

A Partner Church Sunday Lesson in classes for 5-14 year olds
by Gabrielle Farrell, DRE First Unitarian Church St. Louis MO February 2000

This special Sunday service was held to celebrate St. Louis's partnership with Csokfalva. There were several visiting Transylvanian ministers and student ministers who led both the adult and children's worship services. The night before there was a wonderful Hungarian dinner and fundraiser with stories and slides of recently returned St. Louis pilgrims to Csokfalva as well as talks by the visiting Transylvanians.

The background reading for the teachers was two articles about John Sigismund and Francis David by Vilma Harrington and Alexander Szentivany in the 1950's anniversary issue of the Christian Register.

Important Note: Instructions for making the luminaria (the project for each lesson) are on pages 4-5 of uu&me! 12/99. Give copies of these pages to all adults and copy the patterns for each child. Children can take the luminaria they make home, and the week before many can be colored with red markers, many rows tied together (with red yarn through holes punched in each corner), and used to decorate the Partner Church Sunday pulpit as is done in Transylvania.

This issue also contains a story about John Sigismund that will be read to the younger children.

Partner Church Sunday Lesson
Primary Learners (ages 5-7, grades K-1)

Teacher/Classroom Preparation:

Prepare a Display/Worship Area:

Put map up.

Display any Transylvanian artifacts we have

Chalice with red votive or red tulip votive

Tulip in vase which is the Hungarian symbol of freedom

Load tape recorder with music by Bela Bartok, a famous

Hungarian

Unitarian composer

Main Goal of Lesson

To convey to the children that Unitarianism began in Transylvania

To introduce the children to the location of Transylvania

To help the children connect with and know something about our Partner Church

In the village of Csokfalva, Transylvania

Teacher asks him/herself: *What matters to me about this lesson?*

Entering Activity

Place four luminaria panels at each place, have children begin to color them with red crayons or red markers (permanent). At each place should be red yarn, a tea light, paper bag and set of instructions. In the center of Table are sponges and needles for yarn.

Have tape recorder playing Bartok music softly.

Chalice lighting (400+ year-old) Transylvania Unitarian affirmation.) --*The Transylvanian minister may join the class at this point.*

An adult (or the visitor) lights the chalice flame. As s/he reads each line the children repeat it.

Where there is faith, there is love.
Where there is love, there is peace.
Where there is peace, there is blessing.
Where there is blessing, there is God.
Where God is, there is all we need.

Talk with them a little about the items in the space asking what they might hint of. Remind them that today this is going on in the big church, and later we will have a special Chapel with ministers from Transylvania leading.

Reflecting (What do they already know?) [*The visiting minister might be joining us for this part of the class. After introductions and practicing pronunciation of his name, ask the children to answer and discuss these questions with the minister*]

What type of church are we? What is the church's name? And what is the name of the religion to which we belong?

Has anyone heard of Transylvania? Where do you think it is?
What do you think it's like?

Does anyone think Unitarians can be Kings?

Has anyone been to a different country other than the United States?
What were some of the things that were different? that were the same? Would you expect Unitarians in other countries to be the same or different from us?

What do you think the word Unitarianism means? How did you learn these things? Who told you?

Exploring

Point to the world map. Say, "Unitarianism began 450 years ago in an area called Transylvania. This was long before there were Unitarians in England, or the US, or Canada. Today Transylvania is part of another country called Romania. Romania is a country made up of people from several different backgrounds who speak Romanian, Hungarian or German. So they are called Hungarian-Romanians, German-Romanians, or Romanian-Romanians.

On the map of the world locate your country, and Romania. On maps of each country, locate your city, and then Csokfalva. (We could pass around photos of each at this point.)

Describe church by quickly showing slides. Point out any embroidery or painting like the designs on their luminaria. Talk about the slides as you move through, pausing if someone notices something to comment on, or you do. [We hope the Transylvanian visitors will come in at this point and add what they know about Csokfalva (they are not from there) and Transylvanian villages.]

Ask questions like these to ascertain what their impressions were of the
visuals:

What is the name of the country? What color do they use a lot in their churches? What is something that is very different? What is the same? How do you think you are related to these people?

Ask someone to come up to pin a star on map where the church is located.

At the height of the discussion, before it has time to wind down, move to next thing.

