



Soulful Home

Finding the Sacred in
Everyday Spaces



Inclusion
February 2025

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A Blessing of Inclusion

Thanks to Our Widening the Circle Team

We thank [The Widening The Circle Team](#) for their insight and help with this packet. Their support and research run throughout this packet, from the stories to the activities. Their help in putting inclusion and love at the center of our packets is a vital part of helping families also center love in their faithful everyday moments.

The Welcome Mat

Exploring the Practice of Inclusion as a Family

As a parent, there are so many things I want for my family. If I sat down and made a list, it would be miles long, because as my family grows and changes so do my hopes and dreams for it.

That said, there are a handful of things, a handful of wants, hopes, and dreams, that are pretty steadfast. A handful of things that, no matter how my family grows and changes, will always be something I strive for. One of those things is that we are a family of inclusion!

I just can't imagine not wanting to raise my children to actively embrace and value diversity. I want them to embrace what makes them different and unique, and I want them to embrace what makes others different and unique too.

My guess is most other UU families feel the same way!!

And it seems to me that this is the way we achieve *a world* of inclusion: family by family. That is not to diminish other ways of building a diversity-celebrating world. It's just to say that cultivating families of inclusion is no small thing. Remembering this is what this month's packet is all about.

So, friends, never forget what you cultivate in your family, you are also cultivating in the world. The inclusion we build within the walls of our homes always leaks out into the world.

Happy world changing this month!

April



At the Table

Exploring Repair Through Discussions

The At the Table section engages the theme through question-driven family discussions. The questions are designed to be used at a family gathering, most often dinner, but also during a quiet moment in the living room, before a board game night, or while driving in the car. This section strengthens the bonds within a family as members learn more about each other by asking and answering evocative questions.

How To Go About It

The most straightforward way to do this is simply to have parents and/or caregivers read off the questions they think will resonate the most with family members and have everyone take turns answering.

Another fun way to do this is to create [a family question jar](#). To make this easier for you, we've listed all the questions below **at the end of this packet** with dotted lines you can cut along to make "question strips." You can then pull out the question jar and have family members choose a question/strip a few times each week.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you define or explain what it means to be inclusive? What words are similar to inclusion? How many can you name?
2. What is your favorite way to welcome new neighbors, classmates, people to your church, or other kids into your troops/groups/clubs/sports, etc.?
3. Can you be inclusive without using words? What would that look and feel like?
4. Where—other than your actual home—do you feel most “at home”?
5. When you see someone on the outskirts of a group, not sure how to join in, what do you usually do? When it's you on the outskirts of a group, what would you like someone to do?
6. Who in the family is the best at meeting new people? What makes them great at it?
7. When was the last time you were the “new kid”? Do you remember who the first person was to reach out and help you feel included?
8. Without words and using only your body (like charades), show how being welcomed into a group feels.
9. What makes our church an inclusive place? How could you help it be even better at it?
10. When someone new comes into a group of people you know well already, how are you most likely to react? What's something you'd like to try the next time this happens?
11. How are you most likely to react when you sense that you're not included?
12. Who in your life has made you feel the most included and why?
13. What was one thing you did today to include someone else?



At Play

Playing With Inclusion as a Family

At Play suggests games, crafts, and activities to help families experience the theme through joy and fun.

Option A: This Month's Treasure Hunts:

We have two treasure hunts this month. Pick the one that interests you most or have fun doing them both!

Treasure Hunt #1: How inclusive is your home?

Search for examples of inclusion in your home. Be sure to remind family members that you may not be able to check everything off and that is ok. The goal of this treasure hunt is to begin looking at the ways your home is inclusive and shed light on other things that can be done to make it more inclusive. Here are some examples to get you started

- Stool in the bathroom or kitchen (being inclusive of height difference)
- Different styles of clothing (being inclusive of different styles)
- Books/Movies with LGBTQIA+ characters (being inclusive diversity)
- Books/Movies with BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) characters (being inclusive of race)
- No stairs (mobility inclusivity)
- Does anyone listen to music that is not in English?
- How many people know how to turn on the subtitles on the TV?
- Does anyone know sign language?
- Do you have sensory inclusive toys (like fidget spinners) and or tools (like noise canceling headphones) in your house
- Are your hallways wide enough and bathrooms designed for wheelchairs?
- Other ways your home is inclusive and welcoming: _____

Treasure Hunt #2: Option A: How inclusive is your neighborhood?

Search for examples of inclusion in your neighborhood. See if you can find...

