

At a Glance

How Powerful Are My Choices?

Focus

To explore how choices help us create the reality we want.

Unity Principle

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Affirmation

I create my experiences.

Scripture

“If your faith is as big as a mustard seed... all things will be possible for you.”

—Matthew 17:20 (New Century Version)

Songs

“There Is Only One Presence,” Eileen Douglas, *Come Share My Joy* CD, #17

“What You Are Holding in Your Mind,” *Words & Music* CD, Janet Bowser Manning, www.freeandunlimited.com

“I Am the Thinker,” Sue Kroupa, *Unite With Me in Song* CD, #7

Unity Writings

The outer acts are secondary; the primal world of causes is within, and it is to this inner realm that we must look for the transforming power of each individual and of the world about him or her as well.

—Charles Fillmore, *Jesus Christ Heals*, p. 16, in *Metaphysics I*, p. 72

The Truth is then: That ... mind has ideas and that ideas have expression; that all manifestation in our world is the result of the ideas that we are holding in mind and are expressing.

—Charles Fillmore, *Christian Healing*, p. 16, in *Metaphysics I*, p. 83

For the Leader

Unity’s 3rd Basic Principle is really a “how-to” statement about ways to bring about the good we seek. The adult version of this Principle states, “We are co-creators with God, creating reality through thoughts held in mind.”

For Uniteens, this may be understood most easily by considering the concept of goals and the choices made to reach them. What is it that we want in life? How do we go about getting it? (How do we “co-create” it?) How does our understanding of our spiritual resources and abilities help us?

The mustard seed teachings remind us that we can grow into far more than we suspect, guided by our inner wisdom. Our spiritual resources of imagination, faith, good judgment, courage, enthusiasm, visualization, perseverance, etc., can help us reach our worthy goals. When our efforts are grounded in spiritual principles and spiritual understanding, nothing is impossible unto us. We guide our thoughts and feelings, and call on inner wisdom, to make the choices that help us to co-create the reality we seek—that is, to reach our goals.

Charles Fillmore used this seed analogy in *Teach Us to Pray*: “Whatever the seed word is that is implanted in omnipresent Spirit substance, this seed word will germinate and grow and bring forth the fruit ‘after its kind.’”

Getting Ready



Lesson 4

Supplies

Pre-session

2-4 rolls of ribbon
Scissors
Mustard seeds, 1 per person
Clear tape
Tape measure or yardstick
Markers

Opening

Ribbons with seeds created during Pre-session
Extras for those who did not complete

Creative Experience

Copies of "I Create My Success!" handout, 1 per person (See end of lesson.)
Plain pocket folders, 1 per person
Paper
Pens
Optional: glue, mustard and other seeds, coarse spices

Prepare Ahead

Pre-session

Cut 1 length of ribbon 9 feet long. Tape mustard seed to end. Place out of sight.

Creative Experience

Copy "I Create My Success!" handout, 1 per person (See end of lesson.)

Additional Lesson

Creative Experience

Copies of "I Create My Success!" handout, 1 per person (See end of lesson.)
Large basket or bucket
½ sheets colored paper, several per person, different color for each person
Pens or pencils
Masking tape

Additional Lesson

Story

Copy Michael Jordan's story, 1 per person. (See end of lesson.)

Creative Experience

Place masking tape line on floor.
Place basket some distance away.
Copy "I Create My Success!" handout, 1 per person. (See end of lesson.)

How Powerful Are My Choices?

Supplies

2-4 rolls of ribbon
Scissors
Mustard seeds, 1 per person
Clear tape
Tape measure or yardstick
Markers

Pre-session

Mustard Seed guessing activity

Prepare Ahead: *Cut 1 length of ribbon 9 feet long. Tape mustard seed to end. Place out of sight.*

Say: Take one of the mustard seeds and guess how large a bush it will grow into. Cut that amount of ribbon and tape the seed to one end. Measure the length and write on the ribbon. Bring to opening circle.

