



**My Chalice**

**BOOK**

**A Beginners Guide**

10th Anniversary Edition

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# Author's Note

## Reflecting on 10 Years of “My Chalica Book”

Hello Beloveds,

It's hard for me to believe it's been 10 years since I drafted the original “My Chalica Book: A Beginners Guide.” At the time, I couldn't have imagined how widely this little booklet would be distributed (going so far as to be featured in a HuffPost article in 2013), I just thought I was creating something useful for my little congregation. But, here we are, 10 years later, and every year more and more of you reach out to me, asking for permission to use this booklet in your home congregations. As always, the answer is YES! Over the years, your interest has shown me that I have something of value to offer the wider UU world. Honestly, without all of your support, I never would have had the confidence to put some of my other works out there; works like “Superhero Academy” or “Steampunk Summer Camp” (both of which are available at <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Uure>) So, YES, a thousand times, YES, please use this resources as you see fit.

However, a quick note before you proceed: for those of you familiar with previous versions of this booklet, you may notice a few changes have been made for this, the 10th anniversary edition. What changes? Well, to begin, the eighth principle has finally been added. My sincerest apologies that it has taken me so long to add the eighth principle; it's been several years since I've had the time or capacity to update to this booklet. Second, you may notice certain wordings have changed. Some of these changes reflect a shift in my understanding of what is (and is not) inclusive language, and some of these changes reflect just how long it has been since Chalica was introduced to Unitarian Universalism (it's not so ‘new’ anymore). Finally, it's worth mentioning that some of the activity suggestions have been changed, for no other reason than I thought of something that fit the prompt better.

In conclusion, I just want to say “Thank You.” Thank you to all of you who, through your emotional and intellectual labor, have taught me so much about life. Thank you to all of you who continue to live into your Unitarian Universalist faith, not just during Chalica, but all year. And, thank you to all of you who showed me I had something of value to offer to the fray.

In faith and service,

- Meredith Plummer

# Introduction to Chalica

Chalica is a uniquely UU holiday dreamed up by Darlene Marshall in 2005. Never heard of it? Not surprising, even after 17 years, Chalica is still not widely known or celebrated. But, the number of congregations who observe the holiday is growing.

So, what is Chalica and when it is celebrated? Chalica is a week long holiday, during which we honor and celebrate our eight Unitarian Universalist principles. Those who celebrate Chalica reflect on one principle each day — putting it into practice through their words and deeds. The celebration kicks-off at home on the first Monday in December, and ends the following Monday. At its core Chalica is meant to be a holiday celebrated at home, however some UU congregations have taken to marking the holiday with a special service.

At the UU Church of Ventura California, an early adopter of Chalica, congregants have reported that they've given charitable donations, volunteered, and reconciled with family members on different days of Chalica. However, Chalica does not need to be such a huge undertaking. Marshall has a word of advice for families who might stress about adding Chalica to other December holidays. She says, "Don't make Chalica into another holiday obligation. People don't have to do hard things for it. They can send a card to someone, or stand up for someone on the playground." She adds, "I've let [Chalica] take on a life of its own. It can either be a serious spiritual exercise or a fun thing to do. All holidays evolve through the people who celebrate them. I don't want too much ownership; I just put the idea out and I'm happy to let it become what it will."

If you and your family wish to celebrate Chalica this year then you may find some helpful hints or suggestions in this booklet. You can find additional resources on Chalica by going to the UUA's website, or by visiting one of the sites listed below.

<http://bit.ly/2zoHBpM>

<https://www.facebook.com/UU.Chalica>

<http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/153582.shtml>

<http://chalica.blogspot.com/>

And, as one of the Chalica songs puts it...

*"Have a Happy, Happy, Merry, Joyous Chalica!"*

-Meredith Plummer, Director of Religious Education, First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati

# Preparation

So, where do you set up your chalice? Should you set up a home altar? How do you honor each principle? Should your family exchange gifts? What food is eaten during Chalica? And, how do you get your family's buy-in? The possibilities are endless and it really is all up to you, as Darlene Marshall so eloquently stated, "All holidays evolve through the people who celebrate them." However you wish to celebrate, this page will provide you with a few resources to get you started.

