"The chalice is a symbol of Unitarian Universalism, often used in our congregations to bring us together in a spirit of reverence."

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We're going to introduce ourselves by sharing something about our own experiences or beliefs. As the basket comes to you, tell us your name. In the basket are sentence starters. Draw out a sentence and complete it aloud. There are no right or wrong answers, only your answer. If you pick one that you can't or don't want to answer, feel free to try a different one. Pauses for thinking are fine. After completing your response, pass the basket on.

Unitarian Universalist theology has both individual and group components. Personal experience is the beginning of Unitarian Universalist theology. Each of us develops our own beliefs. At the same time, we support and challenge one another in those beliefs through our sharing together about what we believe. This is not an easy task, but we have just been doing theology, in a distinctively Unitarian Universalist manner. As UUs, we expect people to bring their own experiences and understandings of religious questions rather than to subscribe to a particular set of beliefs or a particular theological viewpoint. However, we also expect that in the course of sharing with one another, our theologies will be shaped and deepened, or even changed.

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Story: after reading the story, distribute copies so that participants can refer to the story as they discuss it. Invite discussion with these questions:

* What did the cathedral you imagined look like? What images did you notice? What sounds? What do they represent to you?
* For the author Forrest Church, the light coming through the windows of the cathedral represents God. What does it represent for you?
* The windows frame different theological expressions. Yet, they are housed in one building. How is that like Unitarian Universalism?
* What is it like to look through different windows of the cathedral? What is it like when you cannot see through a window? What is it like to notice all the windows at once?

Complete the discussion by underlining the theological diversity within Unitarian Universalism using these or similar words:

“Unitarian Universalists need not agree on the specifics of our theologies. We may believe differently about God, about what happens after we die, about the role of Jesus, Buddha, and other prophets. We are united in our acceptance of one another, our conviction that our lives on this earth matter, and our belief that truth is revealed in many different ways.”

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Read the Sources

"What do you think is the effect of having such a diverse set of sources of religious authority?"