Integrating

Reintroduce the craft activity. Give clear step by step instructions as to what they are to do next. Hand out all materials. Encourage them to ask each other for help, or an older classmate. Encourage them to work on their luminarias silently, while you read the story. Encourage listening to and thinking about the story as they work.

Story about King John Sigismund (for example, from *uu&me* 12/99)

Reading the story while the Primary graders are working probably isn't going to work unless you have plenty of parent helpers. Skip the story if it will make the class go better. If you do read it, you will need to be quite dramatic

If they don't finish in time, ask each child to put their work in a paper sack with instructions and votive to finish at home or in coffee hour. Have them put their names on bag.

Closing

Have another adult extinguish the chalice saying:

*We leave this morning remembering our Partner church in
Csokfalva, Transylvania.*

Ask the children to repeat it.

Line up by 10:18 Turn off light -- and tell them they are going to a special Chapel. Today girls will sit on the wall side of the Chapel, while the boys will sit on the side of the Chapel with the doors, because this is how the children sit when they go to church in Transylvania, and we want to try out how it would feel.

Partner Church Sunday Lesson
Elementary Learners (ages 8-9, grades 2-3)

Teacher/Classroom Preparation:

Prepare a Display/Worship Area:

Put map up.

Display any Transylvanian artifacts we have

Chalice with red votive or red tulip votive

Tulip in vase which is the Hungarian symbol of freedom

Load tape recorder with music by Bela Bartok, a famous

Hungarian

Unitarian composer

Main Goal of Lesson

To convey to the children that Unitarianism began in Transylvania

To introduce the children to the location of Transylvania

To help the children connect with and know something about our Partner
Church

in the village of Csokfalva, Transylvania

Teacher asks him/herself: *What matters to me about this lesson?*

Entering Activity

Place four luminaria panels at each place, have children begin to color them with red crayons or red markers (permanent). At each place should be red yarn, a tea light, paper bag and set of instructions. In the center of table are sponges and needles for yarn.

Have tape recorder playing Bartok music softly.

Chalice lighting (400+ year-old) Transylvania Unitarian affirmation.) --*The Transylvanian minister may join the class at this point.*

An adult lights the chalice flame. As s/he reads each line the children repeat it.

Where there is faith, there is love.

Where there is love, there is peace.

Where there is peace, there is blessing.

Where there is blessing, there is God.

Where God is, there is all we need.

Talk with them a little about the items in the space asking what they

Transylvania might hint of. Remind them that today this is going on in the big church, and later we will have a special Chapel with ministers from leading.

Reflecting (What do they already know?)

What type of church are we? What is the church's name? And what is the name of the religion to which we belong?

Has anyone heard of Transylvania? Where do you think it is? What do you think it's like?

Does anyone think Unitarians can be Kings?

Has anyone been to a different country other than the United States? What were some of the things that were different? that were the same? Would you expect Unitarians in other countries to be the same or different from us?

We heard in our chalice lighting, the word God? In this church does a person have to believe in God? If yes, why do you think this? And if no, why do you think this?

What do you think the word Unitarianism means? How did you learn these things? Who told you? How will you decide what you are going to think about Unitarianism?

Exploring

Point to the world map. Say, "Unitarianism began 450 years ago in an area called Transylvania. This was long before there were Unitarians in England, or the US, or Canada. Today Transylvania is part of another country called Romania. Romania is a country made up of people from several different backgrounds who speak Romanian, Hungarian or German. So they are called Hungarian-Romanians, German-Romanians, or Romanian-Romanians.

On the map of the world locate your country, and Romania. On maps of each country, locate your city, and then Csokfalva. (We could pass around photos of each at this point.)

Describe church by quickly showing slides. Point out any embroidery or painting like the designs on their luminaria. Talk about the slides as you

move through, pausing if someone notices something to comment on, or you do.

Ask questions like these to ascertain what their impressions were of the
visuals:

What is the name of the country? What color do they use a lot in their churches? What is something that is very different? What is the same? How do you think you are related to these people?

Ask someone to come up to pin a star on map where the church is located.

At the height of the discussion, before it has time to wind down, move to next thing.

Integrating

Reintroduce the craft activity. Give clear step by step instructions as to what they are to do next. Hand out all materials. Encourage them to ask each other for help, or an older classmate. Encourage them to work on their luminarias silently, while you read the story. Encourage listening to and thinking about the story as they work.

