



At a Glance

What If I'm Afraid to Change?

Focus

To explore how to welcome change.

Unity Principle

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Affirmation

God helps me to welcome change gladly.

Scripture

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.—Philippians 4:13 (New King James version)

Songs

“I Am the Thinker,” Sue Kroupa, *Unite With Me in Song* CD, #7

Unity Writings

We cannot stay in any place and say: “Here is where I want to be. I don’t want anything else to happen to me....” This isn’t the way life is. This isn’t the way to happiness or contentment. Strange as it may seem, happiness, joy, contentment, and victory belong to the overcomer.

—Sue Sikking, *A Letter to Adam*, p. 160, in *Metaphysics II*, p. 40

For the Leader

For Uniteens, changes come fast and furious—in their relationships to family and friends, in their school life, even in their bodies and emotions. It is natural to resist or even be afraid of some of these changes, as both of our stories indicate.

Change is a normal part of life, and we want the Uniteens to deal with change without fear, knowing that they have the resources within themselves to meet any circumstance. We want them to know how they can change themselves in positive ways in order to meet changing circumstances.

The Christ-self that is our best-self is always available to us to help us change into the way we want to be. Identifying what we value in others helps us to know what we can cultivate in ourselves. Affirmations are a means by which we can start to claim change as a positive force.

Getting Ready



Lesson 1

Supplies

Pre-session

Paper
Pens

Opening

Masking tape

Story

Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul
5 Basic Unity Principles poster

Creative Experience

Rolls of toilet paper, 1 per 3 people
Paper
Pens

Closing

Large pot lined in aluminum foil, sitting on tray
lined with aluminum foil
Long-handled lighter
Pitcher of water
Or
Large paper bag (replaces all above)

Prepare Ahead

Opening

Place masking tape line at opposite ends of room to mark start and end points for race.

Additional Lesson

Story

Copies of Bible story

Creative Experience

Copies of handout
Pens

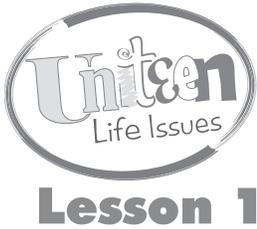
Additional Lesson

Story

Copy Bible story in lesson, 1 per person.

Creative Experience

Copy "What's Next?" handout, 1 per person.



What If I'm Afraid to Change?

Pre-session

Pre-session is not essential to the lesson. If Uniteens arrive before the starting time, use pre-session to begin to focus on the lesson and to encourage relationship-building.

Supplies

Paper
Pens

This Is Me! affirmations

Say: List three people you admire, living or dead. Next, list 3 characteristics of each of them that lead you to admire them. Finally, turn those adjectives into statements about yourself, using the format "I am _____." For instance, if you admire your father because he is a helper, write "I am a helper" or "I am helpful." Bring your list with you to opening circle.

Focus

To explore how to welcome change.

Opening

Opening Prayer and Check-in

Include an offering blessing and song wherever it works best with your group.

Say: Let's take a look around at everyone in our circle today. Take a good look! Now everyone turn around and face away from the center of the circle. Change one thing about your appearance. When we turn back around, we will take turns saying our names. After each person says their name, the first person that figures out what has changed will say, "_____ has changed _____." Then we will go to the next person until all are introduced. *(Proceed as indicated.)*

Say: There are large and small changes we make in life. Today we will be talking about change. Change is a normal part of life, but sometimes we are afraid of it.

The Christ-self that is our best-self is always available to us to help us change into the way we want to be. Let's acknowledge this power within us by saying together, "Thank you, God, for the openness to change." *(Repeat.)* Amen.

Crab Race

Say: For this race, let's all line up at this line. Bend over and grasp your ankles, or as far down your legs as possible. When I say "Go!" race for the finish line in this position. When I say "Stop," go back to the starting line and begin again with the new instructions. Ready? Begin.

Proceed as indicated. Halfway to end line, stop them and send them back to starting line. Then instruct them to grasp their ankles again, and re-start the race running backwards. Stop them halfway again, re-send back to starting line. Instruct them to grasp ankles again and race sideways like a crab. Add variations as you desire. When appropriate to stop, ask group to re-join in circle.