- A church marquis in a language other than the one(s) you speak
- A Pride flag in the window of a business
- A public building with a ramp in addition to stairs out front
- A room set aside for nursing a baby
- A "pets welcome" sign
- Free, outdoor music that someone could get to without a car
- Someone doing an act of kindness for someone they don't know
- Children playing a game that you're unfamiliar with
- A city house with a chicken coop in their yard
- A public sign with Braille lettering on it



Option B: Craft Night: Values Bracelets

Gather the family around the table to a UU spin on a classic craft. “Values Bracelets” that are basically friendship bracelets with some fancy beads woven in that represent the values that your family is committed to intentionally **including** in their lives?

Here are some recourse to help you get started

- Written Step by Step Guide to making bracelets:
<https://otherwisemazing.com/how-to-make-friendship-bracelets-with-beads/>
- Visual Step by Step Guide to making bracelets:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiCmnqdlOHM>
- Bracelet Making Kits: [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Option C: Inclusion/Multicultural Puzzle

Work together as a family (being sure to INCLUDE everyone) to solve an Inclusion/Multicultural Puzzle. Have fun choosing puzzles or two that feature diverse scenes, such as cultural festivals, landmarks, or global scenes, and then work together to assemble the pieces.

Here are some examples

- [Lakeshore Celebrating Diversity Floor Puzzle](#)
- [All are Welcome Here Jigsaw Puzzle, 1000 Pieces](#)
- [Beautiful Dresses from Around The World 500 Pieces](#)
- [World Landmarks Travel Puzzle 1000 Pieces](#)



At the Bedside and in the Book Nook

At The Bedside & In the Nook suggests books that help families engage the monthly themes with their imagination. This story-centered section honors the unique way stories enrich our sense of what's possible, expand our empathy, and build our identities.

Everyone Belongs, by Heather Avis (suggested for kids 3-7)

This vibrant and joyful picture book encourages children to not only value all people but to also make room for their differences. Macy and Tru are putting on a spectacular talent show to highlight the ways they love to perform. Other kids arrive, eager to participate but unsure if they'll be welcomed. Since the two sisters know that everything is a lot more fun when everybody's included, they're determined to find a role in the show for each person.

Invitation to Connect: Parents, ask your children what their favorite part of the book might be.

You Are Not Alone, by Alphabet Rockers (suggested for kids 4-8)

It can be scary to feel like you're all on your own, especially in the face of prejudice and injustice. But always remember you are not alone! With uplifting text and colorful art, You Are Not Alone shows readers that when we step up to support one another, we can make a world where everyone knows they belong.

Invitation to Connect: Parents use this as an opportunity to share a story about a time when you felt alone and how you handled it and who was there for you. Then, ask your child(ren) to share a story about a time they felt on their own and who reminded them that they are not.

A Kids Book About Being Inclusive, by Ashton Mota (suggested for kids 5-9)

This is a wonderful book that offers kids and families a clear explanation of what inclusivity is and what it means to be inclusive. This book also lifts up that being inclusive is a choice we can make every day and that when we learn to see the beauty in our differences, we can embrace the rich, diverse, and amazing world we live in together!

Invitation to Connect: Parents use this as an opportunity to share a story about yourself and a choice that was based on being inclusive. Then, ask your child(ren) to share a story about a choice they have made.

Inclusive Ninja: An Anti-bullying Children's Book About Inclusion, Compassion, and Diversity They Called Us Enemy

By Mary Nhin (suggested for kids 10 and under)

Life is hard. It's even harder for children who are just trying to figure things out. Dive into this wonderful book that shares how we can all be an advocate for inclusion in this diverse, anti-bullying book about inclusion and diversity.

Invitation to Connect: Parents, ask your children how they can be an advocate for inclusion.



They Called Us Enemy: A Graphic Memoir

by George Takei (suggested for kids 10 and up)

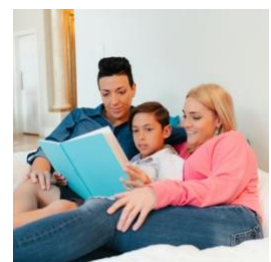
A stunning graphic memoir recounting actor/author/activist George Takei's childhood imprisoned within American concentration camps during World War II. Experience the forces that shaped an American icon -- and America itself -- in this gripping tale of courage, country, loyalty, and love.

George Takei has captured hearts and minds worldwide with his captivating stage presence and outspoken commitment to equal rights. But long before he braved new frontiers in Star Trek, he woke up as a four-year-old boy to find his own birth country at war with his father's -- and their entire family forced from their home into an uncertain future.

In 1942, at the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, every person of Japanese descent on the west coast was rounded up and shipped to one of ten "relocation centers," hundreds or thousands of miles from home, where they would be held for years under armed guard.

