

The Golden Thread of Truth Presents:

Interfaith Programs for Kids & Teens



A Twelve Month Program Volume 2

Welcome to The Golden Thread of Truth Annual Curriculum, Volume 2! The intention of this material is to teach our children that all the world's religions support a consistent message about the truth of who we are. Stories from Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Native American traditions and contemporary authors support the same underlying messages and values. Love thy neighbor. You reap what you sow. We are stewards of the earth and each other. Treat others as you would like to be treated. Parents around the world, from all religious beliefs, cultures and lifestyles, teach these values to their children through timeless stories.

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February 2016: Thrive!

Week #1: Grounding: Knowing Our Source

Main Message: *We live on a powerful, nourishing, creative and abundant planet, sometimes referred to as Mother Earth. Our world operates in perfect harmony, just as each of us operates in perfect harmony. This week we celebrate the source of all good, both within ourselves and our world.*

- Mother Earth works in perfect harmony
- The abundance and creativity we see around our world is true in our lives as well

Readings:

“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.” —*Albert Einstein*

SOM 72.4: The basis from which man is evolving is Infinite. Behind him is the Great Unknown but not the great unknowable. As the result of the discovery that he could think, plan and execute, man has built up a great civilization; he has perceived that Nature works through him in order to work for him. He has harnessed electricity, compelled steam to do his bidding, conquered the air, built cities, made the desert bloom, and has thrown the lines of his commerce around the globe. Indeed, he has seemed to possess the earth during this process...

Lesson: Our Planet - Ourselves

The world we live in is an amazing place. Take some time to talk about ways in which the Earth harmoniously operates and we operate harmoniously too.

The Earth is Powerful. On our planet we see powerful events upon our planet: Thunderstorms, hurricanes, earthquakes. But we also see power in quieter ways, the growth of a tree, the birth of a bird or the building of a beaver dam.

The Earth is Nourishing. Everything we need to survive is provided by our planet. The rain falls, the sun shines, the soil provides nutrients.

The Earth is Creative: Imagine the species of flowers or insects or creatures in the ocean that exist. Each is unique. Even each rose is unique from the others on the bush.

The Earth is Abundant: The number of grains of sand on all the beaches and in all the deserts on the earth are more than we could ever count. As are the number of blades of grass or the number of stars in the sky.

Now consider each of these characteristics within each of us. How are we...
Powerful (We build airplanes to cross the oceans, etc)
Nourishing (We give to the planet just as the planet gives to us (farming, etc)
Creative (We search for wisdom and truth, etc)
Abundant (We are each blessed with individual gifts and together we can create anything)

Questions and Answers:

Q1. Why is it important to care for our planet?

A1. Without our planet, we cannot be powerful, nourishing, creative or abundant

Q2. In what way are You powerful and creative?

A2. I recycle. I paint pictures. I write stories.

Q3. In what way are You nourishing and abundant?

A3. I help a friend. I give my smiles away. I take hikes and enjoy nature and feel good about myself.



Activities:

Symbolism of Craft: We are using a craft that represents an item from nature.

Craft: Newspaper Tree

Materials:

Newspaper

Scissors
Rubberbands

Directions:

Roll up newspaper and cut 4 slits
Pull middle of tree up

Advanced Material for 4th & 5th grade: What is the difference between Create, Creative and Creativity.

To create means to use your mind, brain and thoughts to bring form to that which is formless. Creation occurs when creating a baby or a garden or a home. I may not know what actions take place during the creation, but I can see the end result whether it is tangible or intangible. Have fun exploring your creativity.

To create (bring into form), to be creative (ponder what is unknown) or to embrace creativity (the process of new ideas) are all working within the Universal Mind. Once knowledge has been put into form, new questions arise. Our creative natures guides us to further understanding of how the universe works and the universal laws.

“The good man is the friend of all living things.” — *Gandhi*

Tween & Teen Activity Root Chakra Meditation:

According to Hindu and/or Buddhist belief, chakras are vast (yet confined) pools of energy in our bodies which govern our psychological qualities. There are said to be seven main chakras in all; four in our upper body, which govern our mental properties, and three in the lower body, which govern our instinctual properties. They are:

The Root chakra. The Sacral chakra. The Solar Plexus chakra. The Heart chakra. The Throat chakra. The Third Eye chakra. The Crown chakra.

