

Religion in Life for Girl Scouts

Older Girls

A Program for Unitarian Universalist Cadette, Senior,
or Ambassador Girl Scouts

Introduction

In this program, you grow spiritually by exploring your Unitarian Universalist faith, values, and heritage, your Girl Scout values and heritage, and topics where the two intersect. The program is organized into six parts:

[Religion and Spirituality](#)

[Religions in Our World](#)

[Unitarian Universalism, Past into Present](#)

[Religion in Everyday Life](#)

[Issues for Girls and Young Women](#)

[Wrapping It Up](#)

Each part has a few numbered requirements, sometimes with a choice of ways to complete the requirement. There are also twelve “Girl Scout Links” embedded in the program which ask you to think about your Girl Scout experience in the light of your Unitarian Universalist faith. To complete the program, complete the numbered requirements plus any 5 of the 12 Girl Scout Links. Many requirements ask you to do some research using printed sources, the Internet, and interviews with people in your community. Through this research, you not only gain more knowledge, but also expand

your sense of curiosity and wonder and strengthen your ability to search for religious and spiritual truth and meaning. Unitarian Universalism and Girl Scouting are indeed two important influences in your spiritual journey, and this program for Unitarian Universalist Girl Scouts will ask you to think about points where the two intersect, so that you can draw from the power of both.

Use the Religion in Life Requirements Checklist (found on the Introduction to the [Religion in Life for Older Girls](#) section of the website) to keep track of your progress (the form is found on the Introduction of the older girls program). You can keep track on your computer or other electronic device or print a paper copy of the form and keep it in a safe place. You can also print out the paper version of the program and use the checkbox before each requirement as a check-off box and/or to scribble in dates as you plan.

Religion in Life “Journal”

As you work your way through Religion in Life for Girl Scouts, it is important that you have some way to capture your research, explore your ideas, and express yourself. You may want to have a journal with unlined pages (for drawing). You may want to keep a folder on your computer as your “journal.” You may want to use different kinds of paper and writing/drawing materials and keep all of your materials in a portfolio or file folder. You may prefer to speak your thoughts in an audio recording or video, create art (music, photography, collage, drama, sketching, sculpture etc.), or have an on-going conversation with others in person, over the phone, or through social media (e.g. email, texting, or Facebook), and some of these pieces will be part of your “journal”. Some requirements will make special reference to recording in your journal, and some will just

ask you to do things (e.g. look something up) that will be easier to do if you use your “journal” to collect and organize information. Feel free to use of these methods (or to combine them) so that you have a collection of pieces of work that show your progress. For example, a girl might list a few ideas or sketch something in a journal notebook, then discuss her thoughts more fully with her advisor or others working on this program with her. She can then add notes of ideas that come up during the conversation. She might take notes on her research or simply print out material from a website, then draw a picture, write a paragraph, or have a conversation in a response to what she learns, collecting any papers she produces in a folder just for Religion in Life for Girl Scouts. Each girl can use the method that works for her and for the situation (the time she has that week or the specific needs of the requirement). However you decide to “journal,” remember that these are not formal assignments to be turned in like in school; no pressure for perfection!

My Promise, My Faith

Girl Scouts of the USA has a program called My Promise, My Faith with a pin that can be earned each year by a Girl Scout. Girl Scouts of the USA encourages you to do your own religion’s program (Religion in Life) alongside the [My Promise, My Faith](#) program. Sometimes you may complete a requirement for Religion in Life for Girl Scouts that can also meet one of the requirements for My Promise, My Faith. It is fine to take “credit” in both programs. The Religion in Life for Girl Scouts program points out places where this is likely to be the case. Watch for “My Promise, My Faith” buttons on the program pages.

Religion in Life for Older Girls

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I am not sure what a requirement means? If when you read a requirement, it seems to mean a couple different things—one really hard that will take hours to do and the other more reasonable and quicker to accomplish, interpret it the more reasonable way! Ask your program advisor for help in making this decision; they have the final say on how to interpret a requirement.

What if I cannot do a particular requirement because of my circumstances? You may find that you need to adjust a requirement because of your learning differences, learning preferences, ability differences, or other circumstances. That's fine! If you find yourself not just working but *struggling*, be sure to talk to your program advisor about how the requirements should be interpreted or adjusted so you can get the most out of the Religion in Life for Girl Scouts program.

What if I've already done a particular requirement?

As long as you completed a particular requirement at an older Girl Scouting level (i.e. Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador) and the requirement is basically equivalent in content and in spirit, then count it as "done"! You might find that you have done part of a particular requirement in your religious education program, in school, or as part of another experience or program; if so, count that part as "done" and then complete the rest of the requirement. If you are not sure whether you've completed a requirement (or part of it) somewhere else, be sure to ask your Religion in Life for Girl Scouts advisor, your parent or caretaker, or the Director of Religious Education at your congregation.

The UUA's online religious education materials can be helpful in figuring this out; you can search [Tapestry of Faith](#) programs.

If I work with others on this program, are there ways we can share the “work” of the requirements?

For sure—and this can be the most enjoyable way of managing your time! Although you will all need to complete the spirit of each requirement, there are ways to break down many of the tasks. For instance, you can split up the research tasks and share your findings, rather than each girl doing all the research by herself. For example, if you need to look up three topics and you have a group of 3 girls: you can each look up a different topic and then share what you find out so that everyone learns about all three topics. Similarly, if your task is to “FIND OUT” something and one of you knows the information already, she can just share it with the others; it is fine to be resources for each other. You can also do tasks together (for example, join together to interview a member of your congregation or perform some service together). Some activities, such as expressing your ideas about a topic, can be done quickly and enjoyably in conversation with each other.

Is it OK to work on-line? Must I be able to work on line?

Although you will likely want to look at the online program materials as you begin the program, you don't have to stay stuck to the computer! You may wish to download the program and to keep track of your progress on an electronic device or computer. You may prefer to print out the paper version of the program to use as your working copy, then go back to the computer now and again to do web research or click on the

embedded links. You don't have to have access to the internet to get information; print resources and people are also good sources of information.

What if my family is not part of a Unitarian Universalist congregation?

Many of the Religion in Life: Older Girls requirements make reference to connecting with people in your congregation, but those requirements can be adapted to your situation. If you are doing this program with a group at a friend's congregation, of course you can use that congregation as "your" congregation. You can also [find a congregation](#) close to you, contact the minister and/or director of religious education, and have them point you toward resources in the congregation. Another possibility is the [Church of the Larger Fellowship](#) (CLF), a worldwide Unitarian Universalist congregation without walls, that you can adopt as "yours" if you don't already consider it your congregation. **Note:** Even if you are part of a local congregation, you are welcome to use the resources of CLF, such as the online sanctuary, [Quest for Meaning](#). Both websites have great material for all ages, and Quest for Meaning has live Sunday services you can attend online. You can also combine the CLF resources with face-to-face, telephone, or other live contact with individual Unitarian Universalists you already know, including people in your own family.

How does the UUA's Religion in Life for Girl Scouts recognition program relate to GSUSA's My Promise, My Faith pin program?

The relationship between the UUA's Religion in Life for Girl Scouts religious recognition program and GSUSA's My Promise, My Faith pin program is found [here](#).

What if I'm not a Girl Scout?

You do not need to be a registered Girl Scout or a member of a Girl Scout group or troop to complete the Religion in Life: Older Girls program, although it will likely be more meaningful to you if you are a Girl Scout. The Older Girl program explores issues that are relevant to all UU girls in middle and high school, it also includes "Girl Scout Links." If you opt to do the program even though you are not a Girl Scout, you may learn something new about Girl Scouting while completing the program.

