

# Uniteens on the Quest

## Lesson 3: What God is Defining the Indefinable

### Facilitator's Overview:

God can be experienced more easily than understood. Moving Forward sets the stage for remembering experiences of God and sets the mood for the rest of the lesson. Music and prayer from the Native American tradition, Biblical passages equating God with love, Unity concepts and principles about God blend to open minds to a greater concept of how God might be experienced. An opportunity to share personal experiences as well as concepts of God appears in Adventures of the Mind. It is here that paradoxes of God can be explored. The ability to hold opposite concepts, forces one out of a purely intellectual space, expanding the ability to experience the sacred at a deeper level. The God Collage gives participants an opportunity to recognize God within the physical realm, as the basic elements, everywhere present, even in the "bad" things. In the Wrap-Up, sharing and affirming help anchor what has been discovered. In the final activity, Turning In, we sing as a reminder that God is love and love is what we are.

**Map Travelers** create a God collage on the map, which can be cut out and cut up later for participants during the curriculum extender.

## Stepping Out

### The Gathering

Welcome, Opening Prayer (optional) Introductions, Check-In  
(Check-in idea: "When I think of God I think of...")

### Moving Forward

God exploring

**Materials:** String of white lights arranged in a circle in the darkened room

- Objects that represent what God is or *places where God is experienced* (pictures of people, flowers, mountains, sunsets, etc.) placed around the circle of lights..
- Tape deck or CD playing a variety of background music

Around a circle of lights, you will have placed objects and/or pictures that represent what God is. Invite teens to sit quietly around this circle and "feel the mood" of the environment, reflecting upon some of the objects and pictures. Ask them, "Which of the objects or pictures best expresses God to you and why?" Welcome sharing. Then ask, "If you were to add something to the circle that expresses God, what would it be?"

**Tip:** Affirmations, song, and scripture can be used wherever they fit.

## Music Along the Way

“Oh Great Spirit.” *Circle of Song p. 6*

## Sacred Guiding Words

I John 4:8 “God is Love”

or

I John 4:7-8 “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God, and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us.”

**Quest Thoughts:** There are many Names for God: Truth, Love, Good, Higher power, Universal Mind, Creative Force, Great Spirit, Father/Mother, The Presence, Etc. Each of us can only know the God of our experience. There is only One Presence and One Power in the universe and in our lives, God the Good.

## Adventures

### Adventures of the Mind

**Directions:** Use **some** of these questions in interactive discussion to draw out the following points. (*Teens on the Quest Part I, p. 4*)

1. **What is God?** God is many things to many people. (*Unity views God as omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent: and as creator, creative idea (creation), and creative activity. It is God’s all pervading presence within all things that creates our unity or our oneness with all that is. God is love. God is Truth. God is Good. God is Divine Mind. God is, and because God is...all is well.*)
2. **What are some ways in which we experience or “know” God?** (*Each person has his or her own unique way or ways of experiencing God. Some experience God through prayer and meditation. For many, entering the Silence is what brings them closest to knowing God’s presence. Others find God in the faces of the people they meet or as they take a walk in nature. Creative pursuits, such as dance or art or music, enliven the spirit within us and can bring us to a consciousness of ourselves as co-creators with God, as unique expressions of God in the world.*)
3. **What can block us from a consciousness of God’s presence in our lives?** (*We have all had the experience of feeling separate from God. Even though there is nowhere that God is not present with us, we can still live through moments in which we are now conscious of God’s loving presence. Often, we experience a sense of separation when we are afraid. Fear can blind us to the truth, block us*

*from knowing our freedom, and prevent us from knowing our unity with god and each other. Some say that the opposite of love is not hate, but fear.)*

4. **Contemplate: How has your idea of what God is changed over the years? How have your life experiences influenced this change? How do you define God?**
  
5. **Paradox: Has anything ever happened to you or to someone you love that you felt was bad? If God is present everywhere, can you find God in that situation? Share. Can God be your personal friend and be a constant unchanging principle or law? Discuss. Do you ever experience God expressing as you, as others, or as nature? When? Could it be all the time?**

**Sidebar: Unity principle #1:** God is absolute good, everywhere present.

## **Adventure of the Soul**

God collage

*(Teens on the Quest Part I. p. 71, adapted)*

**Materials:** Copies of song, “Oh Great Spirit” from *Circle of Song*, p. 6, magazines, scissors, glue, posterboard

Invite teens to sing the chant “Oh Great Spirit,” from *Circle of Song* p. 6. Replace the words “sun, moon, sky, and sea” with earth, air, fire, and sea,” representing the four elements. After singing, invite them to create a group collage of what God is—expressing through the four elements. They may want to begin by drawing a framework for the collage that reflects the areas that the song indicates that God is within, including “inside... and all around me.”

Once the framework is established, the teens may cut out pictures from the magazines that represent the four elements and place them in the appropriate quadrant. For “inside me,” pictures of people might work, since people contain aspects of all four elements. Regardless, allow your group to create whatever is occurring to them. *They* are the creators, and thus, they have the authority to decide what is created.

Encourage teens to place pictures representing how God shows up in the world in ways that may not seem good at first . tornado, lightning, flood, earthquake to illustrate the paradox.

**Map Travelers:** As a group determine how to locate the collage within the map, as a reminder that God is within everything.

## **Adventures of the Heart**

Oh Great Spirit Prayer

*Earth Prayers* p. 192-193

Say this prayer facing the different directions. Have participants take turns reading it. If weather permits, go outside to do this.

## **Closing Campfire**

### **Sharing Our Discoveries**

What has been the most meaningful part of today's experience for each of you?

### **Affirming Our Journey**

This week let's recognize God in everything we see—in ourselves, other people, nature, and the elements. Together let's affirm:

"There is only one Power and one Presence in the Universe and in our lives, God the Good."

Materials: Bible, copies of song "Love is the Only Power" from *Circle of Song*, p. 206 or *Wings of Song*, p. 119.

### **Turning In**

God is love

*Invite teens to come together in a circle for closing.*

Gather together in your sacred circle, and read 1 John 4:7,8 where John says, "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love." After reading, invite teens to stand and sing, "Love Is the Only Power," from *Circle of Song*, p. 206. You may want to invite teens to sing to partners, adding hand movements, as described in *Circle of Song*.