## Set-up: Altars and Chalice

The Chalice—the symbol of the Unitarian Universalist faith—takes center stage for Chalica. So, where should it be placed? Think of where your family spends most of their time when they are home; is there a place for your chalice there? Perhaps you could place your chalice at the center of your kitchen table, or perhaps you could set it up in the living room. If it interests you, you could set up a little altar. Place a small table in an underutilized section of your home and drape it with cloth. On your altar place your chalice and other important items—a family picture, a small plant, a notebook, Chalica books (see the principle pages of this booklet for suggestions), or a bowl with water and stones (for joys and sorrows). Don't have a chalice? See the next page for information on how to obtain one.

## Presentation

Do you have children? Worried about getting your children to participate in Chalica? Afraid they won't put the eight principles into practice outside of home? Make sure you are setting them up for success. Starting a few weeks before Chalica, talk to them about the holiday. Ask them what they might do to honor our eight principles. You may even ask, "So, on Friday, when we celebrate our fifth principle, 'all people need a voice,' what would you like to do?" Together, plan for a few family focused activities that celebrate the different principles (e.g. your family may arrange to volunteer on Saturday in order to honor our sixth principle, "Build a fair and peaceful world."). Then, each morning of Chalica, state the principle for the day and revisit your conversations about how that principle should be honored.

## Celebration: Festivities, Food, Books and Gifts

By now, I hope I have made it clear, there is no RIGHT way to celebrate Chalica. However, within the pages of this booklet you will find suggestions on how to honor each day of this week. The only thing I would encourage you to do is to participate in some form of reflection each night. If you are celebrating Chalica as a family, gather together at the end of the night, light the day's chalice, and share how you honored the day's principle. If you are celebrating Chalica alone, then light the day's chalice and reflect in a journal. Remember, spirituality is a journey; happy travels!

# Chalices

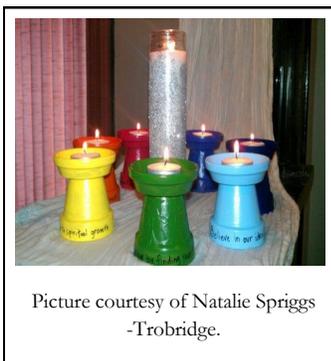
So, when you celebrate Chalica, do you use one candle, or seven? Should you use store bought, or homemade? Pillar, or tea light? Real candle or LED? The answers to these questions is really going to depend on you. Time constraints may mean that you will have to buy a chalice, but buying multiple chalices can get costly. You can always make a chalice rather inexpensively (under \$3), but you'll need some time, or many helping hands, to make seven chalices. Whether or not you choose a pillar or tea light is really based on preference, but if you have a small child, then you probably want to stick to an LED candle. More information is provided below.

## Store Bought Chalices

Traditionally, a chalice is shaped like a wine glass. However, that doesn't mean the chalice you use at home has to adhere to tradition. Your local grocery, or craft, store probably has a whole aisle dedicated to candles and candle accessories. Why don't you check it out? Find a shape, color, or fragrance that appeals to you, and don't forget the matches! On the other hand, if you wish to buy a more "traditional" chalice, visit [www.flamingchalice.com](http://www.flamingchalice.com). Or, check out amazon, eBay or etsy.

## Home-made Chalices

There are several ways to make a chalice at home. The most cost effective way to create a chalice is to search your local thrift store for anything with a chalice shape. Often times, you will find short stem, wide brim, wine goblets, or ceramic vases. Use enamel or acrylic paint and air or heat dry as directed. Then, when the paint is dry, fill the basin of your chalice with sand and insert a tea light.



You can also make a chalice out of a terracotta pot and matching saucer. First, turn your pot upside down. Then, Glue the bottom of the saucer to the bottom of the pot with heavy-duty glue. Allow the adhesive to dry for one hour and then paint your chalice with acrylic paint. You may need to apply several coats; allow paint to dry for 15 minutes between coats. After your second coat of paint, feel free to add some design elements to your chalice. Once you are satisfied with your chalice, give it two coats of spray acrylic sealer/glaze. Allow 30 minutes between coats. When the sealer is dry, place your tea light on top.