What if a link takes me to a Unitarian Universalist religious education page with more activities on it; must I complete those also?

Through this program, you'll find links to stories and other materials on the UUA's website. Some of these links will help you find, for example, a story you need for your Religion in Life for Girl Scouts program. If you follow a link and find a new page that includes activities for a religious education class, you don't have to do the religious education activities to earn the Religion in Life for Girl Scouts emblem.

Religion in Life for Older Girls

Part One: Religion and Spirituality

Many people's ideas about religion and spirituality are shaped by the religious traditions they grew up with, and sometimes you will find people who don't even want to use words like religion, spirituality, and worship, because they or others they know have limited the meanings to ideas they feel are negative.

In this section, you will take a fresh look at the concepts "religion" and "spirituality" and consider how you think about these terms. Graduates of a Unitarian Universalist Coming of Age (COA) program might find that they have completed many of the requirements—or parts of the requirements—in this section. Great! If so, check off the requirements you completed in COA, fill in the gaps to complete others, and keep going!

1.1 Defining *religion*

What is a religion? What kinds of elements commonly make up a religion? Look at this definition from the [United Religions Initiative](#); it is written for children, but shares the neutral approach that scholars of culture and religion use. Find at least two more definitions of *religion*. Try looking in new and old reference sources (for example, dictionaries and encyclopedias, whether printed or electronic), finding both short and long versions (for example, a dictionary entry vs. a textbook on religion), and/or asking people who have very different religious beliefs. Compare the definitions you find.

Considering each source, why do you think each definition takes the form it does? That is, why are they different? And what do they all have in common? Create a definition of your own; feel free to change it at any time. Why does it matter how one defines

religion? What impact might it have if a particular spiritual tradition (say, Buddhism, Wicca, or Unitarian Universalism) was called a religion—or declared *not* to be a religion?

□ 1.2 Faith, Spirituality, and Worship

Look Up *faith*, *spirituality*, and *worship*. Think About their roots as well as their definitions. Are some definitions more broad or narrow than others? How are these three words related to each other and to *religion*? How are the four words different from each other? In mainstream America, spirituality, worship, and faith are often assumed to involve concepts of “God.” What are some other possible ways to think of spirituality, worship, and faith? Ask a Unitarian Universalist minister, religious educator or someone else who has studied religion whether and how their understanding of the words spirituality, faith, worship, and religion changed while as a result of their learning experiences.

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK A: Girl Scouts of the USA describes itself as “a secular organization that refrains from teaching religious or spiritual beliefs or practices,” and believes the “motivating force in Girl Scouting is a spiritual one.” Ask an adult Unitarian Universalist who was/has been a Girl Scout for several years about their experiences in Girl Scouting and how they relate to spirituality. Compare these to your own experiences.*

□ 1.3 The Big Questions

Human beings have long asked questions about what we don’t understand. In fact, questioning forms the foundation of academic and other research. Questions can lead

to creating spiritual knowledge, scientific knowledge, and many other kinds of knowledge. Here are some of the “Big Questions” asked and/or answered by many of the world’s religions:

- Has our world always existed? If not, how did it start?
- Is there some sort of plan for humans and the cosmos?
- Are there worlds, seen or unseen, other than the one we live in?
- What comes before birth and after death?
- Where do humans stand in relation to other beings and forms of matter?
- What are people’s responsibilities and rights in the contexts of the cosmos, the world, and humanity?
- How should we live our lives?
- What do “good” and “evil” mean and how can we recognize each?
- How are faith and reason to be used when we don’t have clear knowledge?

If you used the Tapestry of Faith curricula [Riddle and Mystery](#) or [Building Bridges](#), you may have encountered some of these Big Questions- and you may have completed part or all of this requirement.

You may wonder about some of these questions. You may already have answers to some of them. You may have considered some of these questions as part of your Coming of Age experience.

Some of the questions may not make sense or be important to you, and you may have additional “Big Questions.” Your questions and answers may change over time—

perhaps they have already changed! Express your thoughts about the Big Questions above in conversation, or through a written journal entry, art, music, poetry, an online

blog, or other means. Then Add your own Big Questions and your thoughts about these new questions, too. It is likely that for some questions you will not yet have an answer, and that's okay. List the questions anyway. Feel free to come back and add more questions and answers as you work on this program.

□ 1.4 Creeds

Choose A or B.

CHOICE A

To *believe* something means to hold it as truth. Read "It Matters What We Believe" by the Unitarian Universalist religious educator, Sophia Lyon Fahs, which has been excerpted as Reading 657 in the hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*. In each stanza, Fahs compares kinds of beliefs, and it is clear which kinds of beliefs Fahs values and which she does not value. Notice, however, that she does not give specific examples of each. Indeed, some beliefs can have positive or negative consequences. Choose three of Fahs' positive categories and three negative categories and Supply Examples for each. For each of your positive examples, Consider whether those beliefs could be negative in other situations or if interpreted differently. For each negative example, Consider whether/how it might be attractive to people.

MY PROMISE, MY FAITH INTERSECTION: If you can link the Fahs poem to your chosen part of the Girl Scout Law, you can complete requirement #1.

CHOICE B

A *creed* is a statement of belief(s). Sometimes a creed is used to define a particular religion. Many denominations have creeds with which each person must agree in order

to be a member. Find Out the creeds for two religious denominations. Unitarian Universalists generally say we have no creed that restricts our membership, but most of us hold in common some very strong beliefs and values, several of which we have collected in the 7 Principles. Read the [Principles](#) as written and also a [version interpreted for children](#). Compare the Principles to creeds from two other religions, considering both their content and how they are used.

Ask a child from your congregation what they can tell you about the UU principles!

□ 1.5 Credos

A central belief in Unitarian Universalism is that a person is free to explore and decide what they believe (UU Principle 4 speaks of the “free and responsible search for truth and meaning”). Despite our common UU Principles, Unitarian Universalists can have very different beliefs about the supernatural, about right and wrong in a specific situation, about politics, and about other important matters. As individuals go through life, their beliefs often change as a result of their experiences. Although Unitarian Universalists agree to respect one another and to encourage each other’s religious and spiritual growth and exploration, many Unitarian Universalists never compose a formal statement of their own beliefs, also called a *credo* (Latin for “I set my heart to”).

However, Unitarian Universalist youth in a Coming of Age program usually do write credos and share them with the congregation. Perhaps you have already done this yourself. Ask at least three Unitarian Universalist adults what they believe and how their beliefs have changed over time. For one of the three, you may substitute a UU youth’s credo statement. Then, Compose a credo of your own. If you have already written a

credo, Revisit that credo and Consider whether and/or how you might revise that statement today.

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Part Two: Religions in Our World

Our world is filled with many people whose beliefs, values, customs, and views of the world differ—in ways you might not even have imagined are possible. In this section, you will learn about some of the religions and the world because one of the sources we draw on in our religious tradition is “[wisdom from the world’s religions](#).”

□ 2.1 Religious Diversity

The number of religious traditions in the world and the differences between them are simply astounding. Create an inventory of all the religions you know of by doing all three of the following:

STEP ONE: Brainstorm

1. List all the religions you can have heard anything about (even if it’s only the name!). If you are not sure whether or not something is a religion, include it on your list anyway. If you’re doing this exercise with another person (**HINT:** Brainstorming works better with 2 or more people), you can add the names of religions that other people mention.

- Now find and look at two charts of “world religions.”