They Called Us Enemy is Takei's firsthand account of those years behind barbed wire, the joys and terrors of growing up under legalized racism, his mother's hard choices, his father's faith in democracy, and the way those experiences planted the seeds for his astonishing future.

What does it mean to be American? Who gets to decide? When the world is against you, what can one person do? To answer these questions, George Takei joins co-writers Justin Eisinger & Steven Scott and artist Harmony Becker for the journey of a lifetime.



In Front of the Screen

Watching Meaningful Movies Together

In Front of the Screen offers families ways to connect with the monthly theme and each other through movies and TV shows.

[Bluey - Season 3 Episode 30 "Turtle Boy"](#) (G)

Dougie is a young dog who uses Auslan sign language to communicate with his mom. Dougie is a representation of the Deaf community, and the episode was created in collaboration with Deaf Connect

Invitation to Connect: *After watching, talk about how you could be inclusive if you met a child at the playground who was deaf and try learning some basic ASL together*

[Zootopia](#) (PG, 5+)

A heartwarming story about a city where all different animals live together. A bunny who dreams of being a police officer and a very sly fox who team up to solve a unique case happening around the metropolis.

Invitation to Connect: *Parents, here's your chance to share stories about how you have been included or excluded from things in your life.*

[How to Train Your Dragon](#) (PG)

A fun adventure movie that highlights the importance of accommodations and being inclusive towards people, or in this case, dragons with a physical disability. Snuggle up as a family and watch the story of Toothless, a young dragon who isn't able to fly because of an accident that damaged his tail, and how a young boy befriends him and makes him a prosthetic.

Invitation to Connect: *Parents, use this movie as an opportunity to talk to your kids about ways they can help those with physical limits be included.*

[The Miracle Worker](#) (Not rated but recommended for kids 9+)

A powerful movie about devoted teacher Anne Sullivan (Alison Elliott), who leads Helen Keller, a child who was born deaf, blind, and non-speaking out of solitude, and helps integrate and include her into the world around her.

Invitation to Connect: *Parents, use this movie as an opportunity to talk to your kids about how they can help lift up some of the untold stories.*

[CODA](#) (PG-13)

Seventeen-year-old Ruby is the sole hearing member of a deaf family -- a CODA, child of deaf adults. Her life revolves around acting as interpreter for her parents and working on the family's struggling fishing boat every day before school with her father and older brother. But when Ruby joins her high school's choir club, she discovers a gift for singing. Encouraged by her enthusiastic, tough-love choirmaster, Ruby finds herself torn between the obligations she feels to her family and the pursuit of her own dreams.

['CODA' Review](#)



In the Toolbox

Strategies to Help Our Kids Navigate the Complicated Stuff

In the Toolbox offers parents resources to better understand the well-established and newly emerging challenges of being a child today. It's all about equipping parents to be better guides and companions for their kids.

Resource One: Sharing

Sharing can be considered a form of inclusivity, as it demonstrates a willingness to involve others, make space for diverse perspectives, and create a sense of belonging by actively including others in an activity or decision-making process; essentially, it's about not keeping things solely to yourself and allowing others to participate. Here are a few different resources on how to help your children learn to share and what to do if they don't want to share in the moment.

- Gentle Parenting Tips to Teach Children to Share
<https://www.oonaalexander.co.uk/children-learn-to-share-by-choice/>
- Sharing and learning to share - Raising Children Network
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/behaviour/friends-siblings/sharing>
- "I DON'T WANT TO SHARE!": Sharing Does Not Come Naturally to Kids
<https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/sibling-rivalry/sharing/>

Resource Two: Raising an Inclusive Child

<https://thepakmagparentspodcast.libsyn.com/episode-105-raising-an-inclusive-child>

Diversity is a fact of life, however, teaching children about differences can feel tricky. As adults, we can be a little unsure if we're sending the right message or how to start that conversation, and that puts us off from going there in the first place. However it's essential for us as parents to teach our children about diversity and inclusion through both conversations and actions. In this episode, Bree chats with Julia Nowland as she explains to us how we can help our children understand the value of inclusivity and accept those around them for who they are.

Resource Three: 7 Key Steps to Raising Inclusive Kids

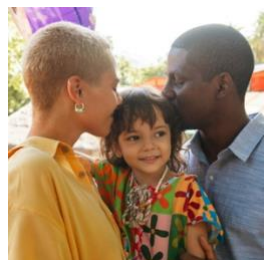
https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/raising-inclusive-kids?srsId=AfmBOorIXfwZKKKQ2bKAituyce4HCJDU8t74hUg76_RbeA245GIWFXy

We want to raise inclusive, accepting children who celebrate diversity. We hope our children will feel comfortable in their own skin while appreciating that not everyone looks, talks, or thinks like them. It turns out that these conversations aren't as scary as we think. Children are curious and open-minded. They don't feel discomfort about differences, and you don't need to have the perfect words. These seven simple strategies will help you raise children who accept and celebrate themselves and others.