According to Buddhist/Hindu teaching all of the chakras should contribute to a human's well-being. Our instincts would join forces with our feelings and thinking. Some of our chakras are usually not open all the way (meaning, they would operate just like when you were born), but some are over-active, or even near closed. If the chakras are not balanced, peace with the self cannot be achieved.

This week, we are going to focus on our root chakra. The root chakra is located around your tail bone and is your grounding point to the earth.

Open the Root Chakra (red). This chakra is based on being physically aware and feeling comfortable in many situations. If opened, you should feel well-balanced and sensible, stable and secure. You don't distrust people around you for no reason. You feel present in what is happening right now, and very connected to your physical body. If it's under-active: you tend to be fearful or nervous, and easily feel unwelcome. If it's over-active: you may be materialistic and greedy. You feel as if you should be secure and are unwelcome to a change.

1. Use the body and become aware of it. Do yoga, walk around the block, or do some manual house-cleaning. These activities let your body become known to you, and will strengthen the chakra.
2. Ground yourself. This means that you should connect with the ground, and feel it beneath you. To do this, stand up straight and relaxed, put your feet shoulder width apart, and slightly bend your knees. Move your pelvis forward a little, and keep your body balanced, so that your weight is evenly distributed over the soles of your feet. Then sink your weight forward. Stay in this position for several minutes.
3. Sit in the cross legged position and let the tips of your thumb and index finger touch gently, in a peaceful motion.
4. Concentrate on the Root chakra and what it stands for
5. Silently, yet clearly, chant the sound "LAM."
6. All this time, let yourself relax, still thinking about the chakra, it's meaning, and how it does or should affect your life.
7. Keep doing this until you are completely relaxed. You may have a "clean" feeling.
8. Visualize a closed red flower. Imagine a very powerful energy radiating it: it slowly opens showing four red petals full of energy.

Affirmation: "I am power, creative, abundant and blessed"

Week #2: Contentment: When Enough is Enough

Main Message: *We review the story of the Mother Squirrel as evidence of love and the kind of love that can bring miracles.*

- Our contentment does not come from outside of ourselves
- It is a Mother's desire for us to be content but also to know when to say no

Readings

Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better. ~ Albert Einstein

SOM 449:4: It is related that while Jesus was talking, he was told that his mother and brethren waited to speak with him. But he answering said unto him that told him, who is my mother? and who are my brethren? He then told them that whoever does the will of God is his mother, sister and brother. We are not to suppose, by this, that he did not care for his earthly parents or friends, He was explaining that anyone who lives in harmony with the Truth, automatically becomes the brother, the sister or the mother of all.

Lesson: The Mother Squirrel

Once upon a time, in a far away land, there grew a giant tree with large, plush branches that spread wide around the tree. Under the tree was a bright shining lake with clear, blue, still water. The tree's leaves made a gentle rustling sound as a breeze caught them and moved them back and forth.

Far up in one of the strong branches in the top of the tree there lived a mother squirrel and her baby. The gentle breeze swayed the branches providing peace and restful rhythm to the squirrel's world. The little squirrel was content and raced up and down the beautiful giant tree's branches and slept in its peaceful home.

One day storm clouds gathered and the sunlight was covered with dark clouds. The lake started to show small waves and the leaves started to come loose from the strong wind. Suddenly a large lightning bolt struck the branch that the squirrels' home was perched on and the nest and baby squirrel plunged off the tree into the lake.

The frightened squirrel cowered against the rain and sank again and again into the dark water. It was only a matter of moments before it would sink out of sight.

The mother was filled with great fear as she ran down to the edge of the lake. She did not know what to do. She looked for a bird that could lift her baby from the water but saw none. She looked for a giant swan that could give her baby a ride to shore but saw

none. She looked for a kind boy who could bring her baby to land but saw none. What could she do?