There is a chart of religions in the Tapestry of Faith [Building Bridges](#) program.

Print, copy, or download the charts and put a checkmark next to each religion on your list that also shows up on a chart. If there are any religions on the charts that are not on your list, add them to your list. Notice which religions on your list are absent from charts of “world religions.”

- Look at your list and consider the religions of the people you know. Underline the religions of people you know. Put a 5-point star by the religion(s) that you consider to be yours. Are there any additional religions that you have direct experience of (e.g. celebrating a religious holiday or conducting a ritual at a friend's house, visiting someone else's worship service)? If so, put an asterisk next to those. (Like color a lot? You can do this part of the exercise with colored highlighters instead of underlining, stars, and asterisks, if you like).

STEP TWO: A little research

- Choose 3 (or more) of the religions you don't know a lot about and look them up. There is background information about a number of world religions found in the Leader Resources for the Tapestry of Faith program [Building Bridges](#).
- Find out which religions are represented in your community and the nearby areas. **HINT:** A local telephone book or newspaper might work better than the internet for this task.

STEP THREE: Think it over

- Now use lines, circles, or outline format to show which religious categories are parts of other religious categories (for example, Roman Catholics and Methodists are both parts of Christianity; Christianity and Islam are both parts of monotheism). It's okay if it looks like a mess; that just shows how complex religions are. If you want, you can also recopy the names into a new chart if it gets too messy to understand.
- Consider which religions you know more about and which you know less about. Do you know more people from some religions than from others? Do you know

more about some types of religions than others? (e.g. Asian religions vs. European ones, monotheistic religions vs. atheistic vs. pantheistic vs....). What influenced which religions you are most familiar with?

- Consider which religions are included in the world religion charts and which are not. What might explain why some get more attention than others? Is there any impact from being commonly represented or commonly left out of the picture?

Discuss your findings with someone else.

□ 2.2 Religious Sources of Wisdom

Choose A or B.

CHOICE A

Most religions have developed sacred writings or oral stories, rituals, symbols, and/or traditions which members depend for guidance. Choose five religions from this list:

Islam	Taoism
Christianity	Shintoism
Judaism	Confucianism
Buddhism	Hinduism
Sikhism	Wicca or another neo-pagan religion
Mormonism	Jainism

A religion from a particular group of indigenous people

For each of the five religions you choose, Find Out its main source(s) of wisdom, including (if appropriate) names of any sacred texts, holy books, or sacred stories. Find Out how people use these sources in their daily lives. Now consider the [six sources](#) of

wisdom Unitarian Universalist names. Which of these sources are important to you in your day to day life as a Unitarian Universalist?

Find out about efforts to help people of different religions work together for peace and harmony in our world by visiting the website of the [Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions](#).

CHOICE B

One of the great “rules to live by” that has been part of many religions is “The Golden Rule.” Click [here](#) for a collection of different versions of the Golden Rule. Read them carefully and notice the subtle differences. If you are completely unfamiliar with any of the religions listed, Look Them Up to gain a very basic understanding. Do any of the versions seem to uniquely reflect the religions they are a part of? Which one(s) do you like the best and why? In your daily life, do you live by a moral code similar to the Golden Rule? Record your responses in a journal or blog or talk them over with friends, family members, or your advisor.

□ 2.3 The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures

Some stories from the Hebrew Scriptures are part of the Tapestry of Faith program

[Wisdom from the Hebrew Scriptures](#): Which of these stories are familiar to you?

Choose A or B.

CHOICE A

Like many other religious oral and written sources, the Bible includes a creation story (Adam and Eve in Genesis), a moral code (the Ten Commandments in Exodus as well as more specific rules described in Leviticus), and a disaster story (the burning of

Sodom and Gomorrah told in Genesis 18:16-19:29 and the Great Flood described in Genesis Chapters 5:32-10.1). In fact, Genesis includes two different accounts of the creation of people (Gen. 1:1-2:3 and 2:4-3:22). Locate these two Genesis passages in two different translations of the Bible (such as the New Revised Standard Version, the Good News Bible, the King James version, the New International Version, or The New American Bible Revised Edition). **HINT:** You can find different versions of the Bible at the public library and on the internet as well as in your congregation's library. Read the creation stories in both versions (the same chapters and verses). Compare how the two versions present the material. How does different language give a different impression? Is it more like history or poetry or...? Find Out how biblical texts have been developed and translated over time. What could account for the two versions of the creation story? How about the differences in the two Bibles you read?

A good source for information about how the Bible came to be written and a good introduction to its content can be found in the book [*Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals*](#) by Unitarian Universalist minister John Buehrens (Beacon Press, 2004). It is likely that you can locate the book in your congregation's library or the public library.

CHOICE B

Whether or not you have studied the Jewish and Christian scriptures, you are probably familiar with the parts of it commonly recounted at holidays: the story of the Jews' flight from Egypt told at Passover, the story of Jesus' birth told at Christmas, and the story of Jesus' last days, death, and resurrection told at Easter. Choose one of these stories, Locate where it is told in the Bible (get a version written for everyone, not a children's

Bible), and Read it. Is the story as you remembered it? What do you notice while studying the written version that you didn't notice so much when listening during a holiday celebration? Now Find two more versions of the story. These versions could be told in writing, pictures, an audio or video recording, or some other method, but look for at least one that was created for children. How is the story told differently when children are the intended audience from when you read it in the actual Bible? If your versions included pictures, audio, or video, how do sounds and visuals change the impression made by words? What choices appear to have been made by the authors, illustrators, producers, actors, and others? If you were a parent, how would you present the story to your child? Record your ideas or create your own version of the story for children. Offer to share your version with children as part of the religious education program in your congregation.

□ 2.4 Lives of Great Leaders

In the same way that many religions have a revered book, many also have one or more central figures, whose lives may be recorded in the book or in oral tradition. Some surprisingly similar stories have been told about these leaders' births, deaths, and/or other key events in their lives. Research the stories about Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad, and Confucius. Record your findings and Describe your reactions to these stories or share the stories with others.

There are some helpful older books that may be in your congregation's library. Look for [*Jesus the Carpenter's Son*](#) (Skinner House Books 1945, 1990) and [*From Long Ago and*](#)

[Many Lands](#) (Skinner House Books 1948, 1976. Both were written by Sophia Lyon Fahs and both are still available as ebooks.

[Muhammad: The Story of a Prophet and a Reformer](#) by Sarah Conover, was published by Skinner House Books in 2013.

□ 2.5 Congregational Life

People in different religious communities have different ways of worshipping, socializing, celebrating, and organizing. Visit at least two congregations that are not Unitarian Universalist congregations. Try to have some variety in religion, ethnicity, or community (e.g. urban vs. rural) in your selection. Consider what is similar to Unitarian Universalist worship and what is different. Write down your findings and Discuss them with another UU or write a blog post or newsletter article about your experience.

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK B: Although sometimes girls at resident camp attend religious services sponsored by their own religions and sometimes Girl Scouts join in interfaith services on Girl Sunday/Sabbath, Girl Scouts of the USA does not itself sponsor religious services. Nevertheless, many Girl Scouts gain a spiritual feeling from some Girl Scout ceremonies. Either Attend a religious service that celebrates Girl Scout Sunday/Sabbath or Plan, Attend, and Carry Out a Girl Scout ceremony (for example, an investiture, rededication, or Scout's Own). Consider how Girl Scouting strives to honor members' religious diversity yet still have a spiritual element for all girls.*

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Part Three: Unitarian Universalism, Past into Present

Unitarian Universalism was not always like it is today—in fact, if you look and listen carefully, you will find changes happening around you even in the present.