Story about King John Sigismund (for example, from *uu&me* 12/99)

If they don't finish in time, ask each child to put their work in a paper sack with instructions and votive to finish at home or in coffee hour. Have them put their names on bag.

Closing

Have another adult extinguish the chalice saying:

*We leave this morning remembering our Partner church in
Csokfalva, Transylvania.*

Ask the children to repeat it.

Line up by 10:18 Turn off light -- and tell them they are going to a special Chapel. Today girls will sit on the wall side of the Chapel, while the boys will sit on the side of the Chapel with the doors, because this is how the children sit when they go to church in Transylvania, and we want to try out how it would feel.

Partner Church Sunday Lesson
Intermediate Learners (ages 10-11, grades 4-5)

Teacher/Classroom Preparation:

Prepare a Display/Worship Area:

Put map up.

Display any Transylvanian artifacts we have

Chalice with red votive or red tulip votive

Tulip in vase which is the Hungarian symbol of freedom

Load tape recorder with music by Bela Bartok, a famous

Hungarian

Unitarian composer

Main Goal of Lesson

To convey to the children that Unitarianism began in Transylvania

To introduce the children to the location of Transylvania

To help the children connect with and know something about our Partner
Church

in the village of Csokfalva, Transylvania

Teacher asks him/herself: *What matters to me about this lesson?*

Entering Activity

Place four luminaria panels at each place, have children begin to color them with red crayons or red markers (permanent). At each place should be red yarn, a tea light, paper bag and set of instructions. In the center of table are sponges and needles for yarn.

Have tape recorder playing Bartok music softly.

Chalice lighting Chalice lighting (400+ year-old) Transylvania Unitarian affirmation.)

Hand out copies and choose 8 children to recite one line each and 1 to light the chalice flame.

The chalice is lit.

I am Unitarian,

I live and work in this faith.

Jesus is my guide

And God is my help.

We, humans, are all brothers and sisters.

Our law is one: Love.
The goal of our work is shared.
Happy are those of God's kingdom.

the big
leading.

Talk briefly about the Transylvanian items on display, asking what they might hint of. Remind them that today is partner church Sunday in both church and in our special Chapel with ministers from Transylvania

Reflecting (What do they already know?)

What is the name of the religion to which we belong? The name of the religion of our partner church's members?

Where did Unitarianism begin? Why? Who was its leader?

village?

Where is Transylvania? What do you know about our partner church

We heard in our chalice lighting, that Transylvanian Unitarians feel they live in God's kingdom and that God is their help as they live their lives. In our North American Unitarianism does everyone believe in God? Why do you think our own congregations have a mixture of people with so many different beliefs about God?

Where is Unitarianism practiced? What countries have Unitarian churches? Are Unitarian churches all the same?

How did you learn these things? Who told you? How will you decide what you are going to think about Unitarianism?

Exploring

Point to the world map. Say, "Unitarianism began 450 years ago in an area called Transylvania. This was long before there were Unitarians in England, or the US, or Canada. Today Transylvania is part of another country called Romania. Romania is a country made up of people from several different backgrounds who speak Romanian, Hungarian or German. So they are called Hungarian-Romanians, German-Romanians, or Romanian-Romanians.

On the map of the world locate your country, and Romania. On maps of each country, locate your city, and then Csokfalva. (We could pass around photos of each at this point.)

Describe church by quickly showing slides. Point out any embroidery or painting like the designs on their luminaria. Talk about the slides as you move through, pausing if someone notices something to comment on, or you do.

Ask questions like these to ascertain what their impressions were of the visuals:

What is the name of the country? What color do they use a lot in their churches? What is something that is very different? What is the same? How do you think you are related to these people?

Ask someone to come up to pin a star on map where the church is located.

At the height of the discussion, before it has time to wind down, move to next thing.

Integrating

Reintroduce the craft activity. Give clear step by step instructions as to what they are to do next. Hand out all materials. Encourage them to ask each other for help, or an older classmate. Encourage them to work on their luminarias silently, while you read the story. Encourage listening to and thinking about the story as they work.

Story about King John Sigismund (for example, from *uu&me* 12/99)

If they don't finish in time, ask each child to put their work in a paper sack with instructions and votive to finish at home or in coffee hour. Have them put their names on bag.