Or, check out Mr. Barb Greve's blog, Barb's Bantering, for instructions on how to make a Lego Chalice (So cool!): <https://tinyurl.com/y7wvhpz4>

# Monday

## Each Person is Important

### As a family

Hold a family talent show. Allow everyone to showcase their unique talents. If you're so inclined, pass out awards for most creative, funniest, best singer, etc.

### As an Individual

As the principle states, "Each person is important." That means you too! Do something special for yourself.

### Food

Gather family or friends and plan a meal where everyone's favorite food is represented. Spaghetti with a side of jelly beans? Why not, it's the first night of Chalica!

### Gifts

What makes the people in your life special? For each person in your circle, write down what you love most about them. Then, give each person their list.

### Books

*Big Orange Splot* by D. Manus Pinkwater and Daniel Manus Pinkwater

*Owen and Mzee* by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, Paula Kahumbu and Peter Greste

*On the Nigh You were Born* by Nancy Tillman

### Movie

"Encanto" released in 2021, rated PG

### Wonder Question

What makes someone important? Is it their abilities, their job, their status? Or, is it something more?

### Additional Ideas

Have you recently had an argument with someone? Or, perhaps you have had a falling out with someone? Why don't you begin the process of reconciliation? Chances are, they're feeling just as terrible as you.

On the next page, draw a picture that shows "Each person is important," or write down all the ways you and your family honored our first principle on this day.



# Tuesday

## Be Kind in All You Do

### As a family

Try to go the whole day without arguing. Focus on putting the wants and needs of your sibling / spouse / housemate before your own.

### As an Individual

Do something selfless — stand up to a bully, pay for someone else’s food, help a stranger. The opportunities are endless as long as you keep an eye out for them.

### Food

Go out to eat at your favorite restaurant, or order in. Doesn’t matter, just tip double (or more!).

### Gifts

Exchange small care packages as a family, or ding-dong ditch one of your neighbors. You can find items for your care package, such as small toys, lotion, and journals, at your local dollar store.

### Books

*Old Turtle* by Douglas Wood and Cheng-Khee Chee

*The Golden Rule* by Ilene Cooper and Gabi Swiatkowska

*Love you Forever* by Robert Munsch and Sheila McGraw

### Movie

“Up” released in 2009, rated PG

### Wonder Question

Should you be kind to people who hurt you? What about people who commit really terrible crimes?

### Additional Ideas

Is there someone in your life that needs a little extra cheering up this time of year? If so, find out what you can do to help this person. Provide them with a meal, clean their house, watch their children, or simply send them a card.

On the next page, draw a picture that shows “Be kind in all you do,” or write down all the ways you and your family honored our second principle on this day.



# Wednesday

## We're Free to Learn Together

### As a family

Pick up a game no one in your family has ever played before. Learn how to play it together.

### As an Individual

Attend a lecture. Go to the museum. See a play. Then, strike up a conversation with the people around you. If you go to school, offer assistance to a fellow student, and accept assistance as well.

### Food

As a family, or with a friend, attempt to cook something you never have before. It might work out, or you might be ordering pizza. It doesn't matter as long as you make the attempt!

### Gifts

Do you know how to make the perfect paper airplane, or do you make the best pumpkin pie? Whatever the case may be, share your expertise with your family or friends. You may be surprised what you learn in return.

### Books

*Fannie in the Kitchen* by Deborah Hopkinson and Nancy Carpenter

*Maria's Comet* by Deborah Hopkinson and Deborah Lanino

*Chicken Sunday* by Patricia Polacco

### Movie

"Monsters University" released 2013, rated G

### Wonder Question

The adult version of this principle states we 'accept one another.' Who do you have a hard time accepting?

### Additional Ideas

What is something in our world that you struggle to understand? Take this opportunity to watch a few videos on the topic from trusted sources (see media bias chart: <https://adfontesmedia.com/interactive-media-bias-chart/>).

On the next page, draw a picture that shows "We're free to learn together," or write down all the ways you and your family honored our third principle on this day.



# Thursday

## We Search for What is True

### As a family

Discuss religion. Or, together, read a book about religion, such as *The Kids Book of World Religions* by Jennifer Glosop. Did you know, children, up until the age of 12, tend to adopt the beliefs of their parents?

### As an Individual

Talk with a friend about their beliefs. How are they different than yours? Keep an open mind; who knows, you may find something that rings true for you!