□ 3.1 Unitarian Universalist History

Read a book, chapter, article, website, or pamphlet on the history of Unitarian Universalism. Write Down any questions you may have, and continue to Look Up and Record the meanings of words that are unfamiliar. Talk with your advisor about this history. Consider how its history has made Unitarian Universalism what it is today. Create a Skit summarizing this history to someone learning about Unitarian Universalism for the first time.

The text of a pamphlet on [UU history](#) can be found on the UUA website.

Test yourself with a [UU History Mix and Match](#). The answers can be found [here](#).

□ 3.2 UU Principles

Revisit the [UU Principles and Sources](#). Find Out how they were developed, when the statement was first officially adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), and how it has changed since then. What statements did Unitarian Universalists have before this statement? Find earlier Unitarian, Universalist, or Unitarian Universalist statements of belief (consider those of these three denominational organizations and/or those used in your own congregation). Do you agree with all, some, or parts of the statements from long ago? How could the changes in the statements relate to other changes in Unitarian Universalism or in American culture? How do they relate to the

process of becoming more inclusive? Which do you think changes first—the words, the people, or the ideas? Record your thoughts and research in your journal, portfolio, or computer folder.

The Tapestry of Faith program Faith Like a River includes a “[History of Statements of Belief](#).” A “Collection of Covenants and Statements of Belief” that accompanies the history page can be found [here](#).

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK C: Consider the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law. Find Out how they have changed over the years. How might the specific changes relate to becoming more inclusive, changes in the way we think about girls and women, and changes in Girl Scout programming? Record your ideas in your journal, portfolio, or computer folder.*

□ 3.3 Famous UUs in History

You have probably already noticed that a lot of people do not know who UUs are—as a group, at least. However, we have had more than our fair share of famous thinkers, leaders, reformers, artists, scientists, and others who have changed the world we live in. You have probably already studied several famous UUs, perhaps not knowing they share your religious heritage. Visit the online [Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography](#) and [Famous UUs](#) and peruse the list of names. How many of the names do you recognize? Choose at least 3 people and Read their entries on the sites. Find Out what they thought and did, and how they affected our world. How do their contributions relate to our religion?

Do you have a belief that is so strong that, for its sake, you could brave the sort of persecution or ridicule some famous UUs experienced? To what extent are you protected from such treatment in your community today? Are there other places or times in which stating the beliefs you hold now would be more risky? Have you experienced lesser forms of criticism or other negative consequences for your beliefs? Are there situations where it makes more sense to keep your beliefs private or express them in a way that is “safer”? When you choose to speak out, how do you find the courage? Create a work of art, a poem, a song, a video, an essay, a blog post or some other way of expressing your responses.

MY PROMISE, MY FAITH INTERSECTION: If while researching UU women for Religion in Life: Older Girls requirement 3.3 you find 3 quotes related to your chosen line from the Girl Scout Law, you can complete My Promise, My Faith Requirement #3.

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Part Four: Religion in Everyday Life

Unitarian Universalists and others live out their religious beliefs and values in their everyday lives. Indeed, many outsiders do not recognize the spiritual and religious nature of our faith, mistaking our sacred for others' secular, and so perhaps it is even easier for us than for others to practice our religion all week long. At the same time, our congregations, like most religious organizations, are made up of administrative, financial, and interpersonal work. In this section, you will explore the connections between our values and the ways our religious organizations work. It is through our congregations and groups that we work to enact our religious ideas in the wider community, and it is through being with, supporting, and challenging one another that we deepen our personal spiritual lives.

Sara, age 12, shared this story as she lit her congregation's chalice for worship:

I am a Girl Scout. My mother is a Girl Scout and HER mother, too. Last Summer was the 100th anniversary of Girl Scouts. I was fortunate enough to be able to travel to Washington DC for the Girl Scouts Rock the Mall 100th anniversary Sing Along. This was a huge event with people from all over the USA and other countries, too. Over 200 thousand people were expected to (and did) show up.

This.

Was.

Big.

There was only one concern we had before the trip. Because the Girl Scouts have traditionally been an all-inclusive group – meaning – for example – that we don't discriminate against Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender people..We have been a target of some groups that do. In the weeks leading up to my trip there had already been several reports in the news about – well...hate groups hating. I was about to be part of a large group of Girl Scouts that could potentially make the perfect target for more hate. I briefly worried that we would be at risk. However, this thought didn't last long. I knew what I was going to do. I went to that event with my Girl Scout shirt, my Girl Scout glory, and a little bit extra. See, my mother and I had gone shopping the day before so I was a bit more prepared than most. While on the mall surrounded by thousands and thousands of fellow Girl Scouts, where we blended right in, I whipped out of my bag a rainbow flag and attached it behind me like a cape. I gave a small rainbow flag to my mother — we didn't blend in so much any more. The Girl Scout event was maybe only halfway over but we were on a mission. We left the mall and the sea of Scouts to run around the streets of DC. Eventually we made our way – just in time – for the start of the DC Gay Pride Parade. (~ 2 miles away) I did not see any protesters that day, quite the opposite, people who saw me with my combination Girl Scout shirt and rainbow flag actually came up to me and thanked me for what I was doing.

I light this chalice today for you, my community, for teaching me that that is the way to be.

I am a Girl Scout and I stand on the side of love.

□ 4.1 Becoming a Congregational Member

Find Out how many people belong to your congregation and what a member's rights, privileges, and responsibilities are. Are there different categories of membership, such as voting membership or youth membership? How do new members join your congregation? Do they sign a membership book or other official document? If so, Access a copy of what people sign, and talk to your minister, religious chair, membership committee chair, or advisor about its importance. Are you already a member of your congregation? If not, would you be eligible for membership and would you want to become a member? Is there a special public ceremony when one becomes a member? Record your findings and thoughts in your journal or Talk them over with your advisor and/or your congregation's minister or religious educator.

□ 4.2 Congregational Organization

Find Out how your congregation operates by selecting two of the four choices below (A, B, C, D), all of which include interviewing people. After each interview, Write a thank you note or email thank you and mention two or three things you learned from the interview. Keep copies of your thank you notes to the people you interview as your record of what you learned.

CHOICE A

Interview a Unitarian Universalist minister, religious educator, and music director. What sorts of education, interests, skills, and characteristics must these professionals have to get their jobs and perform well in them? Find Out how they spend their time during a typical week or month.

CHOICE B

Interview the president of your congregation. What is her/his job? What board positions are there besides president? Obtain a list of board members and find out who each one is. How did they get to be on the board? Ask a couple of them why they chose to serve the congregation in this way, what is difficult about the job, and what is most rewarding. Attend a board meeting, letting the president know of your plans ahead of time and getting permission if needed. How are decisions made for the congregation? Later, Read a copy of the minutes of the meeting you attended and compare what you observed with the official record of the meeting. Find Out how minutes are stored and what they are used for.

CHOICE C

Obtain a copy of the current congregational budget. Interview the treasurer or finance committee chairperson, asking questions such as: where does the money come from? what part goes to pay staff? what part goes to heat, light, building maintenance, and mortgage/rent? does the congregation have any debt? what part goes to community assistance and other social concerns? to religious education? to other programs and activities? to the UUA? How does the congregation decide what the budget will be? what happens if the congregation does not have enough money to meet the budget or does not spend all the money it budgeted?

CHOICE D

What committees, subcommittees, task forces, councils, and other leadership structures does your congregation have? Which of these are “standing” (on-going) and which are “ad hoc” (formed for a particular task)? How big are they and who serves on them?