Focus

To explore how choices help us create the reality we want.

Opening

Opening Prayer and Check-in

Include an offering blessing and song wherever it works best with your group.

Say: Let's go around the circle giving your name and choosing which color of the rainbow you like best.

Say: Dear God, thank you for your wisdom and guidance. Thank you for clearing our minds so that we can make helpful choices and use our power for change. Thank you for always being with us. Amen.

Supplies

Ribbons with seeds created during Pre-session
Extras for those who did not complete

Magnificent Mustard Seed

Invite those who have not completed Pre-session to do so.

Say: Let's spread out our ribbons and seeds, to see how big we thought a mustard seed might grow. *(Then slowly and theatrically bring pre-measured ribbon with seed into view.)* This is actually how large this little seed can grow—9 feet!

- I wonder how that seed was able to accomplish so much more than what seemed possible. Any thoughts?

The seed is guided by its inner wisdom to be its best self. Sometimes it may get tangled up with other plants or land on rocky soil or get sidetracked in its growth by a tree. Then it might not grow to its full potential.

- In what ways is that like us trying to reach a goal at school like passing a subject that is difficult for us?

Take your ribbon now and twist or tie it up to make some new shape. You may join your ribbon with someone else's if you choose. *(Allow a few moments for this activity, then invite individuals to share with the group.)*

Say: You have ended up with something very different than what you started with, something that never existed before, by using your creativity and making choices. All of these possibilities were waiting inside you, just as the potential for a huge plant was waiting inside the mustard seed. We can be guided by our inner Christ to make wise choices. In that way we change the kind of experiences we have.

Today we will be considering one of Unity's 5 Basic Principles that talks about the power of our thoughts and feelings to help create the life we want. Let's read together Principle #3 from the poster.

The power of thoughts and feelings can be very evident when we visualize something. Let's experience that now in meditation.

Meditation

As we close our eyes and take three slow, deep, centering breaths in and out, we can quiet our minds and bodies to prepare for meditation. *(Pause 10-15 seconds.)*

In your mind's eye now, imagine a pool of clear water shimmering in front of you.... As you watch the water, imagine a drop of color landing in the water.... Watch it swirl around and change shapes.... Now imagine a drop of another color landing in your pool of water.... Observe how it swirls and joins with the first color....

Now picture a pebble being dropped into your pool from the side, and watch the changes.... A larger rock now drops in from the other side, and you observe the interactions and changes with the earlier ripples and colors.... Use your imagination now to change your pool of water however you wish.... *(Pause 10-15 seconds.)*

Your pool of water smooths now and becomes clear and quiet.... When you are ready, open your eyes and re-join the group.

Principle 3

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Option: If time permits, invite group to share their visions.

Say: Although we all heard the same words, we each had different experiences. We also experienced how our thoughts and feelings could change our vision, and how we can create new images with our minds. These are inner abilities that can help us create change in our lives and achieve goals we choose for ourselves.

Jesus talked about using inner powers by referring to the mustard seed. Let's see what he had to say.

Alternative: *If doing lesson with Michael Jordan story, say: Michael Jordan used the power of the mustard seed within him to help create the world he wanted. Let's read his story now.*

Focus

To explore how choices help us create the reality we want.

"The kingdom of heaven is the realm of divine ideas, producing their expression, perfect harmony. It is within [each person]."

Charles Fillmore, *The Revealing Word*, p.115



Mustard seed info video www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustard_seed. Click on "mustard plants" (in first sentence) to view plant. Click on Cultural references, then Parable of the Mustard Seed for link to parable.

Exploration

Bible Story: Mustard Seed **Matthew 13:31-32 and 17:14-20 (New Century Version)**

Say: In Matthew 13:31-32, Jesus told a story about the kingdom of heaven.

Read or invite a group member to read the following Bible passage to the group.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man planted in his field. That seed is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows, it is one of the largest garden plants. It becomes big enough for the wild birds to come and build nests in its branches."