Closing

Have another adult extinguish the chalice saying:

*We leave this morning remembering our Partner church in
Csokfalva, Transylvania.*

Ask the children to repeat it.

Line up by 10:18 Turn off light -- and tell them they are going to a special Chapel. Today girls will sit on the wall side of the Chapel, while the boys will sit on the side of the Chapel with the doors, because this is how the children sit

when they go to church in Transylvania, and we want to try out how it would feel.

Partner Church Sunday Lesson
Middle School Learners (ages 12-14, grades 6-8)

Teacher/Classroom Preparation:

Prepare a Display/Worship Area:

Put map up.

Display any Transylvanian artifacts we have

Chalice with red votive or red tulip votive

Tulip in vase which is the Hungarian symbol of freedom

Load tape recorder with music by Bela Bartok, a famous

Hungarian

Unitarian composer

Main Goal of Lesson

To convey to the children that Unitarianism began in Transylvania

To introduce the children to the location of Transylvania

To help the children connect with and know something about our Partner
Church

in the village of Csokfalva, Transylvania

Teacher asks him/herself: *What matters to me about this lesson?*

Entering Activity

Place four luminaria panels at each place, have children begin to color them with red crayons or red markers (permanent). At each place should be red yarn, a tea light, paper bag and set of instructions. In the center of table are sponges and needles for yarn.

Have tape recorder playing Bartok music softly.

Chalice lighting (400+ year-old) Transylvania Unitarian affirmation.)

Hand out copies and choose 8 children to recite one line each and 1 to light the chalice flame.

The chalice is lit.

I am Unitarian,

I live and work in this faith.

Jesus is my guide

And God is my help.

We, humans, are all brothers and sisters.

Our law is one: Love.
The goal of our work is shared.
Happy are those of God's kingdom.

the big
leading.

Talk briefly about the Transylvanian items on display, asking what they might hint of. Remind them that today is partner church Sunday in both church and in our special Chapel with ministers from Transylvania

Reflecting (What do they already know?)

You just heard a Transylvanian Unitarian affirmation. What do you notice about it? What does it tell you about Transylvanian Unitarians?

What does the word Unitarianism mean?

Where did Unitarianism start? Why? Who was its leader?

churches?

Where is Unitarianism practiced? What countries have Unitarian

countries?

Name some Unitarian pioneers? Can you name some from other

We heard in our chalice lighting, that Transylvanian Unitarians feel they live in God's kingdom and that God is their help as they live their lives. In our North American Unitarianism does everyone believe in God? Why do you think our own congregations have a mixture of people with so many different beliefs about God?

How did you learn these things? Who told you? How will you decide what you are going to think about Unitarianism?

Exploring

Point to the world map. Say, "Unitarianism began 450 years ago in an area called Transylvania. This was long before there were Unitarians in England, or the US, or Canada. Today Transylvania is part of another country called Romania. Romania is a country made up of people from several different backgrounds who speak Romanian, Hungarian or German. So they are called Hungarian-Romanians, German-Romanians, or Romanian-Romanians.

On the map of the world locate your country, and Romania. On maps of each country, locate St. Louis, and then Csokfalva.

We are going to learn about or connections to Transylvanian Unitarians by watching part of this video called "A Heretical History." Show tape from beginning to the first mention of Socinus (after Transylvania has once again become Catholic).

Ask questions that help them share their impressions of the video and retain what they have seen:

What was the name of the King? Who was the theologian? The name of the meeting? Which religions were included? What did the King die of? What happened to Transylvania after the King died? What does this mean for all of us as practicing Unitarian Universalists today?

At the height of the discussion, before it has time to wind down, move to next thing.

Integrating

Reintroduce the craft activity. Give clear step by step instructions as to what they are to do next. Hand out all materials. Encourage them to ask each other for help. Encourage them to work on their luminarias while the minister is speaking.

If they don't finish in time, ask each to put their work in a paper sack with instructions and votive candle to finish at home or in coffee hour. Have them put their names on bag.

Closing

Have another adult extinguish the chalice saying:

*We leave this morning remembering our Partner church in
Csokfalva, Transylvania.*

Ask them to repeat it.

Line up by 10:18 Turn off light -- and tell them they are going to a special Chapel. Today girls will sit on the wall side of the Chapel, while the boys will sit on the side of the Chapel with the doors, because this is how the children sit when they go to church in Transylvania, and we want to try out how it would feel.