Which work groups can anyone join and to which work groups must one be elected or

appointed? How do the committees relate to each other, the staff, and to other UU congregations? Interview someone who has served on more than one committee and for a total of at least five years (if possible, try to learn about a committee whose focus interests you). Ask what they find most difficult and rewarding about committee work.

□ 4.3 Denominational Organization

Learn about how our denomination is organized beyond the congregational level by completing Choice A, B, C, D or E. If your activity choice includes an interview, Write the person a thank you note or email thank you and mention two or three things you learned from the interview. Keep copies of your thank you notes to the people you interview as your record of what you learned. No matter which choice you complete, find a way to Share what you learn with others.

CHOICE A

Interfaith work: Does your congregation (or a representative of your congregation) belong to any interfaith organizations in your community or region? Talk to someone who is involved in this way and Ask what the congregation wants to achieve by associating with other faith groups. Find Out how well the people from the different religions in the interfaith organization understand and show respect for each other's religions. How are conflicts and misunderstandings resolved? What have they been able to accomplish by working together?

The Tapestry of Faith program [A Chorus of Faiths](#) provides a process for high school-aged youth to get involved in interfaith work. If working with people from other faiths on

a project to make the world a better place is something that interests you, talk with your religious educator or youth advisor.

CHOICE B

Find Out how many Unitarian Universalist regions and districts there are across the United States. What are the names of your region and district and what geographical areas do they cover? How do congregations, districts, regions, and the national UUA organization collaborate? Interview someone who is involved in district or regional activities to find out how congregations benefit.

CHOICE C

Surf your way around the [UUA's website](#) and Find Answers to the following questions. What sorts of information does uua.org provide? How big is the UUA? What other UU organizations exist outside the United States and is Unitarian Universalism the same all over? Interview someone in your congregation who is involved in UU activities at the national or international level.

CHOICE D

General Assembly (GA) is both a conference and a group of people: it is an annual week-long gathering of UUs whose congregations belong to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA member congregations are primarily, although not exclusively, in the United States. UUs in other parts of the world have different organizations). At this meeting, representatives of UU congregations serve as delegates: they meet to consider and vote on resolutions brought to national attention. Attendees trade information and resources with others working on similar projects in other regions of the

country. This conference also includes worship services, lectures, and other events that help people grow spiritually. GAs may also focus on such issues as the environment, justice and civil rights, education, sexual orientation and gender identity, and how our collective movement behaves—how we collaborate and what we stand for as a group. Interview someone from your congregation or district, preferably someone who has served as a delegate, and learn about his or her GA experience. Find Out how your congregation prepares its delegates. Visit the [General Assembly webpage](#) and “attend” the last meeting by viewing some of the recorded materials. What resolutions were passed and not passed last year? Where and when is the next General Assembly? Find Out what youth activities are included at GA. What would you need to do if you wanted to attend a GA in the next few years? How does GA relate to our 5th UU principle? 5th UU principle: “The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.”

CHOICE E

Examine an issue of the UUA’s magazine, the *UU World*, looking at either the print copy or viewing the [latest issue online](#). Can you identify items that relate to worship? District and congregational happenings? International concerns? Youth activities? Social justice concerns? The milestones of ministers and lay leaders? How do the advertisements relate to Unitarian Universalism? Choose one of the items in the publication that interests you and share it with your advisor. Discuss how the denomination’s magazine serves the interests of the UUA and congregations, religious professionals and the laity (=“lay people” or people who are not ordained ministers).

□ 4.4 Serving the World

Unitarian Universalists, like people in other religions, live out some of their ideas of right and wrong by performing service. To explore some of the ways UUs act on their faith in the world, complete Choice A, B, C or D.

CHOICE A

Examine your congregation's programs and Make a List of the ways in which your congregation provides service. Choose a congregational service activity that interests you and Help with it. Tell others how your actions relate to your Unitarian Universalist faith and how you felt doing this service.

CHOICE B

Identify a local community group that provides service to others, perhaps one where another UU volunteers. Interview a volunteer there and ask how their volunteer work relates to personal beliefs or religious faith. Then, help that group with its work. Write a thank you note or email thank you after the interview and mention two or three things you learned from the interview and/or from your experience providing service.

CHOICE C

The [Unitarian Universalist Service Committee](#) (UUSC) and the [UU United Nations Office](#) (UU-UNO) are two structures through which our denomination expresses its values in the world. Find Out when each of these organizations started, what their

relationship to the UUA is, and what they do. For the UUSC, find out how this group is different from other religions' mission groups. For the UU-UNO, find out what an "NGO" is and how NGOs relate to the United Nations. Find Out how individual UUs can participate in the work of these two groups and, if you wish, participate in one of their activities. Record or explain your thoughts and findings.

CHOICE D

Concern for the world as a natural environment motivates many Unitarian Universalists to service. Look Up *environmentalism* and consider how it relates to the UU Seven Principles. Identify two people in your congregation who work on environmental issues and Find Out what they do. Participate in one of their projects if possible. Research an environmental issue of interest to you to find out what the problem is and how volunteers and professionals help to protect the environment. Share your findings with others.

GIRL SCOUT LINK D: What projects have you or other Girl Scouts done to protect the environment? Describe your own experience or Research the activities of other Girl Scouts. Which parts of the Girl Scout Law relate to environmentalism? Record your thoughts in your journal or online, or express them through creatively through art, music, poetry, video or other means.

4.5 Religious Guidelines and Problem-solving

Choose A or B.

Explore the Tapestry of Faith youth program [Virtue Ethics](#). Talk with your youth group, youth advisor, or religious educator about introducing this resource in your congregation.

CHOICE A

Many people bring their religious values and beliefs into their work lives as well as into their volunteer service. Ask two UU adults how being a Unitarian Universalist affects the way they do their jobs or even what line of work they chose. Ask how being a UU affects the decisions they make, their leadership style, and/or how they interact with others at work. Find Out if religious conflicts ever come up at work and how they handle them.

CHOICE B

How do your religious values guide you as you face difficult decisions or solve problems in your everyday life? Consider conflicts with friends and family, ethical dilemmas, and other choices. Have you ever looked to religious resources for guidance or inspiration? Share your thoughts and experiences with a UU adult and with a peer (UU or not) and Ask that person about how they apply their religious or moral values to everyday living.

- *GIRL SCOUT LINK E: Consider how the Girl Scout Law influences members decision-making. Ask two other Girl Scouts (or Girl Scout Alumnae) how they apply the Girl Scout Law to everyday life. Share your own experience with them. Consider whether one's understanding of the Girl Scout Law changes as one*

grows older. Record your thoughts and findings in your journal or online or express them creatively.

MY PROMISE, MY FAITH INTERSECTION: Girl Scout Link E can be related to any part of the Girl Scout Law to complete My Promise, My Faith Requirement #2. If you record your thoughts and findings using one of the more artistic options listed in My Promise, My Faith Requirement #4, you can complete that requirement too.

□ 4.6 Ritual and Worship

“Worship” comes from the Anglo-Saxon (Old English) word “wearðscipe” (pronounced “way-ARTH-shippa, with a hard “th” like in “them”) which translates as “worth-ship.”

Basically, it means to give expression to one’s values. Ritual, on the other hand, means symbolic action, often but not always traditional or repetitive, which creates an experience and expression of one’s beliefs and values. People often use rituals to worship. To explore how these two terms operate outside of Sunday services, select and complete Choice A or B.

