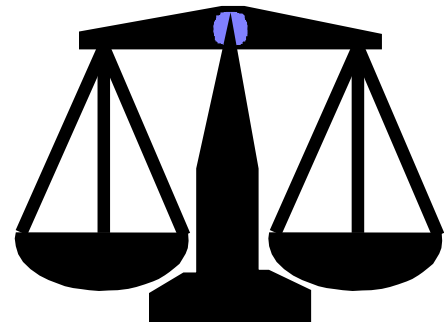




Helen Hunt Jackson

WE MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE
FOR EVERYONE.



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ALPHABET

Please read Overview before using this Plan.

J j Letter J introduces Helen Jackson and the treatment of Native Americans or First Nations peoples.

MATERIALS: Construction paper with hole punched in top, yarn for necklace
Snacks—Juice, jelly, jam

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 an empty chair for someone who is not present or for someone who has not joined the group yet.

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 grab bag.

SPECIAL PERSON: Helen Jackson (Oct. 15, 1830-Aug. 12, 1885)

Helen and Emily were best friends. They played together whenever they could. They made pretend that they were pirates or pioneers or Indians.

Indians is the name that people who came to this country from Europe gave to the people that were already living here. Now we may use the term Native American or First Nations. [See notes at end regarding term "Indian."]

Helen Jackson and Emily Dickenson pretended that they were wise women of the tribe. They fixed herbs to heal and food to nourish. They pretended to prepare for a celebration. Pretending, they wondered where the Indians were. They had lived there for thousands of years before the "white people" from Europe came. But the girls realized that

they were not there now. It seemed that everywhere the white people were, there were no Indians. Wherever the white people moved, the Indians were no longer welcome. People who were white called the Indians 'savage' and did not treat them well. Helen and Emily thought that this was not right. But they wanted some proof that Indians had lived where they now lived, in Northampton, Massachusetts. They explored all day, and they found several arrowheads. The Indians had used bows and arrows to hunt for food, before they used guns. Helen and Emily then knew that the land where they now lived had once belonged to Indians. Together, they promised that they would do something for the Indians.

When Helen Jackson and Emily Dickenson grew up, Emily Dickenson wrote poems. Helen Hunt Jackson wrote many poems and articles for newspapers and magazines. She moved to Colorado with her family, but came back to Boston in 1879 for the seventieth birthday celebration of Oliver Wendall Holmes (See H, Holmes).

While she was in Boston, she heard a lecture by Ponca Chief Standing Bear. After hearing his story, she became known as a defender of the Indians. Treaties or promises that the government had made were broken. The Poncas had been forced to move from Nebraska to 1000 miles north by walking. Half of the tribe died on the way.

*In 1881, she published a report on how the United States government had treated the Indians, and sent it to important people concerned with Indian Affairs. Over a hundred years later, this book, *A Century of Dishonor*, was reprinted in 1995 (available in hard cover and paper).*

*Helen Jackson wrote a story (book) called *Romona* in 1885, about the wrongs done to the Indian nations. The book was popular and was made into a stage play and three movies!*

It made people aware of the wrong that had been done.

AFFIRMATION: *We make the world a better place for everyone.*

The Native Americans have great respect for the world. Some readings from Native Americans are in our hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition* (Beacon Press, 1993), such as #682, which is the basis for this piece, with motions.

Beauty is in front of me (stretch arms out front)

Beauty is behind me (stretch arms behind)

Above me (stretch arms over head)

And below me (touch the ground)

Beauty is all around me, I am in it. (turn in a complete circle)

I grow in beauty.

THE LETTER J IN CHURCH

A-B-C

Animals: jackal, jaguar

Body: Jaw, joint. Discuss how joints work, including the jaw. Try to walk without bending knees. Also, try eating snacks without bending elbows (can do this by feeding each other)

Calendar: January, June, July

- 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: CLOSING: Gather around the Special Place where the things related to the letter have been placed. " We give thanks for the Letter J. 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

VARIATIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Look at a map of Native American tribes in the area of the church. Are there members of the congregation who are of Native American heritage? Invite a Native American visit the group to talk about things that are of spiritual value to him or her.

Balance of Justice. Discuss the symbol of justice, with the concept of balance. The concerns of each person, each group of people is balanced with the rights of every other group. The intent is that the scales will balance, so that the rights and choices and opportunities and power of one group will be fair and just when compared with any other group. What Helen Jackson was describing was a scale that was weighed down with the power of the "white" person (more power, greater weight) so that the scale was not balanced.

USAGE NOTE excerpts from the *American Heritage Dictionary*, "Native American": The term *Indian* has always been a misnomer for the earliest inhabitants of the Americas. Many people now prefer *Native American*...both as a corrective to Columbus's mistaken appellation and as a means of avoiding the romantic and generally offensive stereotypes associated with phrases such as *wild Indian* or *cowboys and Indians*.

However, it should not be assumed that *Indian* is necessarily offensive or out of date. On the contrary, *Indian* is firmly rooted in English in neutral terms such as *Plains Indian*, *Paleo-Indian*, and *Indian summer*, as well as in numerous plant and place names, and in locutions of this kind there is no possibility of substitution. Furthermore, many Native Americans and others sympathetic to Native American issues continue to use *Indian* as a term of pride and respect.