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My Initial

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ALPHABET
Please read the Overview before using this Plan.

ALL ABOUT US gives the children an idea of what will be happening each time that the group meets, by involving them in preparing the space. The format today differs slightly from that used in subsequent sessions.

Try to have all of the teachers involved with this curriculum present for this session.

MATERIALS:

- Name tags, stickers, markers
- Paper, markers to draw body
- Calendar for church year
- Covers for Notebooks, if they are to be used, and large cut out or draw letters for the covers.
- Affirmations chart (Introduction, page 4)
- Snacks: Not letter specific in this session, but have children identify the letter that starts the items used for snacks.

GETTING STARTED Start in a circle or around a table.

Welcome. As each person says his or her name, respond with “welcome (name)” and make sure that the name is on the group list, with how the person wants to be called (full name, nickname).

(The group list can become the “We Are Here” Chart that is noted in Session on Anthony under “attendance” and “absence.”)

Explain that the "welcome chair" is an empty chair (except for a stuffed animal or welcome sign) to remember someone from the group who is not present and for someone who has not joined yet. A person who comes for the first time or to visit may sit in the chair, or they can have their own chair and still leave a chair empty.

Have each person make a *nametag*. One way to make nametags is to write the child's name (at least the first name) and allow him or her to color or put on stickers.

Talk about their initials as special for them, even if

some people have the same initials as others. When we talk about specific letters, the initials of the people with that letter will be noted throughout the year.

Talk about *being here at church*, such as the name of the church and how they got to church (with whom, means of getting there). They can make this space special for themselves each week, starting today.

Special space for special things. Invite children to bring pictures or objects that start with the letter that they will be talking about, starting with the next session. (This is an invitation; bringing things is not a requirement for participation.) Set aside a space on a table or shelf for these items. Set a sign there for "Special Space" (In the session on A, this space will be dedicated as an altar, or special space for special things.)

Have the church name in large letters or on a banner. Put the names of the children on the banner by their initials. This can be by first initial, or repeated for both initials. Put the names that do not fit the letters of the church name around the name, so that every person’s name is entered as belonging to the community.

SPECIAL PEOPLE. Each session, a Unitarian Universalist will be introduced, either from history or from their own church. The special people for today are everyone in the group. This is a time to get to know the children and leaders better. A "We are Special Chart" or "Favorites Chart" can be made, the questions can just be asked, or this can be a game. Following is a sample chart, but design the questions so that you will discover what you want to know about the participants. (Add the names of the leaders to the chart.) For example:

Favorites	Name	Name	Name
Kind of ice cream			
Animal			
Pets			
Color			

Food			
Game			

Alternative activity:

Divide the space into two parts, with a real or imaginary line dividing the parts. Ask questions that give two choices or yes/no responses, with one answer on one side and the other on the other side. If both answers apply, the person can stand between the two parts. Sample questions:

- Do you like cats or dogs?
- Which do you like better, ice cream or pizza?
Ask people in each section that their favorite kind is.
- Do you like blue or red better? Green or yellow, etc.

Affirmations. The Affirmations are ideas for how we live. Read the chart to the children, and mention the ones that have been used during this session. This chart is a reference. Explain that the left side is the way the adults say the Affirmations in the church service, and that the right side is a way that they may express the thoughts of the Affirmation. Discuss Affirmations that have been part of the discussion so far, like

- “Everyone is important.” This affirmation can be placed where the nametags are kept.
- “Church is a place where we can learn together.” This affirmation can be put with the church name.

A-B-C

Animal corner. Each session, they are invited to think about animals that start with the letter of the week, including domestic and common animals, and endangered species. If pictures or animal figures can be kept throughout the year, this can be developed as a zoo area, which will be the focus of Session Z. The Affirmation of “We take care of our world” can be placed over this space.

Note: If there is a problem with time, this can be included under Session A.

Body. Taking a large sheet of newsprint, have a child

lie down or stand against the paper on a wall or door so that the body can be traced. Each week, a part of the body that starts with that letter will be noted and labeled. We will talk about the function of that body part.

Note: If there is a problem with time, this can be included under Session B, making sure to add the body parts from Session A at that time.

Calendar. Have a calendar for the entire church year, including summer months. This can be hung so that the entire year is visible, or just expose a month at a time. Note today's date. The calendar can also be used to note what letters will be considered on which days that the group meets. (Birthdays can be added in session B. Barton)

CLOSING: Gather in a circle. "We give thanks for being together. We have shared and learned about our space, our church and ourselves. May we leave in love and peace. Next week we will meet again. Our letter will be _____ and our leader(s) will be _____."

Mention the letter for next week, who will be leading the session, or anything special coming up.

VARIATIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

NAMES: Have people tell how they got their name, such as other people in the family with that name. If possible, have a listing of names and possible meanings, such as name books.

Also, have each person say their name and a positive characteristic about themselves that starts with the same letter as the name:
Energetic Ernie, Happy Helen, Kind Kim, Singing Sarah, Bouncy Becca, Cheerful Cathy, etc.

NAME OF THE CHURCH: If there have been names previously, what have they been? What does the name mean now?

Walk around the building. Where is the name of the church? How would someone who is looking for a Unitarian Universalist Church know that the

congregation is meeting here, or what time activities occur? Is there a sign? Is there anything to tell them that this church is different from other churches (such as the Flaming Chalice symbol or Wayside Pulpit -- sayings that are sometimes placed outside of Unitarian Universalist churches)?

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