CHOICE A

Find Out what worshipful activities your congregation sponsors other than the Sunday services. Consider, perhaps, activities that answer the spiritual needs of groups with particular spiritual leanings, such as UU pagans or UU Christians, a meditation group, or worship that is part of youth events. If possible, Participate in one of these activities. Also, Find Out whether there are any worship or ritual aspects of the committee meetings, small group or covenant group meetings, social justice or service projects, or

religious education classes in your congregation. Record your thoughts and findings and find a way to Share them.

CHOICE B

Individuals often conduct their own daily spiritual rituals such as prayer, meditation, “saying grace” at meals, maintaining a shrine at home, worshipping through art or nature, communicating about spirituality on the Internet, greeting others in a special way, or other activities. Identify two UUs with active ritual lives and Ask them about their practices. Try one of their activities yourself or Create your own ritual and try it out. Find a way to Express what you learn from the experience.

□ 4.7 Social Diversity and Inclusivity

Unitarian Universalist values lead congregations to strive to become evermore welcoming and inclusive of people with different religious backgrounds and beliefs, ethnicities, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and socioeconomic classes. Identify which of the 7 Principles relate to our concern with diversity and inclusivity, then complete Choice A, B, or C to further explore one type of inclusivity.

CHOICE A

Research what your congregation and the UUA are doing to welcome people of all classes, “races,” and ethnicities. What groups have formed to work on discrimination based on race, class, and ethnicity? What projects are currently underway and what resources are available? Record and share your findings.

Explore [Be the Change! Youth Multiculturalism and Antiracism Project](#). Talk with your youth group, youth advisor, or religious educator about introducing this resource in your congregation.

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK F: Girl Scouts of the USA likewise has a long history of ever-increasing diversity and inclusion. Research how Girl Scouting has found ways to serve the needs of all girls. Consider how supporting cultural diversity might be different in different communities or parts of the country. What does your troop/group and local council do to be welcoming to all girls? Record your thoughts and findings and find a way to Share them.*

CHOICE B

Unitarian Universalism stands out as a religion that welcomes and embraces of diversity in the areas of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. Find Out what a congregation must do to be designated a UU Welcoming Congregation. Is your congregation a Welcoming Congregation or working on becoming one? What are the steps to increase awareness and inclusion *after* becoming a Welcoming Congregation?

If possible, ask someone who has been involved in equality and justice activities for people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions what has been most difficult about the work and what positive results have occurred. .

Peruse the UUA website to see what resources on these topics are available for teens.

Record your thoughts and findings and find a way to Share them.

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK G: Like Unitarian Universalism, Girl Scouts of the USA has become more inclusive of people with diverse sexual orientations, gender*

identities, and gender expressions. Research Girl Scouts of the USA's stances on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression issues. Notice how the position statements are carefully worded to communicate with members (and their parents). Why would Girl Scouts have to choose its words so carefully? How does the diversity of Girl Scouts of the USA families compare with diversity of Unitarian Universalist families in terms of politics, religion, ethnicity, and social class? Record your thoughts and findings and find a way to Share them.

CHOICE C

As a society, we have become more aware of the diversity of people's physical, mental, and emotional abilities. Some people who would be excluded from opportunities in the past are now included with or without accommodations—sometimes all that's needed is for people to be more open-minded about different abilities. Look Up the biography of Dorothea Dix and find out what she did to change how people of her day responded to people with mental injuries and illnesses. Find Out what "universal design" means. What does your congregation, school, or community do to make its space and activities accessible to people with a variety of abilities? What can you do to support the effort? If you or someone you know well has a disability or learning difference, how can you use your special knowledge and experience to break down the barriers? Record your thoughts and findings and find a way to Share them.

□ 4.8 How Outsiders See Unitarian Universalists

Most people in the world are not Unitarian Universalists. In fact, even though our denomination is in many ways very “American” (e.g. because of its use of the democratic process and its emphasis on freedom of religious thought), most Americans do not know much about Unitarian Universalists. Many have never heard of it, some have very limited knowledge or misperceptions, and some confuse us with other groups. Many call us “Unitarians” although we’ve been Unitarian *Universalists* for half a century! With your advisor, minister, or other UU adult, Discuss your experiences interacting with people who do not understand your religion. Practice describing your religion to others: What would you say if you only had a minute to speak? What would you add if you had more time? Would you change the wording depending on whether your audience is likely to want to become a UU or likely to think our religion is frightening? Find Out how two Unitarian Universalist adults describe their faith to others. Record your thoughts and findings and find a way to Share or express them. Check out the pamphlet [To the Point](#), where a variety of different Unitarian Universalists describe their faith.

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK H: Although Girl Scouting is well-respected in the United States, many people have very limited ideas about what Girl Scouts do and are, too. Some people think that Girl Scouts of the USA is just Boy Scouts of America for girls, or that Girl Scouts in only the 3 Cs of cookies, crafts, and camping (although GSUSA names three other Cs—courage, confidence, and character—as central to their mission). Others view Girl Scouts as self-sacrificing, super-efficient, or judgmental goody-goodies. Sometimes Girl Scouts enjoy laughing at*

outsiders' caricatures, putting references to goody-goodies and cookie sales in skits, songs, and jokes. At other times, though, the limited views feel insulting or burdensome. Another danger of these limited views is that girls who might enjoy and benefit from Girl Scouting get the mistaken impression that Girl Scouting isn't "cool" and then miss out. Discuss with your Religion in Life advisor, Girl Scout leader, or other Girl Scouts your experience with misconceptions of Girl Scouting. Compose a short description of what Girl Scouting means to you. Also, Identify a common unfair comment about Girl Scouting and Practice giving a response.

Religion in Life for Older Girls

Part Five: Issues for Girls and Young Women

As a female, a minor, and a Unitarian Universalist, you have probably already noticed that in the past—and sometimes in the present—our world has been focused on the needs, interests, and experiences of other people: males, adults, and members of the largest religions. The parts of Religion in Life for Girl Scouts you have already completed above have asked you to put your religious perspective on equal footing with other religious traditions and to explore social action in a diverse world with respect to categories other than age and gender. In this part, you will explore women’s history and other issues that concern girls and young women today.

□ 5.1 Feminism

“Feminism” can be understood as the belief that males and females should have equivalent rights and privileges, and, that, furthermore, wherever females as a category are disadvantaged, the situation must be corrected to achieve gender equity. The struggle for gender equality has given feminists—whether or not they are called “feminists”—centuries of work, with different tasks at different times for different people. In fact, feminists do not always agree on the same interpretations, actions, or strategies in a given situation. Feminists’ views may also differ according to their ethnicity, age, race, gender (yes, boys and men can be feminists!), religion, and/or social class. Find at least 3 more definitions and/or descriptions of feminism or feminists. Can you tell whether the person who created each definition of “feminism” approves of feminism or not? How? Which definitions do you like the most and least? Why? Who are some

famous people and people you know who could be called “feminists”? Find a way to Share your findings.

