

Around the Church, Around the Year: “Our Partner Church”

Use to replace Lesson #21 “Our Favorite Objects”

If being used for partner church education only, you might omit the “favorite objects” parts of the lesson. This session can easily be adapted for use if you have a partner somewhere other than Transylvania.

Goals for participants:

- To see a connection between a favorite things and the special person, place or heritage from which the objects have come.
- To introduce them to our Partner Church through special objects which we have received from them.
- To compare the symbols of UU’s and Unitarians in Transylvania, as “objects” which remind us of our religion.
- To make “Friendly Books” to send to children in Transylvania.

Materials needed:

- Pictures of children in Kövend, special objects from Transylvania.
- Posters of the chalice and the dove and snake symbols for the children to color.
- “Friendly Books” for the children to color
- Camera and film
- Large sheet of paper for the tally sheet. Or tally sheets copied from RE Office.

Was this a gift?	NO ///	YES //// ///	From a friend? //// From a relative? /////	Bought in a store ////////////// Hand-made by giver //
Does it remind you of a special place or time?	NO	YES	Places---where?	Time—season? Long ago? Winter Summer Spring Fall
Does it remind you of a special event?	NO	YES		

Preparation:

- Contact the guest who will tell about Transylvania, to confirm arrangements, and to see if they have any special “favorite things” to show from Transylvania. Be sure to mail them a copy of these lesson plans.
- Familiarize yourself with basic information about our Partner Church and with the location of our gifts from Transylvania; arrange to have some of them in the classroom if possible.
- 2-3 weeks ahead, ask the RE Office to prepare a letter home that can be handed out at the end of the previous class.
- Remember to bring one of your own “Favorite Things”
- Set up special tables in the room where each group of “Our Favorite Things” may be displayed.
- Make one copy of “Our Favorite Things” tally sheet on large paper for each six children.

Lesson plan

As the children arrive: help them put their favorite things safely on display next to or on top of a card with their name on it. All through the lesson stress the respect and care with which we treat our favorite things.

If there are more than 6 children present, divide the class into two groups for this activity. Have children put their things on *two tables* and use *two tally sheets*. It will be hard for everyone to listen patiently to each person's sharing, if there are too many in the circle. One teacher should make a quick check to see that each table will have about the same number of children.

Newcomers or children who didn't get the letter, or forgot, can be invited to be think about something that is very special to them, a favorite thing—and write its name and their name on a card to put on the table with the others'.

As the children leave for worship, ask if they might see a gift from the a Partner Church displayed in the Sanctuary, give them a clue:

“While you are in church, look for a gift from our Partners. You'll know it because it is something red and has the name of our church on it.”

When the group returns, ask who thinks they saw the special gift. Let them know they will hear more about Transylvania after they have time to share their own favorite things.

Sharing our Favorite Things: (10 minutes)

Ask children to sit at the table where their favorite thing, or their name card, is. Each person takes a turn telling about their favorite thing, as you fill out the tally sheet.

Favorite Things, at Church, from some Special Friends: (20 minutes)

Make one big circle, and introduce the guest, who is hear to tell them some more about the special things. Display the embroidery, and invite the children to look for the big on in the front of the church next time the go into the Sanctuary—maybe some will remember having seen it.

Fill out the Favorite Things chart on the whiteboard:

The embroideries: were gifts, from friends, one reminds us of a special place. Kövend, a little village far away. Both things were made by hand. One reminds us of a special event—our church's 100th birthday.

Hearing stories about our Partner Church (15-20 minutes)

Show on the map or globe where Denver is, how it is part of the state of Colorado, which is part of the United States. Then show where Kovend is, and that it is in a region called Transylvania, in a country called Romania.

The guest speaker will need 10-15 minutes to show pictures of the village, tell stories about our partner church, and share their own favorite things from their partner church travels.

As some children listen better with busy hands now is a good time to hand out the symbol coloring pages, and some crayons or markers. Or have the children draw pictures of themselves and their families at church “in your favorite place in our church” to send to Transylvania.

Friendship books [also found on: <http://www.uua.org/uupcc/re/friendship-books.doc>]

On the last two pages you will find examples of friendship pages (which can be made into little books) which can be carefully completed and sent to friends (usually of the same age) in your partner congregation. (They were originally made by Ruth Gibson regibson@uuma.org)

Reflection and Planning after class is over

Reflect on the questions below and discuss them with your co-leader(s) or the MRE.

1. What went well in this session? What did not go well, or could have been improved?
2. If we were going to lead this session again, what would we change about it? Why?
3. Do any of the group members seem to need some special attention? If so, what kind?
4. What preparation do we need to do for the next session? Do we need time to complete projects from this session? How shall we coordinate this with the next session's process?

Are we likely to need an additional “catch-up” session?

Friendship Books and Picture Letters

You may give pages like the second page one to children too young to read, and have them put a picture on each section.

Older children enjoy writing answers as well as drawing and also completing the first page.

You might make a cover of red paper. Red is an important color in Transylvania, because there it is the color of freedom.

You could also choose to send home the papers (especially "A Visitor from Far Away") as a work sheet for children to think about with their families and complete at home, and then bring it back with them on the following Sunday. In the second week's class they can share their different responses in small groups, and then work on a group picture and letter to be sent to the children in their partner church. This is an especially helpful exercise to do when you are expecting visitors, because it will help the children (and their parents) begin to think about how to welcome people from a different culture.

My name is:

I am ____ years old.

A VISITOR FROM FAR AWAY

If I invited a friend from far away to come visit me, the places I want him/her to see the most would be:

She/he might not know how to speak English very well, so I would communicate by:

While he/she was here, we would eat lots of and drink lots of:

If he/she ever got homesick, I would:

When her/his visit was over, if she/he invited me to visit her/his home, I would say:

If I did go, I would be sure to bring along my:

My name is:

I am ____ years old.

Write and draw the following to send to a child in our partner church:

ME
ÉN

AND MY FAMILY
ES CSALÁDAM

THIS IS WHERE WE LIVE
ITT, LAKUNK
SEGITENNI

THIS IS HOW I HELP AT HOME
OTTHON, IGY TUDOM

MY FAVORITE FOOD
A KEDVEDCEM ÉTTEL

I LIKE TO PLAY
SZERETEM JÁTZANI