

Begin by lighting a chalice (or reasonable facsimile). "We light this chalice for our Unitarian Universalist Spirit Growing, Justice Seeking Community" Response: "I am a living member of the great family of All Souls"

Curious About Dreams

March 22, 2020

Sophia Fahs was an author, teacher, minister and religious activists who revolutionized Unitarian Religious Education in the 1930's through 60's. She identifies the realization that the world of reality sensed during wakefulness is different from the reality sensed in sleep as one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in children. She suggests that this realization leads to a feeling for that which is invisible in the personality.

Introduce the theme by engaging in conversation reviewing what happens when it's time for bed. Have a special song, story, or prayer? Do you dream? Do you remember their dreams when they wake up?

From "The Dream Book" by Patricia Garfield:

When you compare your dreams to what happens while you're awake, your daytime life might seem pretty dull. Have you ever had any of these dreams:

- that you were flying on a Dragon's back
- that you were being chased by a vampire
- that you were eating a hot fudge sundae
- that you were running naked
- that you were being kissed by your favorite movie star or singer
- that you were hunting for a room that you couldn't find
- that you were soaring to the moon
- that you were falling
- that you found an extra room in your house
- that you were sitting on a rainbow
- Or anything else unusual?

If you have, then you're not alone. All these have been dreamed by kids a lot like you. Welcome to the wild, weird, and wonderful world of dreams!

Your dreams are changing, big time. Those hormones you hear so much about not only cause guys to get facial hair and girls to get changing body shapes, but they also create chaos in your dream life. Researchers tell us that the quality of dreams changes as adolescence begins. Nice dreams decrease. Wild and wacky dreams increase. If you start having some crazy dream adventures, you should know that so does almost every other kid your age.

During the years you are doing the most growing, you are also dreaming more. The more you sleep, the more you dream. We spend about 1/3 of our entire lives in sleep. Sleep is one of our basic needs. You need to sleep, just as you need to eat and drink, to survive. Scientists are not really sure why, but they have found that people who are kept awake for several days usually become irritable, inattentive, and irrational.

Some researchers think that sleep restores something in the body that gets used up while we are awake; Others think sleep removes toxins that have built up in the body as we get tired. We know that a certain "growth hormone" is only released into our bodies during the deepest stages of sleep. This hormone helps kids develop and also helps repair tissues and heals wounds.

When you close your eyes to the outer world in sleep, you open your mind to an inner world of dreams.

Dreams are a kind of thinking that takes place during sleep. This thinking is mostly in images, like a language of pictures.

Dreaming Through The Centuries

People have always been fascinated with dreams. Since the first written record was scratched into clay tablets in the days of the ancient Sumerian people, dreams have been part of humankind's history. If you know the Old Testament of the Bible, you might remember Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream of the seven fat and seven lean cattle, and Jacob's dream of the latter reaching to heaven. The mother of Buddha, the Prophet Mohammed, and the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, are among the people who have had important dreams recorded in holy books. Each religion has inscribed the dreams of their founders and chief followers, finding inspiration, warnings of danger, and guidance in them. Dreams were believed to be messages from the gods and still are in some cultures.

All people have been fascinated with the mystery of dreams. Most cultures have developed ways to protect sleeping people from the evil spirits thought to bring bad dreams, and to insure good dreams. Some Aboriginal people of North America used to hang dreamcatchers above the cradleboards of sleeping infants to screen out nightmares and allow the passage of good dreams. Chinese parents provided their children with double-headed tiger pillows to scare off evil spirits who might approach from any direction. Japanese people carried amulets carved from ivory in the shape of a mythological creature called a Baku, who was supposed to eat bad dreams. Europeans hung a stone with a natural hole on a red ribbon and tied it to a bedpost to protect the sleeper.

Some societies believe that dreams foretell the future. Certainly some people experience dreams that seem to give information the dreamer could not have known in any other way. We don't really know how many people have predictive dreams and how accurate they are. What we do know is that dreams are definitely a way to learn more about ourselves. From our dreams we can find out how to make waking life better.

Discover Yourself As You Dream

Where dreams can teach you how you are truly feeling about yourself, your parents and other family members, friends, classmates, and teachers. They can tell you how you feel about your body. They can show you how you feel about the role you are playing in life at the moment. They can help you form your own identity.

A lot is going on in your waking life right now. You're figuring out who you are and who you want to be. You're testing your independence while still holding on to security. You're thinking about what you might want in romance and relationships. You're developing skills and pride in your accomplishments. You are finding your way to self-confidence. You're deciding what is really important in life. Dreams can help you with all of this, and more. As you start your own dream Journal, or think about and explore your own dreams, you will be expanding your self-knowledge. Your best guide is as near as your pillow. Turn out the lights. Curl up in bed. Dream and discover yourself.

Read: "Grandmother's Dreamcatcher" by Becky Ray McCain <https://vimeo.com/185424192>

Follow Up:

- 1) Share dreams.
- 2) Make dreamcatchers. Cut the center from a paper plate. Punch holes around the rim. Weave with yarn, string, shoelaces... String beads and feathers. Hang above bed.
- 3) Make a "Dream Notepad". Use the 2 templates attached.
- 4) To learn about dream interpretation read "The Dream Book" by Patricia Garfield



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