Resource Four: IEP Training for Parents

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESww2ot4gMw>

Sometimes, as parents, it is our children who need us to advocate for their inclusion, but we are not sure how or where to begin. This resource provides information from Special Education Advocate Melissa Yelito on ways to simplify the often (always?!) overwhelming IEP process, including information on eligibility, evaluations, terms, laws & timelines, educational placement, and more.



On the Porch

Connecting and Sharing Stories with [Your Village](#)

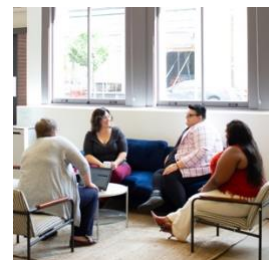
On the Porch uses thoughtful questions to open space for you and your parenting partners or parent/caregiver friends to connect more deeply with each other and think more deeply about how the monthly theme has shown up in your life and can show up in a more intentional way.

How to Go About It

Bring these questions with you when the time comes to hang out with your co-parent or parenting/caregiver buddy. Treat the questions less as a quiz and more like doorways inviting you into the world of mutual storytelling and memory. Go through them all, or pick a few that call to you most.

Questions

1. All of us have a story of being excluded. What's yours? Do you carry this story lightly, or does it weigh on you?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being sorely disappointed and 10 being extremely pleased, how are you doing with your community's efforts (your town, congregation, family, etc.) at racial justice and racial reconciliation? Where are you in this story? Do you feel excluded by it? Helpless to change it? Empowered?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how good are you at being open to people who disagree with you politically? How good were you at it 10 years ago? What has led to the difference between now and then?
4. Playing on teams or being part of clubs as a child, did you feel included easily, effortfully, or not at all?
5. What is society's biggest misunderstanding about inclusion?
6. What is your relationship to "the American dream"? Have you always been included among those who have access to that dream? Or have you had to fight hard to be included in that group? What first comes to mind when you hear the phrase, American Dream? What feeling arises?
7. What types of people do you have the hardest time being open to? What experiences in your past have led to you being reactive to this type of person? What mental tools and tricks do you use to push yourself to be more open to them?
8. What person, historical or known to you, do you most admire for their inclusivity and commitment to equity and why?
9. What risk-taking behavior from your youth would you want to include in your life again, just maybe in a smaller dose?
10. How do you define inclusion, and what it means to be inclusive?
11. If you could go back and change a moment of being excluded or excluding someone else, what would it be?
12. What part of your personality do you wish your family of origin would have included and welcomed more enthusiastically?
13. Have you ever had an experience that gave you a cosmic sense of being included? A feeling of being at one with everyone and everything around you? Or a moment when you felt embraced or loved by the universe itself? If so, how did that experience change you?



Alongside the Chalice

Family spiritual practices and rituals are crucial for kids, youth, and adults. While lighting a chalice at home is a beautiful family practice, it can often be the only explicit UU identity practice we bring into our homes. So our Alongside the Chalice section offers a different UU practice, observance, or ritual for families to try out each month, with the hope that a few stick and become woven into the repeated and treasured rhythms of family life.

Inclusion Affirmations

Affirmations can be a very powerful spiritual practice, especially when they are used with intention and mindfulness. While affirmations are often associated with positive thinking and personal development, they can also be deeply spiritual tools when approached as a way to connect with one's higher self, the divine, or universal energy. In many spiritual traditions, prayer is a way of communing with the divine. Affirmations can take on a similar function when viewed as intentional expressions of faith or trust in the divine. They can act as prayers of affirmation, allowing you to express your deepest beliefs and intentions in a direct, personal way.

This month, introduce inclusion affirmations to your family by beginning or ending the day with affirmations that reinforce the interconnectedness of all people. Repeating these affirmations can create a strong sense of shared humanity and mutual respect. It helps children understand that everyone, regardless of their background or differences, is part of a larger community, deserving of kindness and acceptance.

How to do it

- Explain to everyone that an inclusion affirmation is a powerful way to remind ourselves of the inherent worth and dignity of every person, regardless of their differences, and that they help us to have an attitude of acceptance, compassion, and unity in our relationships with others.
- Each family member takes a turn coming up with an inclusion affirmation and teaching it to the family.
- The family can say statements like, "We are all connected," "Every person has value," or "We celebrate our differences." You can adapt the affirmations to focus on inclusion, compassion, and unity.