Suddenly the fear disappeared as she had a thought. If she could remove the water from the lake, the baby could not drown. Frantically she dipped her bushy tail in the lake so it filled with water then she squeezed it out. Again and again and again she worked.

She worked with all her soul and all her might and was noticed by others nearby. We do not know if it was the swan, or the bird, or a small boy who came to help. We do know that the rain suddenly stopped and the lake settled. And we do know that shortly a little, wet, weeping baby squirrel was nestled in the arms of his joyous mother who had done everything in her little power to accomplish the miracle.

Questions and Answers:

Q1. Why are mothers important?

A1. Mothers are a source of unconditional love

Q2. What makes a mother?

A2. A mother can be someone who gave birth to you or someone who cares for you but most of all sees you as the true divine spirit that you are.

Q3. What can I do today to let my mother know how grateful I am for her?

A3. Help her. Talk to her. Tell her you love and appreciate all she does for you..

Activities:

Symbolism of Craft: .A gift for our mother

Craft: Corsage

Materials:

Construction paper
Colored egg cartons
Pipe cleaners
Plastic bugs

Directions:

Cut the green construction paper to make a leaf

Cut the egg cartons to look like half of flowers. Glue the pipecleaners, 'flowers' and bugs the the leaves.



Advanced Material for 4th & 5th grade: What do children think of their mothers?

A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie. ~Tenneva Jordan

When you are a mother, you are never really alone in your thoughts. A mother always has to think twice, once for herself and once for her child. ~Sophia Loren

I remember my mother's prayers and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life. ~Abraham Lincoln

You don't really understand human nature unless you know why a child on a merry-go-round will wave at his parents every time around — and why his parents will always wave back. ~William D. Tammeus

A mom's hug lasts long after she lets go. ~Author Unknown

Sing out loud in the car even, or especially, if it embarrasses your children. ~Marilyn Penland

Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children. ~Charles R. Swindoll

Tween & Teen Activity How to be a mother

This week, give each of the teens a raw egg that they must care for during the week. Their mission is to bring it back intact the following week. Set up rules and schedules for the teens to take care of their eggs. The teens may draw faces on their eggs, name their eggs or dress their eggs if you have time.

Rules:

1. The egg can never be out of their site
2. The egg must be held for at least 1 hour a day
3. The egg must have a safe place to sleep

Affirmation: "I love and appreciate my mother"

Week #3: Creation: Magical Thinking

Main Message: *Tara is the Mother Goddess in both the Hindu and Buddha traditions as well as many others. In Hindu traditions, she is the Mother Creator, representing the spiritual force from which all things come. Many stories revolve around her for her compassion for others, her wisdom and her strength as a woman. Many wanted her to reincarnate as a man but she refused, went on to gain enlightenment and earned the title Mother of all Buddhists. She is the only goddess who was worshiped in ancient times as well as today. In many ways, she can be considered the first feminist.*

- Goddess Tara knew her ability to attain enlightenment did not depend on her gender
- We are not limited by any of our external characteristics in what we create

Readings:

Since we are dealing with an Infinite Power, which knows only Its own ability to do, and since It can objectify any idea impressed upon It, there can be no limit to what It can or would do for us, other than the limit of our inward embodiment. Limitation is not in Principle nor in Law, but only in the individual use we make of principle. Our individual use of It can only equal our individual capacity to understand It, to embody It. We cannot demonstrate beyond our ability to provide a mental equivalent of our desire. - Ernest Holmes

Lesson: Goddess Tara

The first reference to the Goddess Tara was 5000 years ago when she represented a group called "The Women of Wisdom". Since then, many stories have been written about her and her many facets. She represents compassion as she gently protects each of us and the earth. She represents perseverance to overcome obstacles. She represents compassion as she heals the misery and pain of mankind.

Tara was the first (and only) female Buddha, or enlightened one who has attained oneness with Spirit and all other living things. But, it was not easy for her to attain this designation. All encouraged her to reincarnate as a man but she refused. She believed that women could be Buddhas just as men could, in fact in some ways, women could do it better.