### Food

Different religions have different traditions when it comes to food and the celebration of holidays. What winter holiday did you grow up celebrating? What food did you enjoy with this holiday? Prepare this food for today.

### Gifts

There are many books about world religions. Gift yourself one of these books and expand your own knowledge.

### Books

*Grandad's Prayers of the Earth* by Douglas Wood and P.J. Lynch

*God In Between* by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Sally Sweetland

*Elijah's Angel* by Michael J. Rosen and Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson

### Movie

“The Nightmare Before Christmas” released in 1993, rated PG

### Wonder Question

What do you know to be absolutely, unequivocally true?

### Additional Ideas

Unitarian Universalism is a very long name, and not many people know much about it. Create an elevator—or, play ground—speech so you can tell people what it means to be a UU in one minute or less.

On the next page, draw a picture that shows “We search for what is true,” or write down all the ways you and your family honored our fourth principle on this day.



# Friday

## All People Need a Voice

### As a family

Could your household be running smoother? Why don't you call a family meeting and ask everyone for their input. Not only will you be giving everyone a voice, but you may learn something you never knew.

### As an Individual

Sometimes, people need us to use our voice to help them. Not to speak for them, but to amplify their voice. Use your socials to share the words, pictures, or videos of those who are begging to be heard.

### Food

Plan a special meal with family or friends, hold a vote on what you'll eat. Majority wins!

### Gifts

Listen to someone who needs to talk. Try not to be defensive, dismissive, or offer up "quick fixes." Yes, it can be hard to hold someone else's pain, but you'll be giving them the priceless gifts of comradery and compassion.

### Books

*If I were president* by Catherine Stier and Diane DiSalvo-Ryan

*D is for Democracy: A Citizen's Alphabet* by Elissa Grodin and Victor Juhasz

*Yertle the Turtle* by Dr. Seuss

### Movie

"Brave" released in 2012, rated PG

### Wonder Question

What would you do if you were president?

### Additional Ideas

Fight for our democracy. Get involved with UU the Vote at <https://www.uuthevote.org/>

On the next page, draw a picture that shows "All people need a voice," or write down all the ways you and your family honored our fifth principle on this day.



# Saturday

## Build a Fair and Peaceful World

### As a family

Find an organization that allows families to volunteer together, then get involved! Volunteer today, or make a plan to volunteer regularly.

### As an Individual

What are you passionate about? Whatever it is, find out how you can help, and get involved! Volunteer today, or make a plan to volunteer regularly.

### Food

Donate your favorite shelf stable foods to your local food pantry. Then, make a meal out of what you just donated.

### Gifts

Who do you want to give a gift to? What is that person passionate about? Donate money on that person's behalf to an organization they care about.

### Books

*Over the River and Through the Wood* by Lydia Maria Child and Christopher Manson

*Henry Climbs a Mountain* by D.B. Johnson

*Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney

### Movie

"A Bug's Life" released 1998, rated G

### Wonder Question

If you had a magic wand, what would you do to make this world a better place?

### Additional Ideas

You may want to hold a fundraiser yourself. Identify a worthy individual, family or organization and make a plan.

On the next page, draw a picture that shows "Build a fair and peaceful world," or write down all the ways you and your family honored our sixth principle on this day.

Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world.

Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world.

Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world.

Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world. Build a fair and peaceful world.

# Sunday

## We Care for Our Earth and All Who Live Here

### As a family

Identify ways your family can be more green—compost, recycle, bike more? As a family, choose one and commit!

### As an Individual

Advocate that your workplace, or your school, be more eco-friendly. Ask for recycle bins and reuse as much as possible.

### Food

Shop your local farmer's market for local and organic fruits and veggies. If you aren't already vegetarian or vegan, plan to make a vegetarian or vegan meal today, and once a week moving forward.

### Gifts

As the saying goes, "Reuse, Reduce, Recycle." Today, recycle something from your house that would have been trash, and create a gift with it. Turn it into a work of art, or a handy item.

### Books

*The Shortest Day* by Wendy Pfeffer and Jesse Reisch

*The Everything Seed* by Carole Martignacco and Joy Troyer

*From Lava to Life* by Jennifer Morgan and Dana Lynne Andersen

### Movie

"Dr. Seuss' The Lorax" released 2012, rated PG

### Wonder Question

The adult version of this principle talks about the 'interconnected web.' What does that saying mean to you?