□ 5.2 Biographies of Important UU Women in History

Across the world and history, there have been some times when women have had power and prestige than at other times. For many centuries in western cultures (and also in other world cultures!), women have had less power and fewer rights than men. In the United States, a country dedicated to the democratic principle, women were not permitted to vote in federal elections until 1920. Until the twentieth century, most professions were closed or mostly closed to women. Yet, famous (and not-so-famous) Unitarian Universalist women have stepped out of the roles assigned to them to perform work that benefited and continues to benefit humankind. Some even dedicated themselves to enlarging girls’ and women’s place in the world. Choose 3 Unitarian or Universalist women (Remember, Unitarianism and Universalism did not come together until 1961!) from the list below. Don’t repeat the famous UUs you researched in 3.3:

Susan B. Anthony (Unitarian)	Lucy Stone (Unitarian)
Margaret Fuller (Unitarian)	Mary Wollstonecraft (Unitarian)
Clara Barton (Universalist)	Abigail Adams (Unitarian)
Judith Sargent Murray (Universalist)	Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (Unitarian)
Julia Ward Howe (Unitarian)	Annie Bissell Jordan Willis (Universalist)
Lydia Maria Child (Unitarian)	Hannah Jewett Powell (Universalist)
Henrietta Robins Mack Eliot (Unitarian)	Mary Livermore (Universalist)

Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (Unitarian) Louisa May Alcott (Unitarian)

Athalia Irwin (Universalist)

Eliza Tupper Wilkes (Universalist)

For each of the 3 women, Identify their contributions to society. What made them special in their day? What are we doing today that is comparable? Find a way to Share your thoughts and findings with others.

Check your congregation's library for these books, which include stories of many of these women: [*Stirring the Nation's Heart*](#) by Polly Peterson (UUA, 2010) and [*Missionaries, Builders, and Pathfinders*](#) by Gail Forsyth-Vail and Polly Peterson (UUA, 2014).

□ 5.3 Women and the Work World

Choose A or B.

CHOICE A

Even today, some religions do not permit women to be ministers (or their religion's equivalent of this spiritual leadership position). Unitarians and Universalists have had women ministers for well over a century, however. Find Out about who Elizabeth Brown Blackwell and Olympia Brown and Share your findings. Look at the "Milestones" section of a print edition of the *UU World*. What proportion of those entering the ministry today are women? How about those leaving the ministry, including retirees? Interview a woman minister and ask her whether people treat her differently than they treat male ministers. If so, how does she respond to the different treatment? Write a thank you note or email thank you after the interview and mention two or three things you learned from the interview. Keep a copy of the note for your own journal.

CHOICE B

Identify a woman who works in a field that for a long time had only (or mostly) men in it, such as science, automotive repair, the military, technology, engineering, farming, contracting (e.g. carpentry, plumbing), or government. Ask her if she ever faced discrimination in the workplace and how she responded to it. Invite her to talk about both obvious and subtle discrimination. Subtle indications that the profession is geared toward males may include leadership patterns, expected dress/uniforms, social events, and assumptions about family responsibilities. In which situations does she adapt to the masculine norm and in which situations does the norm change because she is present? How has her profession changed over time in relationship to gender issues? Find a way to Record and Share your findings.

5.4 Beyond “tomboys”...

Have you ever participated in activities which other people associate more with boys than with girls? Recall and Reflect on those experiences. (If you can't think of any instance in your own life, think of some other girl or woman who people thought acted “like a man” or “like a boy” for this exercise.) Did people approve, disapprove, or have a mixed reaction to your behavior? How were you treated and how did you respond? Would you do anything differently if the same sort of situation came up again? Because girls and women in the United States generally don't face discrimination that is as obvious as in the past, do you think it is easier or harder to talk to your male friends

about sexism than it was for girls in generations past? Role Play telling a male friend about a situation that is unfair to girls and/or women.

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK I: Examine Girl Scout programming and publications to see how GSUSA encourages girls to explore fields and activities that were closed to them in the past. Which parts of the Girl Scout Law and GSUSA's Mission support efforts to get fair treatment for girls and women? Record and Share your findings.*

□ 5.5 Sisterhood in Unitarian Universalist Communities

Find Out what the [Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation](#) (UUWF) is and what it does. What other groups at the national, district, or congregational level involve mostly or only women—either officially or unofficially? Consider interest groups (e.g. needlecraft groups, the women's sections in the choir), service projects, the committees that plan social gatherings, and religious education (e.g. committees, teachers, and classes such as *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven*).

[Cakes for the Queen of Heaven](#) is an adult curriculum that looks at the place of women in Western religious history and helps participants explore feminine aspects of the Divine.

When are groups all female by intention and for a purpose? When a group is not intentionally all female, why do you suppose it is all female in practice? Interview two women who value female-focused spiritual resources, and find out why these resources are important to them. Consider how a religious group can balance the benefits of single-sex programming with the concern for inclusivity and gender equity. Write thank

you notes or email thank you to the women you interviewed, and mention two or three things that you have learned.

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK J: Although men are welcome to volunteer in Girl Scout leadership teams that include women, the adult membership of GSUSA is still predominantly female. Talk with a female adult volunteer and ask her what she values about her friendships and working relationships with other adult female members. If possible, Find a man who is a member of GSUSA and Ask him what his experience in this female-focused organization is like. Record and Share your findings.*

□ 5.6 Challenges for Youth in Contemporary Life

People face many challenges in their everyday lives and some challenges seem to change or surface when one reaches adolescence. Select and complete three of the five choices that follow.

CHOICE A

Stress: What is *stress* and how can you manage it? Find out what the body does in reaction to stress, some common stress triggers, and some strategies for keeping yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy in times of stress. Talk with an adult in your family and with your advisor (one conversation with each) about stresses you face and how you respond to them. Consider how your experiences have changed since you were younger. Ask the two adults how their stressful experiences during adolescence compare and contrast with yours. Find Out what resources are available

for teens under stress. Express and Share what you learned through art, music, poetry, a blog post, or some other means.

CHOICE B

Sex and romance: Even though children talk about romance as early as kindergarten (“he likes you!”), issues of romance and sexuality become particularly important during teen years when people are beginning to form their adult identities, may start to date in groups or pairs, are physically able to conceive and bear children, and in some cultures are expected to commit to a marriage partner. The intensity of this period can be exciting, fun, frightening, exhausting, and sometimes just plain awkward and embarrassing.

Determining who one is attracted to and deciding whether and how to act on that attraction is not simple, because so many other questions are implied and intertwined:

- What is my romantic and/or sexual orientation, and do I have the support I need to be happy, healthy, and safe in disclosing my orientation to my family and friends? How can I support friends who choose to disclose romantic and/or sexual orientations that may not match their families' or friends' expectations?
- What is my gender identity, and do I have the support I need to be happy, healthy, and safe in disclosing my identity to my family and friends? How can I support friends who choose to disclose gender identities that may not match their families' or friends' expectations?
- What are my family's rules and/or expectations for teens and romance?

- How are my relationships with friends and family affected if I am in a romantic relationship?
- What activities and values are important to me and do I want someone special to share them with?
- How much and what kinds of sexual activity am I comfortable with and do I want to have? What is safe, healthy, and wise for me?
- What should I do if someone I am interested in pressures me to go beyond my comfort zone or limits in terms of commitment or sexual activity?

Talk with a parent and one other adult in your congregation about their experience with romantic and sexual issues at your age; what do they wish they had known or done differently? What helped them face those issues back then? Find Out what resources can help you deal with those issues--don't forget about special UU resources, such as the Our Whole Lives (OWL) curriculum or other youth group programs. Record your thoughts and findings in your journal, to the degree you are comfortable doing so.

[Our Whole Lives](#) has programs for both junior high youth- grades 7-9- and high school youth- grades 10-12. Are these programs offered at your congregation?

CHOICE C

Substance use and abuse: During their teen years, many people are pressured to try drugs, alcohol, and/or tobacco. Using reliable sources, Find Out the risks involved in their use (consider legal, safety, health, reputation, financial, emotional, and relational risks and costs). Why and how might other people try to pressure or trick you into drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use? Role Play possible responses to unwanted invitations

involving drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Look Up organizations that help people resist these sorts of pressures, and organizations that help people deal with addictions and/or loved ones' addictions (such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or Al Anon) . Find Out if your congregation sponsors any such groups or where they meet locally, and find a way to Share this information. Talk with your minister, religious educator, or other adult in your congregation to learn how people use spirituality to help them recover from addictions.