Tara exists in every culture on earth. There are so many stories as she assumes whatever pure truth is needed to meet the needs of the one worshiping her. She

exists as Mother Earth (Terra). She represents spiritual energy and connection to other worlds. In Celtic she is Tor. In Chinese she is Kuan Yin. In South America she is Tarahumara. Astonishingly, all these cultures, the ancient mother goddesses Tara is still worshiped today.

Tara, as a Buddha, has chosen to remain in the cycle of birth and rebirth in order to assist every being on earth in reaching enlightenment.

Questions and Answers:

Q1. What does Tara represent?

A1. The embodiment of Spirit in all cultures.

Q2. Why is Tara different for other deities?

A2. She took the female form, and female traits, in all stories in all cultures.

Q3. What can Tara teach me?

A3. I am not limited by another outward appearance, only by what I believe about myself.

Activities:

Symbolism of Craft:..Feminism has a symbol to represent women. However, we all know that each of us, men and women, has a feminine portion to our nature. This week we will merge the symbol for women, with the symbol for Science of Mind to remind us of this fact.

Craft: Celebrating our feminine spirit

Materials:

Paper

Markers and/or paint



Advanced Material for 4th & 5th grade: The Goddess Tara Vow

Because of her essential goodness, Tara was granted the right to assume her human form as a man. But Tara elected instead to remain in her womanly form.

The Goddess Tara vowed:

*"There are many who wish to gain enlightenment
in a man's form,
And there are few who wish to work
for the welfare of living beings
in a female form.*

*Therefore may I, in a female body,
work for the welfare of all beings,
until such time as all humanity has found its fullness."*

An elderly woman who was a sculptor worked in a city where there was a large Buddhist temple called the Mahabodhi (Great Wisdom). She sculpted a statue of the goddess Tara and built a shrine to house it. Upon completing the project she was filled with regret when she realized that she had not considered the placement of the shrine. "Oh no," she thought, "Tara has her back to the Mahabodhi and that isn't right!"

Then she heard the sculpture speak to her, saying "If you are unhappy, I will look toward the Mahabodhi." As the woman watched in amazement, the door of the shrine and the image of the goddess Tara both turned to face the Temple.

Such is the love and compassion of the goddess Tara.

Q. How does Tara represent Spiritual Oneness?

Tween & Teen Activity: Women in the World

Women were not always given all the rights and privileges of men. Even today, many cultures around the world do not give women the same rights as men. In some, women cannot go to school. In some, women cannot divorce their husbands, no matter what. In some, women cannot vote or be seen in public without their husband.

The ancient goddess Tara in her many incarnations has many gifts to share with contemporary women. Tara embodies the feminine strengths of great caring and compassion, the ability to endure stressful and even terrifying moments, the acts of creation, and the source of sustenance and protection.

Tara is an archetype of our own inner wisdom. She guides and protects us as we navigate the depths of our unconscious minds, helping us to transform consciousness, our own personal journeys of freedom.

It is the goddess Tara who helps us to remain "centered". The myths of the Goddess Tara remind us of our "oneness" with all of creation and the importance of nurturing the spirit within.

What would our culture look like if this was true for our country. Break into small groups and ask yourselves these questions.

1. How would our country be different if:
2. Women could not vote
3. Women could not pick their husband
4. Women could not leave their home without a male escort
5. Women could not dress, work or speak as they wanted

Affirmation: "I embrace my divine feminine"

Week #4: Clarity: Orderly Intentions

Main Message: *We conclude this month with a celebration of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Much is known about Mary from the Christmas Story where she rides a donkey into Bethlehem and gives birth to Jesus in a stable. However, Mary is also revered within the Muslim community and, while the passages attributed to her in the Bible are relatively brief, she had an entire chapter of the Quran dedicated to her. We will focus on the story of Mary from the Quran, her birth of Jesus and her clarity of purpose. Metaphysically, Mary is Soul in physical form.*

- When Mary gave birth to Jesus, she showed that through God, all things are possible.
- Mary was one who had clarity of faith and believed in Spirit completely and sincerely.