Say:

- Who had a good time?
- Who were the winners in this race? (*No one—there were no winners, only change and variety.*)
- In a game like this, do you think it would be more fun to keep changing actions or to do the same thing over and over?
- What did you learn about your different skills with different actions?
- Was it necessary to win in order to enjoy the experience? What does that tell you about your attitudes toward change?

Prayer/Meditation

Say: An affirmation is a statement that is true about our real self, or our Christ-self, even if it doesn't look that way on the outside. In our Pre-session and Opening, we expressed ways we might like to be, and ways which might require us to change. These affirmations are a way we can help ourselves to change. Another way is to offer help to each other.

Today we will do an "active prayer" to practice this possibility. First we will form a seated circle. Then we can take turns sitting in the center of the circle and stating one of your affirmations from our Pre-session activity, or one you would like to create now. For instance, someone might say "I am a good athlete" or "I am compassionate." The rest of us can support that by reflecting it back: "Jane, you are a good athlete." "John, you are compassionate." We can each make an affirmation for ourselves that we would like others to help us claim.

Who would like to begin? (*Proceed until everyone has had a chance for the experience.*)

Supplies

Masking tape

Prepare Ahead

Place masking tape line at opposite ends of room to mark start and end points for race.

If time permits or group interest is high, up to 3 affirmations may be said by each.

Say: Let's end our prayer time by affirming together our affirmation for today:
God helps me to welcome change gladly.

I will say it one more time, then we can all claim it together. (*Proceed as indicated.*) Amen.

Focus

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Exploration

Story: "The First Day of Middle School"
Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul, p. 195

Read or invite group members to take turns reading the story to the group.

Discussion

All questions need not be asked. Continue as long as interest is maintained. Several people may answer each question.

- What is the big event that is happening in the author's life?
- What are her fears?
- What actually happened that day?
- What changes have happened in your school/street/town in the past year?
- What changes have you seen in your friends' lives in the past year?
- In what ways is change necessary to life?
- What is a difficult change that you have experienced in the past year?
- How did your fears make things better or worse?
- What actually happened as compared to your fears?
- Where did you find support during this time? What was helpful to you?
- How does Unity Principle 3 relate to your experience? (*Indicate poster.*)
- How can your awareness of the Christ within you help you through change?
- If you had to rewind your life and go through this experience again, what messages/thoughts would be helpful to keep telling yourself?

Principle 3

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Creative Experience: Undoing My Fears

Say: We will form into groups of 3 to practice ways to free ourselves from our fears. Let's form our groups by counting off "1, 2, 3." Person #1 in each group will name something they fear, while Person #2 walks around them, wrapping them in toilet paper. Person #3 writes down the fear. Person #1 names 3-5 fears, as the process continues. Person #2 separates toilet paper from rest of roll when done wrapping.

Person #1 will then speak an affirmation or technique to handle each fear. Person #3 can remind them of what fears were listed. During this process, Person #2 unwraps Person #1 as affirmations and techniques are given. Person #1 takes their toilet paper and sets it aside to use at the Closing.

We will then switch roles until everyone in the group has had the experience. *(Proceed as indicated.)*

Say:

- How did it feel to be wrapped up by your fears? How is this like experiencing fear in your daily lives?
- How did it feel to gradually be set free?
- What affirmations and techniques (of yours or others) do you think might be most useful to you in the future?



Closing

Say: We have practiced freeing ourselves from our fears today, so that we can welcome change into our lives. In a moment, we will each take turns placing our individual toilet paper from our activity into this pot while affirming "God helps me to welcome change gladly." We will then burn our "fears" into ashes. *(Proceed as indicated.)*

Say: Thank you, God, for the power within us to overcome fear. Amen.

Supplies

Rolls of toilet paper, 1 per 3 people
Paper
Pens

Supplies

Large pot lined in aluminum foil, sitting on tray lined with aluminum foil
Long-handled lighter
Pitcher of water
Or
Large paper bag (replaces all above)

If unable to have open flame in room, invite Uniteens to place toilet paper into paper bag and carry to outside trashcan.

These suggestions are to encourage Uniteens to connect what is happening in their lives to their spirituality. Use to enhance lessons and/or to continue lesson theme at home. Check any website before recommending it, as web content frequently changes.



Media Connection

- Find a new song (unfamiliar to you) on the web or iTunes that relates to change and observe how it ends. Share with another person next week if you like.



Theme Extender

Focus

To explore how to welcome change.