CHOICE D

Time management: Young people, as well as adults, seem to have far more activities and relationships competing for their time than they used to. For instance, many teens have blended families with more than one household to manage and relationships with larger extended families to maintain. In addition, the worlds of school, work, and social relationships come home with us electronically each day, demanding attention through social media (such as Instagram, Facebook, and Tumblr) and cell phones. Even classes can be extended into the evening with on-line requirements.

Take Stock of how you spend your time now, including time spent at school, doing school work, socializing with friends in person or on the phone, doing school work and other things on cell phones and computers, helping around the house, taking care of yourself, spending time with immediate and extended family, earning money, doing hobbies or sports, relaxing peacefully, and sleeping. Make a list. Then, Write the number 1 by the things that are obligations, 2 by the things that are not obligations but are very important to you, and 3 by things that are not high priorities for you. Are you able to fulfill all your obligations as well as take care of yourself? Is there anything you'd

like to have more time for or anything new you'd like to try but don't have the time to do? Consider what you would like to change. When looking to make more time, look to see if there's anything you can do more efficiently, things that seem to eat up time, and things you marked as 3. Where can you trim and reallocate time? Do your Unitarian Universalist values offer any help in making those decisions? Ask two other people, including at least one adult, to give you some feedback on your plan; see if they have any ideas for time savers or arranging priorities.

CHOICE E

The power of electronics: Extremely rapid growth in technology over the past 25 years has given us many more opportunities for accessing information and interacting with others. Unfortunately, these advances also have their dangers and downsides. Identify Strategies for dealing with four of the following pitfalls:

- repetitive stress injuries due to computer usage (**HINT:** Look up *ergonomics*)
- addictive behaviors related to cell phones, the internet, video games, and shopping
- identity theft
- viruses
- hoaxes
- predators on the internet
- cell phone rudeness
- bullying using electronics
- violence

- recovery after a computer "crash" or malfunction
- debt.

For which of these pitfalls is the solution technical? Which require you to exercise your Unitarian Universalist values?

Examine your own practices and identify what you can do to make and keep your computer use beneficial, safe, and enjoyable. Discuss your thoughts and findings with at least one adult and one peer.

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK K: Peruse GSUSA's and WAGGGS's websites to find out how these organizations approach some of the issues listed above. Are there other issues they tackle that are not listed above? In particular, look at the [World Thinking Day](#) website and look at the themes explored during the last few years and the resources provided on the website. Are there differences in some of the challenges that face girls in different countries and cultures? Record and Share your findings.*

5.7 Body Image and Self Esteem

Although males have started to feel more pressure to look good and make their bodies extremely thin and muscular, girls and women still face higher expectations to create and maintain the unrealistic ideal of a curvy yet very thin body shape. The pressure for girls and women can lead to problems with physical and mental health, such as malnutrition, dental problems, eating disorders, anxiety, and depression. Expectations related to fashion trends are high as well, and can pose challenges. For example, many fashions available—especially those in teen sizes—sexualize girls and young women,

thus affecting how others see and treat them; prolonged wearing of high heels damages feet; tanning and wearing make-up may damage the skin, as well as being expensive and time consuming. Yet, shouldn't girls and women be allowed to create their own images and express themselves in a variety of ways? Absolutely!

Explore your power to make your own choices by following these three steps:

STEP ONE:

Monitor the media for a couple of days: notice how girls and women are shown and evaluated on TV, radio, and websites, and in films, magazines, and advertising. Are people of all body shapes and appearances treated equally? Notice the sorts of things people say in everyday conversation to and about girls and women regarding their looks, and then Compare them to what is said to boys and men about their looks. How are the expectations alike and different?

STEP TWO:

Find Out what the experts say about body image, fashion, and health (physical, mental, and emotional). If you have participated in any of the Our Whole Lives (OWL) programs, think back to what you learned about gender, self-expression, and relationships there. What can girls and young women do to resist damaging practices and expectations? Find Out what family rules and guidelines your peers and you must follow regarding clothing, jewelry, and make-up. What choices are open to you along the spectrum between avoiding all risky appearance choices and fully participating in today's norms for female fashion, however inappropriate or dangerous?

STEP THREE:

Consider how girls and women express their femaleness in different ways. Knowing that you don't have to choose just one way of presenting yourself all the time, answer these questions in your journal:

- What sorts of body image and fashion choices would you like to make for yourself?
- How might your choices change as you grow older? Consider how your family rules, your roles, and your body might change.
- How are people of different ages, genders, races, ethnicities, religions, etc. likely to view you based on appearance and how might that affect how you are treated?
- How will you show your inner self through your outward appearance?

□ 5.8 Opportunities for Youth

In 5.6 and 5.7, you explored some difficult issues that face and even endanger us.

Now. Let's focus on positive opportunities. Find Out what opportunities and resources your congregation and the Unitarian Universalist Association have for youth. Look For these possibilities as you conduct your search: youth groups on the local, regional, and national levels; events such as conferences and seminars on those three levels; activities youth can do alongside adults (e.g. serve on committees; join interest and/or service groups; lead worship; hold office; take classes; join discussions); youth activities at General Assembly or district conferences; the [UU College of Social Justice](#); UU camps and conference centers in your area and beyond internships. Be sure to talk to

others (e.g. your director of religious education, your minister) as well as conduct a web search. Make a list and Star the ones you find most interesting. Choose at least one starred item and find out how you could make it happen. Share your findings with others.

The [Blue Boat](#) blog presents information on events, opportunities, leadership roles and resources for youth and young adult Unitarian Universalists (UUs) as well as stories and opinion of and about UUs and those who work with them. Blue Boat also reports on the future of faith, social justice and other issues and trends of interest to UUs and other progressively minded people of all ages.

□ *GIRL SCOUT LINK L: Think beyond your own troop/group's activities. What activities and opportunities are available to Older Girls in Girl Scouting (Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors)? Consider the following: camps (staff and participant); world centers; conferences; activities and on-going roles working with younger girls; special trips; committees (e.g. council-wide or national planning at your age level); participating in council or national leadership (e.g. being a delegate or board member). Make a list and Star the ones you find most interesting. Choose at least one starred item and find out how you could make it happen. Share your findings with another girl or adult Girl Scout.*

Religion in Life for Older Girls

Part Six: Wrapping It Up

W.1 Follow Up with Action

Look back over all you have learned and achieved in this program. Now take one aspect of this program one step further into action. For example, you could

- write a letter to the editor of your local paper about an issue that is important to you
- visit a religious education class (any age, even adult!)
- get involved in a social justice project or program
- serve as a lay leader in a worship service
- take part in a project to help girls and/or women
- organize or help organize an interfaith event

W.2 Share Your Experience

Share with someone else in your congregation your experience with Religion in Life.

This could be by informally talking, through a newsletter or website article, on a poster or slide show during coffee hour, or even by talking to the whole congregation as part of an awards ceremony.

MY PROMISE, MY FAITH INTERSECTION: This requirement can be adapted to any of the lines in the Girl Scout Law to fulfill My Promise, My Faith requirement 5 by choosing to share your My Promise, My Faith experience too.

Congratulations on finishing this program—now celebrate your success! If you are to be formally presented with your award in you congregation, consider inviting some of your Girl Scout friends.