### Additional Ideas

Go for a walk and pick up any litter or trash you may come across.

On the next page, draw a picture that shows "We care for our Earth and all who live here," or write down all the ways you and your family honored our seventh principle on this day.



# Monday

## Build the Beloved Community, Free From Racism & Oppression

### As a family

In Beloved Community, as in families, not everyone is the same, but everyone is valued and has a seat at the table. As a family, work together on a project to benefit the household (e.g. a piece of art or renovation).

### As an Individual

Get connected with the organizations already doing the work of anti-racism & anti-oppression in your community.

### Food

Host a potluck dinner with your Beloved Community. Ask everyone to bring their favorite comfort food.

### Gifts

Give to Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU): <https://blacklivesuu.org/>

### Books

*Some People Do* by Frank Lowe

*Antiracist Baby* by Ibram X. Kendi

*Something Happened in Our Town* by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, and Ann Hazzard

### Movie

“Trolls World Tour” released 2020, rated PG

### Wonder Question

Has your congregation passed the 8th principle? If not, why not? If so, what’s next?

### Additional Ideas

Host a Project Octave playthrough. Learn more at <https://www.projectoctave.org/>

On the next page, draw a picture that shows “Build the Beloved Community, Free from Racism & Oppression,” or write down all the ways you and your family honored our eighth principle on this day.

Build the beloved community, free from racism & oppression. Build the beloved community

Build the beloved community, free from racism & oppression. Build the beloved community, free from racism & oppression.

free from racism and oppression. Build the beloved community, free from racism & oppression. Build the beloved community

free from racism & oppression. Build the beloved community, free from racism & oppression.

# Suggested Sayings

On this page you will find some additional resources for your Chalica celebration at home. In particular, you will find suggestions for opening and closing words, as well as simple songs for all ages.

## Opening Words

*We light this candle to remind ourselves to treat all people kindly. We light this candle to remind ourselves to take good care of the earth. We light this candle to remind ourselves to live lives full of goodness and love.*—Author Unknown

Ask a child to show you the hand motions to these opening words...

*We are Unitarian Universalists. We are the church of the open mind, the loving hearts, and the helping hands. Together we care for our earth, and each other.*—Author Unknown

## Closing Words

*What are the ways we worship? We worship with song and dance. We worship with words and silence. We worship alone and in community. We worship in all sorts of spaces and places. We worship with life. Blessed be.*—Beth Casebolt.

*Walk softly, speak truthfully, love gently, breathe deeply, live wisely, go in peace.*—Elaine Gallagher Gehrman

## Songs

In addition to the Chalica song mentioned during the introduction — which can be found on YouTube — here are a few songs which you could incorporate into your Chalica celebration...

*When I breathe in, I breathe in peace.*

*When I breathe out, I breathe out love.*

- Meditation on Breathing #1009 in Singing the Journey

*Gathered here in the mystery of the hour.*

*Gathered here in one strong body.*

*Gathered here in the struggle and the power.*

*Spirit, draw near.*

- Gathered Here #389 in Singing the Living Tradition

# Additional Resources

On this page you will find some additional resources for continuing worship in the home.

[A Child's Book of Blessings and Prayers](#) collected by Eliza Blanchard, illustrated by Rocco Baviera, available on Amazon.

[Come Into the Circle: Worshipping with Children](#) by Michelle Richards, available on Amazon.

[Come Sing a Song with Me: A Songbook for all Ages](#) a project of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network, available at the UUA bookstore.

[How to Bury a Goldfish: And other Ceremonies and Celebrations for Everyday Life](#) by Virginia Lang and Louise Nayer, available on Amazon.

[May This Light Shine: A Songbook for Children and Youth](#) a project of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network, available at the UUA bookstore.

[Nurturing Spirituality in Children](#) by Peggy Joy Jenkins, available on Amazon.

[Religious Education at Home: A Handbook for Parents](#) a project of The Church of the Larger Fellowship, available at the UUA bookstore.

[The Gift of Faith: Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children](#) by Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar, available at the UUA bookstore.