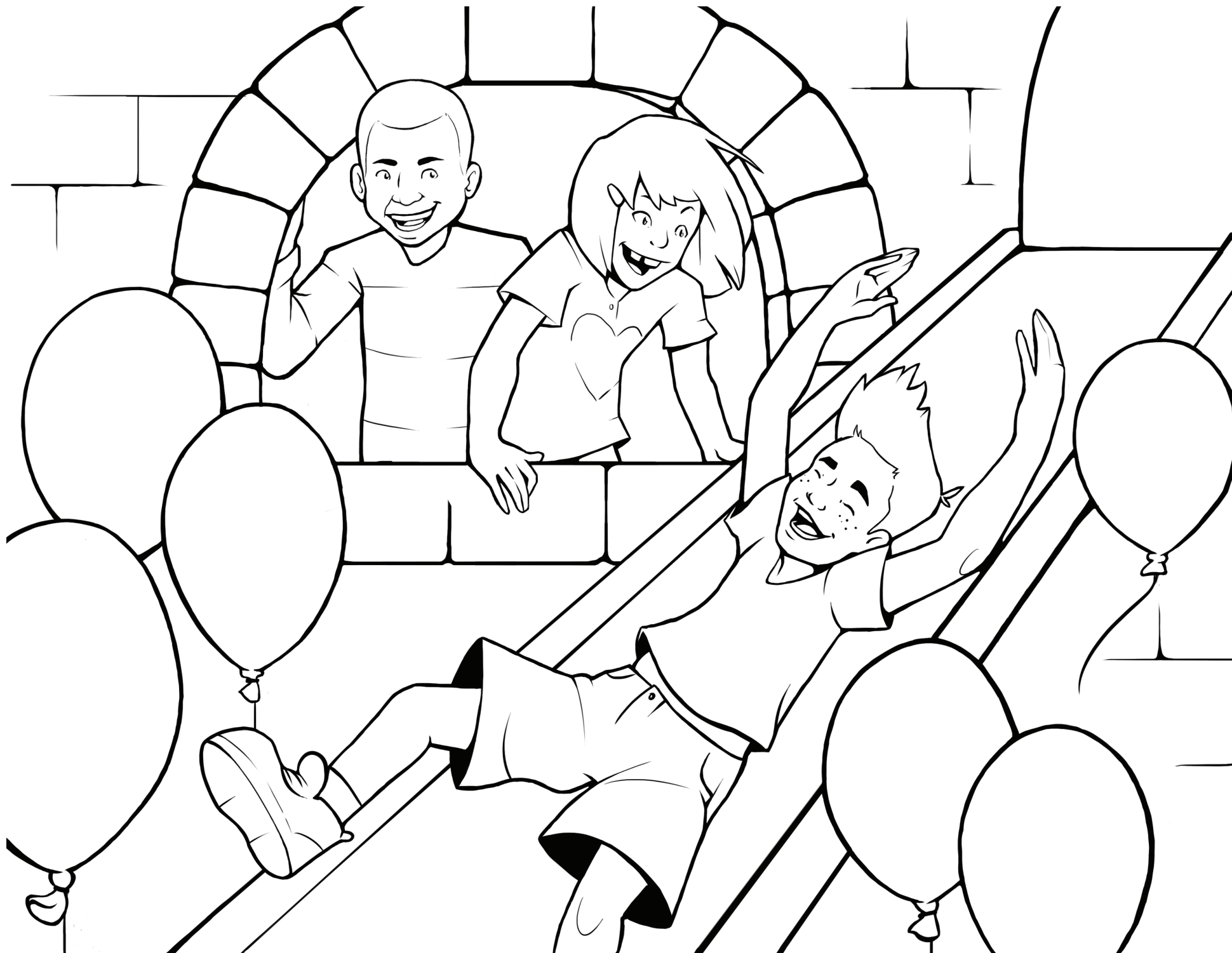
(<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session16>)

NEXT: Find Out More

(<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session16/119915.shtml>)

Download all of Wonderful Welcome (Word) (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/welcome_column.doc) (PDF (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/welcome_column.pdf)) to edit or print.

For more information contact **religiouseducation@uua.org**.



"A Barn-raising in the City," Wonderful Welcome; illustration, Paul Gray