



From UU Historical Society web

James Freeman Clarke

CHURCH IS A PLACE WHERE WE LEARN
TOGETHER.



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

C Letter C introduces James Freeman Clarke, some things about church services, and the symbol of the chalice.

MATERIALS: Construction paper Letter C with hole punched in top, yarn for necklace
Pictures of churches, if possible, with pews that were boxes with doors (New England)
Construction paper, pattern for Chalice, hole punch, yarn; or small flowerpots and glue.
Pictures of cats in various poses for "Cat Statues"
Snacks-- carrots, crackers, celery, cheese (from cow)

GETTING STARTED:

Welcome. After each person says his or her name, the group responds, "Welcome, (name)." For a child who is attending for the first time this year, add name to the letters that have been posted and to the attendance sheet, and make a nametag during or after the session. Leave a seat for someone who is not here today or as an invitation for others to join the group.

The Letter of the Day:

- Talk about the Letter.
- Give the Letter Necklace to a person with that initial.
- Talk about the things that the children have brought for the Letter, and/or Letter Bag.

Put the things related to the letter in the Special Place

SPECIAL PERSON: James Freeman Clarke
(April 4, 1810-June 8, 1888)

James Freeman Clarke was a minister of a new church in Boston. He wanted this church to be different. A church is what we call our places where we come to worship—another C word.

When he grew up in New England, people paid for their seats or pews (benches). In some churches of that time, the pews actually had doors on them. (This was partially to keep out

the drafts in the winter.) But you could have your seat only if you could pay for it, and you sat in the same seat every time you came to church. If you could not pay for a seat, there was a separate place for you to sit. James wanted everyone to be able to have a seat in his church, without having to pay for it, so no seats were sold in his church.

Do children sit in the same seats every time they come to church or to children's chapel? Even if they do, do they like having the choice?

When people paid for seats, the money was used to run the church, like buy fuel and pay the minister. We still need money to run the church, but we give money to the church, like we do now with the morning collection (offering).

Briefly talk about collection in terms that apply to your own church setting, like in the morning worship, or in children's worship. Children seeing people giving money is a way of teaching about financial support of the faith community.

Something else was different about James' church. When he lived, the minister was the one who talked in the service. Music -- like singing -- was done by professionals. The congregation -- like you and me -- had to be quiet all during the service and listen to the minister and the musicians, but we couldn't sing ourselves. James Freeman Clarke started to have the congregation sing the hymns and to read with the minister, in what we call responsive readings. He wanted his church to be a "church of the people."

Discuss parts of the service where people take part, such as lighting the chalice, singing, responsive reading. This includes how children participate in children's worship/chapel.

Because of James Freeman Clarke, we all have a part in church services.

AFFIRMATION: *Church is a place where we learn together.*

THE LETTER C IN THE CHURCH

Chalice: One of the symbols that we use in our churches starts with C-- the chalice. The chalice is shaped like a fancy glass or cup. Chalice means a cup that is used for holy purposes. We use our chalice to hold a candle or oil. And we light the chalice to help us come into worship. The chalice and candle or oil have been used for many, many years as symbols of worship, even before there were Unitarians or Universalists!

Talk about how a chalice is used in the church and children's worship. Do children have an opportunity to light the chalice?

Have each child make a chalice. Make a chalice for the room.

PATTERNS FOR CHALICES

Paper:

- Draw and cut chalice with flame to desired size. Punch hole in the flame.
- Cut yarn long enough for a necklace.
- Put yarn through the hole in the flame.
- Tie ends of the yarn together.

Flower pots:

Small clay/pottery or plastic pots that have detachable bottoms can be used. Detach the bottoms, turn the pot over, put the bottom on the top as the chalice part. These can be glued together. Put a candle into the chalice. If the candles are to be lit, the pottery pots are safer. The pots can be decorated.

Have pictures of chalices that can be colored.

Child. This is one of the most important words in for church. Leaders, sing or read the words to #338 "I Seek the Spirit of a Child" in *Singing The Living Tradition* for yourselves in preparation. Tell the group why you are spending time with

them, and their importance in the church community.

Camera: Take pictures of the group, the church, and their room. (If pictures are displayed, follow the congregation's policy regarding identification of children.)

A-B-C

Animals: camel, cat, chicken, chimpanzee, cow, coyote, chickadee

Body parts (add to Body Picture): chest, chin, cheek

Calendar: Christmas

- Note the date of the session and any special events for the day, including birthdays.
- Note items beginning with that letter
- Note events between today and the next session, including birthdays.

CLOSING: Gather around the Special Place where the things related to the letter have been placed. " We give thanks for the Letter C. We have shared and learned about special people and animals and ourselves and our church. May we leave in love and peace. Next week we will meet again. Our letter will be ____ and our leader(s) will be ____." Make sure that people take home things that need to go.

VARIATIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Story of the UUSC and the Flaming Chalice as the symbol. This story can be found in various curricula, such as the story by Rev. Margaret Gooding in the UUA curriculum, *Around the Church, Around the Year*. This story was used with permission in *UU Principles and Parenting*, Zidowecki

"The Flaming Chalice" by Rev. Margaret Gooding

The story is set in Europe during WW II.

Nicolette and Jean-Pierre were cold and hungry. When their mother had heard that

the soldiers were coming, she and Grandmere Lucie had bundled up food, clothing, and blankets and the four of them had set off with other people who were escaping from the town. They were refugees, people with no home, looking for a place to live until the war was over.

Now, after a week, the food was gone. It had started to rain, and the road was turning to mud. Everyone felt miserable and scared. As it grew dark, they moved into the woods to find a place to sleep under the branches of the trees.

Suddenly, they heard a truck rumbling down the road. Nicolette, Jean-Pierre, Mama, and Grandmere peeked out between the branches, afraid the truck might be full of soldiers. But when the truck stopped, and Mama saw the flame and circle painted on the sides, she said, "Come quickly, I have heard of these people. They will help us."

The people in the trucks were members of the Unitarian Service Committee. They distributed bread, cheese and hot soup to everyone. They drove the refugees to a town far away, to a building whose door had the same sign of the flame and the circle on it.

Inside the building it was warm. There was food, cots to sleep on, and good blankets. It was crowded with refugees, but no one seemed to mind. The Unitarian Service Committee people were friendly and kind. Nicolette, Jean Pierre, Mama, and Grandmere Lucie stayed for four weeks. They then went to live with Grandmere's brother in a safer place.

When the war was over, Nicolette and Jean-Pierre's father came home from the army. Reunited, the family returned to their village and rebuilt their house. Long afterward, they often thought about the truck and the building with the sign of the flame and the circle.