Say: Later, in Matthew 17, Jesus' followers came to him when he was alone and asked him a question. A man whose son was having seizures had brought the child to the disciples to heal him, but they could not. So the man brought the child to Jesus, who healed him. One of the disciples asked Jesus why they were unable to heal the boy.

Read or invite a group member to read the following Bible passage to the group.

Jesus answered, "Because your faith is too small. I tell you the truth, if your faith is as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. All things will be possible for you."

—Matthew 17:20

Discussion

All questions need not be asked. Continue as long as interest is maintained. Several people may answer each question.

- Jesus used a mustard seed more than once in his teachings. What are the characteristics of a mustard seed that he referred to?
- What gifts does the mustard seed offer besides mustard? (*Examples: haven for birds, seeds for birds and insects, shade, etc.*)
- What does a mustard seed teach us about our spiritual characteristics? (*Examples: faith in unshown abilities, perseverance, unanticipated gifts to others, etc.*)
- In what way does a mustard seed show “faith?” (*Examples: continues growing toward its fulfillment, guided by wisdom within, even while quite small, etc.*)
- In thinking about Unity Principle #3, how can understanding a mustard seed help us in bringing about the good we seek for ourselves and our world?
- The mustard seed, although very small, is able to accomplish its goal of becoming a large plant. Think of someone you know who has accomplished big goals. Tell us what they accomplished. What abilities did they use to accomplish this?
- What goals have you accomplished for yourself?
- What things have discouraged you in accomplishing your goals? What might help you? How might we in this class help you?
- How do our thoughts and feelings influence our choices?
- What thoughts, feelings, and beliefs would you like to hold or change in order to create the experiences you want for yourself?

Creative Experience: Goal Journal

Hand out pocket folders with a few blank pieces of paper in each.

Say: Think about an experience you would like to create for yourself, some goal you have for yourself for sometime in the coming year. Write it in the center of a piece of paper from your Goal Journal folder. Next, write around it all the thoughts and feelings you have about this goal—good, bad, or indifferent, problems and pluses.

Proceed as indicated. Then pass out “I Create My Success!” handouts.

Unity Principle 3

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Supplies

Copies of “I Create My Success!” handout, 1 per person (See end of lesson.)
Plain pocket folders, 1 per person
Paper, pens
Optional: glue, mustard and other seeds, coarse spices

Prepare Ahead

Copy “I Create My Success!” handout, 1 per person. (See end of lesson.)

Say: Let's read aloud together the first step toward reaching our goals from our handout. (*Proceed as indicated.*)

At the bottom of your page, or around the edges, write down what inner resources you believe you might need to bring your dream into reality. (*Proceed as indicated.*)

Say: Next, take a look at all the thoughts and feelings you wrote around your goal. See if you think any of them might be interfering with you meeting your goal. If so, cross them off.

Say: At the top of another piece of paper, draw an image or a symbol for the goal you seek. Below it, write action steps you can take in the next week and month to help you reach your goal. (*Proceed as indicated.*)

Say: You have made choices about thoughts, feelings, and actions that can help you reach your goal. As you look at your goal and the steps you want to take, are there ways those of us in this group can help you? (*Allow time for any requests.*)

Say: We can use the steps on the 4-Fold Path at any time to expand our Goal Journal for any goal we might have.

Option: If time permits, Uniteens may use glue to draw on cover of folder a symbol for one of their goals, then sprinkle seeds and spices onto glue.

We can remind ourselves of our power to help create the world we want for ourselves by speaking together our affirmation:

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

You might also want to write this affirmation in your journal.



Closing

Say: Let's go around the circle and get into a posture, or give an image, that shows how you will look when you achieve the goal you want. I will begin then we will go around the circle to my left. (*Proceed as indicated.*)

Say: We can close now with our affirmation to remind us of the creative power of this Unity Principle.

