



Religious Education (RE) Highlights Jan. 3, 2021

Quick Notes

Welcome to 2021! This week, we marked the ending of one year and the beginning of another with our Fire Communion ritual of burning the prayer cards from our prayer stands. Next week we will begin our new theme of consolation, but we've got one last week of kindness to add, in hopes of seeing more of that this year!



RE Facebook Group

We invite you to join the **private Facebook group for PUUC RE**. We will share additional resources - quotes, pictures, and recommendations on stories that match the monthly theme. (www.facebook.com/groups/553574108531044?should_open_composer=true)

Each week we will be sharing ways for you and your child(ren) to connect to our Unitarian Universalist values at home. We are including a lot of information in our newsletters as a way to provide options so you may choose what works best for your family. As long as the past newsletters remain in your inbox there is the opportunity to return to them again and again.



Shared Plate Partner — Crisis Assistance Ministry

The mission of Crisis Assistance Ministry is to provide assistance and advocacy for people in financial crisis, helping them move toward self-sufficiency. Learn more about Crisis Assistance Ministry by visiting their [website](#).

The Shared Plate partner for the month receives 50% of undesignated/non-pledge offerings. You can support our Shared Plate partners even when we aren't meeting in person by going to the website and clicking "plate collection" from the drop-down menu under "fund" <https://onrealm.org/piedmontuuchurch/-/give/now>. Thank you for your generosity!



Exploration for Youth

perspective.”

“Emotional empathy is when you quite literally feel the other person’s emotions alongside them, as if you had ‘caught’ the emotions. Emotional empathy is also known as ‘personal distress’ or ‘emotional contagion’. This is closer to the usual understanding of the word ‘empathy,’ but more emotional.”

“Compassionate empathy is what we usually understand by empathy: feeling

“Cognitive empathy, also known as ‘perspective-taking,’ is not really what most of us would think of as empathy at all. Cognitive empathy is basically being able to put yourself into someone else’s place, and see their

someone's pain, and taking action to help. ...Compassionate empathy is consistent with what we usually understand by compassion. Like sympathy, compassion is about feeling concern for someone, but with an additional move towards action to mitigate the problem."

The focus of compassionate empathy, with an emphasis on action, is aligned with and reinforcing of kindness. Shannon L. Alder writes, "Kindness is love in action, not feeling emotions or thoughts of empathy only. Kindness is doing!"

Try to Be Kinder by George Saunders

I'd say, as a goal in life, you could do worse than: Try to be kinder. In seventh grade, this new kid joined our class. In the interest of confidentiality, her name will be "Ellen." Ellen was small, shy. She wore these blue cat's-eye glasses that, at the time, only old ladies wore. When nervous, which was pretty much always, she had a habit of taking a strand of hair into her mouth and chewing on it.

So, she came to our school and our neighborhood, and was mostly ignored, occasionally teased ("Your hair taste good?" — that sort of thing). I could see this hurt her. I still remember the way she'd look after such an insult: eyes cast down, a little gut-kicked, as if, having just been reminded of her place in things, she was trying, as much as possible, to disappear. After a while, she'd drift away, hair-strand still in her mouth. At home, I imagined, after school, her mother would say, you know: "How was your day, sweetie?" and she'd say, "Oh, fine." And her mother would say, "Making any friends?" and she'd go, "Sure, lots."

Sometimes I'd see her hanging around alone in her front yard, as if afraid to leave it. And then — they moved. That was it. No tragedy, no big final hazing. One day she was there, next day she wasn't. End of story.

Now, why do I regret that? Why, forty-two years later, am I still thinking about it? Relative to most of the other kids, I was actually pretty nice to her. I never said an unkind word to her. In fact, I sometimes even (mildly) defended her. But still. It bothers me. So, here's something I know to be true, although it's a little corny, and I don't quite know what to do with it:

What I regret most in my life are failures of kindness. Those moments when another human being was there, in front of me, suffering, and I responded ... sensibly. Reservedly. Mildly. Or, to look at it from the other end of the telescope: Who, in your life, do you remember most fondly, with the most undeniable feelings of warmth? Those who were kindest to you, I bet. But kindness, it turns out, is hard — it starts out all rainbows and puppy dogs, and expands to include . . . well, everything .

Exploration for Children

Crossing the Finish Line Together

Based on a true story which happened at the 1976 Special Olympics in Seattle, Washington.



Years ago, at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants lined up at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the sound of the starting gun, they all started off in their own way, making their best effort to run down the track toward the finish line. That is, except for the one young boy who stumbled soon after his start, tumbled to the ground and began to cry. Two of the other racers, hearing the cries of the boy who fell, slowed down and looked back at him. Then without hesitation, they turned around and began running in the other direction—toward the injured boy.

While the other contestants struggled to make it to the finish line, the two who had turned around to run in the other direction reached for the boy and helped him to his feet. All three of them then linked arms and together they walked to the finish line. By the time the trio reached the end, everyone in the stands was standing and cheering, some with tears rushing down their faces. Even though by turning back and helping the boy who fell, they lost their own chance to win the race, they all had smiles on their faces because they knew they had done the right thing.



Quick Links

Websites:

Piedmont UU Church website: www.puuc.org

[Piedmont UU Church Blog](#)

[Piedmont UU Church Calendar](#)

[Piedmont UU Church on Facebook](#)

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