Readings:

"O Mary! God has chosen you and purified you and again he has chosen you above all women of all nations of the worlds" - Quran 3:42

SOM 475.4-5: Let us make this plain. If one is not attracting good into his life, there is something wrong with his unconscious thinking. The subjective state of his thought is wrong. As the subjective state of his thought constitutes the sum total of his belief, it is his habitual attitude toward life and living. This inner thought content is the sole medium between the Absolute and the relative, between causes and conditions.

When this inner thought is clarified, that is, when it knows the truth, it will reinstate the outer man in peace, poise, health and happiness. This inner thought becomes clarified as we unify with good; this is the inner quickening. Following this is the outer quickening - the outward sign of the inner belief.

Lesson: The Importance of Mary

Even as a child, Mary spent much of her time in the prayer temple. She believed completely in the power of the unseen spirit. Her faith throughout her life was a shining example to the people of her time. Muslims and Christians both have recorded that her clarity of faith let her accept the miracle of her birth of Jesus.

Metaphysically, Mary is soul in form. She is the intelligence in which the spirit (Jesus the idea) was transformed into the body (Jesus the man). She was the vessel of the creative process. Though modern science knows the details of how birth is achieved today (though we cannot duplicate it), Mary achieved the birth on her own with Spirit.

The importance of Mary is that, like Tara last week, she achieved these great things because she was a woman, not in spite of being a woman.

In Islam, Mary is the personification of ideal prayer, clarity and devotion to Spirit.

Fun Fact: Instead of giving birth to Jesus in a stable, the Quran states that Mary gave birth while standing and hanging onto a palm tree which provided water and food! [A voice said "Grieve not! for thy Lord hath provided a rivulet beneath thee; And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree: It will let fall fresh ripe dates upon thee."] The Quran also says Jesus presented his first miracle when he spoke from the cradle.

Questions and Answers:

Q1. Why is Mary important?

A1. She was the mother of Jesus.

Q2. Did Mary give birth to Jesus in a stable or holding onto a palm tree?

A2. It doesn't really matter. Both stories represent the familiar surroundings of its writers.

Q3. In what way do all religions agree about Mary?

A3. Both Muslims and Christians believe that Mary was of such pure spirit and of such clarity of devotion to the spirit all around us that she was a vessel for a miracle.

Activities:

Symbolism of Craft: In art, Mary is often depicted with a halo. The Halo represents connection, clarity and pureness to spirit.

Craft: Create a Halo to wear!

Materials:

Garland
Pipecleaners
Headband

Directions:

Wrap the pipe cleaners around the headband.
With the 2 pipe cleaners, make a circle
Cut the garland to fit the circle and wrap it around the pipe cleaners
Attach the circle to the pipe cleaners on the headband



Advanced Material for 4th & 5th grade: Let It Be

The Beatles, a British group from the 1960s, told the importance of Mary in one of their most famous songs: Listen to and read the words from “Let It Be”

<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/beatles/letitbe.html>

To hear the song, http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=WcBnJw-H2wQ

Q. What does Let It Be mean to you?

Tween & Teen Activity: Clarity of Thought (visioning)

Clarity of thought. Clarity of purpose. These are all important points during our life. Many use visioning to achieve this clarity.

Today, we will be doing a visioning for our own clarity in life.

What is visioning? It is communing with Spirit in a quiet way that you can receive words, see pictures or colors, or in other ways get messages from Spirit. It is a way to quiet and receive from a still place.

To begin a visioning, have everyone quiet and close their eyes.

They should each have a paper and pencil to record what they experience.

Open with a recognition of how spirit moves in and through everything present.

Call in an intention to quietly listen for guidance and wisdom.

Ask each question below and wait at least 3 minutes until asking the next question.

Sometimes it helps to ask the question twice.

1. What is Spirit’s highest purpose for my life?
2. What do I need to embrace for my life?
3. What do I need to release?
4. Is there anything else I need to know?

After the visioning is complete, each teen may share what they experienced if they wish.

You may also follow the visioning on our YouTube channel - led by Dr. Michelle Medrano: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=026q2NfsCtA>

(23 Minutes Long)

Affirmation: “I live with clarity and peace”