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe. (*Repeat.*)

Thank you, God! Amen.

Option: Listen to "What You Are Holding in Your Mind," *Words & Music* CD, Janet Bowser Manning, www.freeandunlimited.com, before closing with prayer.

Additional Lesson

This section offers additional story ideas for another date. It can also serve as an alternate to the main story/experience.

Story: Michael Jordan: A Success Story

(Adapted from www.espn.go.com/sportscentury/features/00016048.html, accessed on March 11, 2008, and from "Michael Jordan transcends hoops" by Larry Schwartz, Special to ESPN.com.)

Hand out copies of Michael Jordan's story from end of lesson. Invite class to read individually, then discuss as group.

Discussion

- What setbacks did Michael Jordan experience in his life?
- What were his responses to those setbacks? What other responses were possible?
- What are some of the most remarkable aspects of Michael Jordan's story to you?
- Do you know of other people who have overcome adversity to achieve great things? Tell us about them.
- What inner characteristics do you think they used to help themselves?
- Which of these characteristics do you see in yourself?
- What other helpful characteristics do you see in yourself?
- What characteristics do you have that you think might create an obstacle toward reaching your goals?
- How might you change them? How hard do you think that might be? What would help you? How might we in this class help you?
- How does our Unity principle for today connect to becoming successful?



Theme Extender

Focus

To explore how choices help us create the reality we want.

Prepare Ahead

Copy Michael Jordan's story, 1 per person. (See end of lesson.)

All questions need not be asked. Continue as long as interest is maintained. Several people may answer each question.

Unity Principle

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Supplies

Copies of "I Create My Success!" handout, 1 per person (See end of lesson.)

Large basket or bucket
1/2 sheets colored paper, several per person, different color for each person

Pens or pencils

Masking tape

Prepare Ahead

Place masking tape line on floor.

Place basket some distance away.

Copy "I Create My Success!" handout, 1 per person. (See end of lesson.)

Success Steps

Listen to inner Christ.

Be clear/realistic.

See it, believe it.

Set goals.

Reward progress.

Let go, let God.

Creative Experience: I Am a Winner! goal setting

Say: Michael Jordan and many of our heroes set goals for themselves to reach their highest good. Just as our Unity Principle 3 recommends, they created the experiences they wanted by making good choices about their thoughts, their feelings, their beliefs, and their actions.

Today we can practice ways to accomplish goals for ourselves. Let's take a look at this handout about goal success. (*Read through together.*)

Say: The first step is to listen to our inner Christ to choose a goal that serves us and serves others. Let's take a few moments of quiet with our eyes closed to let our inner Christ guide us to consider goals we would like to achieve. Let any number of your personal goals rise to your mind, and consider them in light of your highest good. The next step is to visualize yourself accomplishing each goal. (*Proceed as indicated.*)

In a moment we will open our eyes and choose some goals we would like to focus on today. Let's say together, "Thank you, God, for your wisdom and guidance in attaining my good." (*Repeat.*) Amen. You may open your eyes when ready.

Say: Take these papers now, a different color for each of you, and write goals for yourself, each on a different piece of paper. Use the first 3 steps on our goal-setting handout to help you. As you finish, wad each one up and place beside you. When all are finished, we will stand at the throw line and toss them toward the basket. We will each toss one in the first round. (*Proceed as indicated.*)

Say: Now we will take one large step closer to the basket and each toss our next goal. (*Continue moving closer with each round until all are thrown.*)

Say: Who found this task easier as we moved closer to the basket? In the same way, as we move closer to Spirit, our task of reaching our goals becomes easier.

- How did it feel to be a winner?
- Did it matter what the distance was you had to go to connect to Spirit? Why or why not?
- How are the "misses" like not accomplishing a goal in life? How do you deal with a missed goal? How can Spirit help you to make a different choice that may move you on to your goal?
- What are some steps you could take to help you meet your goals? To help others?
- What is one you will use this week?