Key Elements of Spiritual Affirmations

Intention: Affirmations become a spiritual practice when they are done with intention and mindfulness. It's not just about saying positive words but about consciously aligning with a higher purpose or spiritual truth.

Repetition: Repeating affirmations regularly helps to embed these beliefs into your subconscious mind and energy field, allowing them to shape your thoughts, emotions, and actions in a spiritual way.

Alignment with Core Values: Affirmations that reflect spiritual values—such as love, peace, unity, compassion, and trust—are more likely to deepen your spiritual practice and help you live in alignment with those values.



The Extra Mile

The Extra Mile section is for families who want to continue exploring the theme of the month through larger adventures, more complex projects, or simply through additional modalities not otherwise included in the packets. A bit more effort, but well worth it!

Inclusive Dinner Party

We all have different ideas of "comfort food," the foods we turn to again and again when we need to feel the warm hug of familiarity, safety, happiness, and warmth. This month, if your family is feeling up to going the extra mile, have an inclusive dinner party where everyone gets to add their comfort foods to the menu. Here are two ways to go about it:

1. Have everyone in your household spend some time thinking about their favorite comfort food (be sure not to put any other stipulation on it; if our kiddo says crackers, then cracker it is this meal is about the experience, not necessarily the nutrition value) and once a food or dish has been chosen, add it to the list. Then, as a family, we go shopping for everything that is needed for each food/dish. Get everyone involved in the making of each food/dish (even if that just means arranging the cracker nicely on a plate), and then as you sit down to eat as a family, invite everyone to share why they picked the food they did and what makes it a comfort food for them.
2. You could also take this up a notch and have an actual dinner party by inviting friends or family to come over, and each bring a dish of their favorite comfort food. As you sit down to eat, invite everyone to share why they picked the food they did and what makes it a comfort food for them.



Blessing of Inclusion

Dear fellow raisers of tiny humans,
"you got this" chanters,
and "How would that make you feel?" reminders,

May our home be a place where all are included and welcomed, where each voice is heard, and where every heart is cherished.

May you feel confident as you help your children recognize that our differences make us whole, and our uniqueness brings us closer together.

May you breathe easy at the site of extra shoes at your doorway or many bikes on your lawn, for you know that they are there because your home is a sanctuary of love and understanding, where compassion flows freely, and kindness guides our words and actions.

May you help your children learn to treat their imperfect parts tenderly, knowing that their fears and foibles make us human and open the door to being gentle with the fears and foibles of others.

May the inclusion you cultivate in your home leak out into the world, joining the river of other families who long for a world where difference is celebrated and seen as a source of strength.

May your family blossom in the spirit of inclusion, where there is no "other" but only those who are yet to be welcomed in.

Blessed are we in our diversity and blessed are we in our oneness.

May it be so.

~ **April**



Question Jar Cut-Outs

Notice that there are a few blank strips at the bottom of the list.

We invite you to write your own questions on those strips.

We also remind you that questions that evoke stories are often the most impactful.

**How do you define or explain what it means to be inclusive?
What words are similar to inclusion? How many can you name?**

**What is your favorite way to welcome new neighbors, classmates,
people to your church, or other kids into your
troops/groups/clubs/sports, etc.?**

**Can you be inclusive without using words? What would
that look and feel like?**

Where—other than your actual home—do you feel most “at home”?

**When you see someone on the outskirts of a group, not sure how
to join in, what do you usually do? When it's you on the outskirts
of a group, what would you like someone to do?**

**Who in the family is the best at meeting new people?
What makes them great at it?**

**When was the last time you were the “new kid”?
Do you remember who the first person was to reach out and help
you feel included?**

**Without words and using only your body (like charades), show how
being welcomed into a group feels.**

**What makes our church an inclusive place? How could you help it
be even better at it?**

**When someone new comes into a group of people you know well
already, how are you most likely to react? What's something you'd
like to try the next time this happens?**

**How are you most likely to react when you sense that
you're not included?**

Who in your life has made you feel the most included and why?

What was one thing you did today to include someone else?

Connect with More Inspiration for You and Your Family!

Parents can Join our Facebook and Instagram pages for
daily Inspiration on our themes:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/?ref=settings>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/soul_matters_circle/

Parents and youth will want to check out
our [Spotify](#) & [YouTube](#) music playlists on the monthly themes.

Credits

Soulful Home packets are prepared by

April Rosario,

Our Soul Matters Director of RE Resources and Family Ministry Coordinator

You are free to use any of this material verbatim in worship, newsletters
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