



Welcome to RE!

This month's theme is Deep Listening

In our weekly newsletters this month you will find:

- Gathering Together Video: A song, some thoughts on our theme and a cool activity
- Songs of Joy!
- A Mindful Moment: *New this month!*
- Soulful Connections: These are activities, projects, invitations for connection
- Sweet Stories for RE: An audio file to listen to or video link to watch

This week we practice **Listening to our Heart**

Our faith reminds us to practice compassion and kindness. It's part of our Second UU Principle, "Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations," which we restate in kid friendly language as "all people should be treated fairly and kindly." We remember this principle when we make choices in the world, whether it's in our communications with friends and family or when we voice our opinions and speak our truth. It's what will guide you when you go to the voting booths (or mail-in your ballot) and what guides our children when they make decisions with friends.

An important part of practicing kindness and coming from a place of compassion is being able to listen to your heart. When our hearts are clear and centered, we can access our intuition to guide us toward our highest good. And when we listen with our hearts and our full attention, that is what nurtures trust and develops compassion between people.

Gathering Together: Listening With Our Ears and Our Hearts

In [this week's video](#), we bring back the Wonder Box from RE and I invite a special guest to open it. My guest teaches me an important lesson in listening with my heart (because I forget to at first!)

Songs of Joy: Listening

This song was written by Lea Morris, in partnership with the SoulMatters curriculum. It is a lovely song about opening our hearts to the messages coming from spirit and from within ourselves. [Here is a video of Lea singing](#) with her kids and then talking with them about what listening means to them. [Here is the audio](#) of the song.

Listening

I'm Listening. I am listening. Spirit speak to me
repeat

My hands are wide open. Eyes are wide open. To see what I may be
repeat beginning

A Mindful Moment: I am Listening

Let's try this from the Soulful Home guide, part of the [SoulMatters offerings](#):

“When you first wake up in the morning, maybe even before you fully open your eyes, say to yourself, “I am listening.” Imagine that--you, laying in your bed, gently moving from your subconscious to your conscious mind, from dream to thought, from rest to activity--speaking silently to the great beyond, “I am listening.” How does it shift your approach to the coming day when you begin with, “I am listening”?”

Soulful Connections: Some Listening Games

Each week we will be offering an activity, project, outdoor explore or community connection to bring some of the gifts of the UU faith and of our congregation into your home.

This week, let's practice listening with our ears and listening with our hearts with a few games!

1. Quiet Coyote: My family's favorite camping game that even my 13 yr old still gets excited about goes like this:
 - One person stands in the center of an outdoor space, with a blindfold or their eyes closed
 - Everyone else spreads out in a wide circle around the center person
 - Slowly, silently and mindfully, everyone tries to creep into the center to touch the blindfolded person
 - If the blindfolded person hears a noise, they point in the direction of the sound
 - If they point at you, you must back up (either three giant steps, or back to where you began) and then begin again trying to silently step forward
 - The game ends when someone succeeds in touching the middle person
2. A Sound Scavenger Hunt: See how many different sounds you can hear this week! Send me a list and I'll share some of our favorites. For an extra challenge, see if you can find the sound of: running water, animals communicating, love, sleep, excitement, connection.
3. Collective Count to 21: This is a tuning in game that builds focus and connection between three or more people. Sit in a circle and simply try to count to 21 together. The rules are you can't say two numbers in a row and you can't say a number at the same time as anyone else. If you do, you start back at 1. You also can't motion or gesture to show who's turn it is or even who begins.. So the practice is to deeply connect to the people around you, tune in to them and their energy and listen to when your heart says to speak.

Sweet Stories for RE: Listening brings Empathy

This week, we have two picture books that celebrate the power and wonder of listening deeply to each other and to the earth. They are both great for any age, but the second one is longer and more detailed.

- [The Rabbit Listened](#) by Cori Doerrfeld is a lovely story about feeling upset and the power of empathy
- [Listening With My Heart](#) by Gabi Garcia is a story about a young girl, Esperanza, who practices showing kindness to others and most importantly, to herself.

We hope you are able to weave some of these offerings into the tapestry of your family days.

May they bring you joy and connection.