Media Connection

Michel Jordan site: www.espn.go.com/sportscentury/features/00016048.html

NBC News, www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12426302/, click on Making a Difference

http://60minutes.yahoo.com/segment/14/michael_jordan. Under On and Off the Court, click on: Imagine this! "60 Minutes" video clip (1 minute long)

The above were all accessed on March 11, 2008.



These suggestions are to encourage Uniteens to connect what is happening in their lives to their spirituality. Use to enhance lessons and/or to continue lesson theme at home. Check any websites before recommending them, as web content frequently changes.

Additional Story

Michael Jordan: A Success Story

Many of you have heard of Michael Jordan, one of the all-time great basketball players. Many do not know how he achieved his goal.

Jordan's love for basketball began when his older brother, Larry, continuously beat him in one-on-one pickup games. He was determined to become a better player even though he didn't make the varsity team as a high school sophomore. "It was embarrassing not making that team," he said. "They posted the roster and it was there for a long, long time without my name on it. I remember being really mad, too, because there was a guy who made it that really wasn't as good as me."

Instead of pouting or making excuses over failure, Jordan used it to spur himself to greater achievement, and began practicing hour after hour on the court. "Whenever I was working out and got tired and figured I ought to stop, I'd close my eyes and see that list in the locker room without my name on it," Jordan said, "and that usually got me going again." He eventually made the team and led it to the state championship.

Jordan's burning desire to win, his utter refusal to quit, his desire to carry his team to the mountaintop made him a legend. When he joined the National Basketball Association in 1984, he finished his rookie season a top scorer in the league, was named Rookie of the Year, and made the All-Star team.

Some troubling events followed. Jordan's father was murdered by armed robbers in North Carolina. Jordan himself was investigated by the NBA for charges of illegally betting. Although he was eventually cleared, these events temporarily caused Jordan to lose his motivation, and he felt it was time to step away from basketball. Jordan sought a new challenge—to play professional baseball. Later, he returned to basketball, believing that he would be even greater in the season to come. He led his team to an astonishing 72-10 record, the best regular season in the history of the NBA.

There's no question that Michael Jordan is one of the greatest players to ever play the game. No player in NBA history has achieved so much in any amount of time. He is a five-time league Most Valuable Player, ten-time scoring champion, a six-time Finals MVP, winner of 2 gold medals in the Olympics, and a six-time NBA champion. He was selected as one of the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History.

Michael Jordan left the game of basketball on his own terms, and has now officially passed the torch to the younger stars. He said he was at peace with his decision. "I know from a career standpoint I have accomplished everything that I could as an individual," he said. "Now I can go home and feel at peace with the game of basketball."

(Adapted from www.espn.go.com/sportscentury/features/00016048.html, accessed on March 11, 2008, and from "Michael Jordan transcends hoops" by Larry Schwartz, Special to ESPN.com.)



I Create My Success!

Goal-Setting Techniques

Goal-setting is a way to bring our desires into reality. It is a way to help us choose thoughts, feelings, beliefs and experiences that will help us accomplish what we seek in life.

The 4-fold path

1. **Listen to your Inner Christ.** Let your inner wisdom guide you to choose a goal that serves you and serve others. Consider what inner resources you will need to use to bring your dream into reality.
2. **Be clear/be realistic.** Ask yourself these questions about your goal:
 - Is it sensible? (*Does it make sense to pursue this goal?*)
 - Is it measurable? (*How will I measure when I have arrived?*)
 - Is it attainable? (*Can I attain this now?*)
 - What is the time-line? (*How much time will it take me?*)
3. **See it and believe it.** Write out your goal on a separate piece of paper, then draw an image of the goal already completed. Describe the outcome in vivid detail. Focus on this image every day.
4. **Let go and let God!** Be willing to drop or change a goal if you determine that it is no longer for the highest good of you or others. Use your wisdom and courage to keep making good choices that serve your God-self. Your creativity will always help you make new goals!