Supplies

Copies of Bible story

Prepare Ahead

Copy Bible story, 1 per person.

Additional Lesson

This section offers additional story ideas for another date. It can also serve as an alternate to the main story/experience.

Read or invite group members to take turns reading the Bible story below to the group.

Bible Story: The Israelites' Travel Troubles Exodus 14:10-14, 16:1-5, 17:1-6 (New Century Version)

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for many years. Finally their leader Moses convinced the Egyptian pharaoh to let them leave Egypt to travel toward the Promised Land of Israel. They had to travel across a large desert to get there, and encountered a lot of difficulties along the way.

Shortly after they began their trek across the desert, the Egyptian ruler changed his mind about letting them leave, and sent his army out to bring them back.

When the Israelites saw the king and his army coming after them, they were very frightened and cried to the Lord for help. They said to Moses, "What have you done to us? Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the desert? There were plenty of graves for us in Egypt. We told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone; we will stay and serve the Egyptians.' Now we will die in the desert."

But Moses answered, "Don't be afraid! Stand still and you will see the Lord save you today. You will never see these Egyptians again after today. You only need to remain calm; the Lord will fight for you."

—Exodus 14:10-14

The Israelites crossed over the Red Sea to dry land, but the Egyptian army chasing them drowned in the sea.

Later, after months of travel in the desert, the Israelites became hungry and tired.

The whole Israelite community ... grumbled to Moses and [his brother] Aaron in the desert. They said to them, "It would have been better if the Lord had killed us in the land of Egypt. There we had meat to eat and all the food we wanted. But you have brought us into this desert to starve us to death."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will cause food to fall like rain from the sky for all of you." —Exodus 16:1-4

That evening quail came to their camp, and in the morning manna was on the ground. Manna is a bread-like substance like small white seeds that tastes like wafers made with honey. From the manna and quail, they had plenty to eat the entire 40 years they were in the desert.

Later on in their journey, they ran out of water.

The people were very thirsty for water, so they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Was it to kill us, our children, and our farm animals with thirst?" —Exodus 17:3

Moses prayed to God, who directed him to a rock at Mt. Sinai. God guided Moses to hit the rock with his walking stick, and water came out from the rock, so that all could drink.

Discussion

All questions need not be asked. Continue as long as interest is maintained. Several people may answer each question.

- How did the Israelites feel when they saw the army coming after them?
- When they were starving, how did they react?
- What feelings do you think the people were expressing?
- What were they afraid of?
- What changes do you think they had to make in their lives in order to make this journey? Why might it have been worth it to them to make the changes?
- How did they handle the changes that they had to make? What other choices could they have made?
- How did their leader, Moses, respond to their grumblings?

- What was God's response?
- What actually happened as compared to their fears?
- What is a difficult change that you have experienced in the past year?
- Where did you find support during this time? What was helpful to you?
(*Encourage each person to share a change and who or what helped them before moving into the activity.*)

Say: Through our sharing we have heard of many ways you have been helped or have helped yourself during a change. Let's take a look at Unity's 3rd Basic Principle and what it can teach us about change. (*Refer to poster.*)

Principle 3

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

- When we are facing a change in our lives that we don't want, what choices do we have, according to this statement?
- What happens in our lives as a result of making those choices?
- What does all of this have to do with welcoming change into our lives?

Say: Let's take a closer look at change in your life through an activity.

Supplies

Copies of handout
Pens

Creative Experience: What's Next? chart

Say: Moses and the Israelites experienced some huge changes in their lives. Think about some big change that has happened in your life. Above the sections of the handout page, identify what the big change was. What were your thoughts and feelings during the experience? Fill in the sections of your paper indicating what was going on for you at the time.

"How else could it be?" means how else would you like this situation to be. How else could it have turned out?

"What's next?" means what can you do now to accept or change this situation.
Proceed as indicated, then discuss in group.

Principle 3

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Ask:

- How does it feel to be able to look at a change with "other" eyes?
- How does Unity Principle 3 relate to your experience? (*Indicate poster.*)
- How can your awareness of the Christ within you help you through change?
- If you had to rewind your life and go through this experience again, what messages/thoughts would be helpful to keep telling yourself?

What's Next?

My Big Change

Feelings/thoughts before:	Feelings/thoughts during:	Feelings/thoughts after:	How else could it be?	What's next?