

White Stone Ceremony

“My New Name”

(Uniteens & YOU)

Lesson Intention

The intention of the lesson is set our intentions for the coming year.

Spiritual Principles

- Our words have power.
- What we call ourselves adds meaning to our lives.
- Setting an intention is like creating a pathway for our hearts and minds to follow.

Affirmation

I Am That I Am.

Bible Quote

“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Sacred Circle

New Friend Greeter

Shares routines with preteens new to the classroom and introduces them to others.

Bell Ringer

Rings the bell to signal transitions or to call for centering when needed.

Circle Transformation

Set up the sacred circle items and puts them away when the circle is over.

Candle Lighter/Opening Prayer

Turns on the light and as they focus on the light this person leads a short opening prayer. Books to read from will be provided. Prayer requests can also be done at this time.

Connection Leader

Chooses one of from the following:

- My name is _____. My favorite _____ is.... Fill in the blank...
- "If you came to my house I would show you _____..."

Catch & Release Box (Teacher Role)

Invites the preteens to write something they would like to release on the post-it-heart. Teacher passes around the box and invites the preteens to place the heart in the box. Share with them that this is a safe place and they can release what is concerning and can have it back at the end of class if they want it. Invite them to "catch" a new idea if needed.

Attendance Angel

Check to make sure all have signed in.

Heart Agreement Angel

Leads the group in reading the heart agreements.

Blessing Angel

Invites the children to send a Wish You Well Blessing to all those here and not with us today.

Sacred Breath Leader

Leads the group in a centering activity: Breath Choices: DRAIN; BALLOON; PRETZEL; TOLIET; ICE CUBE. They can also lead the preteens in Brain Gyms (provided) or a Heart Lock-In: Relax & Breathe; Focus on your heart; Send feeling of love/appreciation to self and others.

Love Offering Angel

Leads the preteens in blessing the love offering and then passes the basket.

Celebration Leader

Passes out the shakers and invites the preteens to share something they would like to celebrate.

Affirmation Leader

Shares the affirmation of the day. Teacher leads a discussion about what it might mean. Invite the children to commit to it for the week. ***"I am here to be seen."***

Closing Prayer

Focus on the candle again and share a brief closing prayer or you can end with the affirmation.

Background

Sources: Rev. Carla Golden; Unity Church of Castro Valley & Rev. Donna Smith

Historically

Historically, during the time of the Roman Empire, when you were released from prison, you were given a white stone. You were to carry that stone with you everywhere you went. Everybody knew that if you had the white stone with you, not only were you free but you had a clean slate. You were able to begin anew. Also, carrying the stone gave you all the benefits of being a Roman citizen. That meant the Roman army protected you. This was no small thing.

We use the White Stone to symbolize that we can leave behind whatever personal prison we may have created for ourselves. This ceremony is an opportunity to start the New Year fresh, with no personal baggage.

Intention

Rev. Carla Golden:

“The first Sunday in January is often designated as "White Stone" Sunday at Unity churches. What is "White Stone" Sunday? It is the day when we set our intentions for the rest of the year. I'm not talking about resolutions, because in the White Stone ceremony, we don't make a list. Usually, we come up with one or two words which represent the changes we wish to make or what we want to see expressing in our experience.”

“Generally, the way it works is that each person is presented with a white tile upon entering the church and a pencil or pen. During the course of the service, a meditation is done that helps the person connect with their divine essence, Higher Self, Divine Mind--whatever we call God. We are invited to ask for guidance on what our word or words will be for the year that will represent our highest intention or it may be a name that we hear for this new spiritual identity. That name is then written upon the white tile. We keep the white tile as a reminder of our intention.”

Bible Reference

Revelation 2:17: *"Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers (who overcomes) I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it."*

White Stone Ceremony

Objectives

Students will:

- Explore new beginnings
- Receive a new name

Supplies

- White Stones
- Pencils
- Meditation Music

Instructions

- I invite you now to pick up that stone and hold it in your hand. This stone represents a clean slate, a fresh beginning, no matter what last year was like. God's love is like that. Revelations 21:5 says: "Behold I make all things new."
- It is important to not use your will to come up with a name you desire or to come up with a name that is driven by your ego. It's usually best to go with what comes to you first. And please don't judge what name Spirit gives you. Initially, you may not understand why this name or phrase was given to you. But, at some point during this next year, it will become obvious.
- If, for whatever reason, nothing definitive comes to you during the meditation, please don't worry. Take your white stone home with you. Sit in meditation with the expectation that your name will be revealed. And it will.

Centering Activity

Make sure everyone has a pencil and stone

SAY...

Take your stone and look at it, see its beauty, see its newness. As we journey on the path of our spiritual awakening, the white stone in each of us is constantly being renewed. The white stone in each of us is being revitalized, redeemed.

The white stone, and the name that will be written on it, is a symbol of our spiritual growth, whereby we cancel out the old; discontinue our old way of thinking and put an end to our habit of forgetting who and what we truly are.

As each of us partakes in the Manna, or spiritual food that is ours for the asking, we become nourished and whole. The energy that we derive from this Manna, gives the inner energy that we need in order to reach a higher state of consciousness, of a purified state of consciousness; a state of consciousness that is symbolized by the white of your stone.

As this renewal process takes place within, we gain the knowledge of a 'new name' within us, and more importantly, we gain a deeper understanding of that new name and where it might lead us. The new name, the new spiritual name that is the true nature of our being is the name we know of as 'I AM.'

As you hold your white stone in your hand, know that you are starting with a clean slate. In this ceremony, we are going to be writing down a new name for ourselves.

The white stone is an ancient ritual. In Jesus' day, when someone served time in prison or in bondage of any kind, they were given a white stone when they were released. Each of us comes from bondage of some kind today, and we are being given a white stone to signify our freedom. All of your past nonsense was as a prison to you, but now you are free to go and be and do anything you choose. Anything you can believe and conceive – you can be and do.

In Revelations, John talks about the people being given a new name. 'Let anyone who has an ear listen, to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.' (The churches were those people whose thoughts were turned towards God.) 'To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna.' (To all who see beyond the appearances, I will give all that is needed to live.)

This ear John refers to is not your outer ear, but the ear of the soul, which is within us. This refers to the ear that hears "the still small voice" as it whispers to us. We develop this inner listening quality by getting out of our intellect and into our hearts, through prayer and meditation. Prayer and meditation are ways to take the journey from our heads to our hearts.

Story Sharing #1

So the first part of the verse tells us to listen, to develop the ear of the soul. To sit in the silence and listen to Spirit.

And then it says, "To everyone who conquers." For us, as followers of Spirit, this is not an outer war at all, but an inner war that requires our surrender... for us to be in the world, but not of the world. And yet, how many times have we not surrendered to that sweet Spirit that calls us in every moment? ... But when we do surrender to that Spirit and go within, then and only then do we conquer. What a paradox. Only in surrender is there victory. Not an outer surrender or an outer victory. But an inner surrender and inner victory, of letting go and letting God be God in me and through me.

When Moses was wandering in the wilderness, the manna was that which God sent down each day. The people only had to go and collect it each day; they did not have to do anything else for God to give them all that was needed to live. So when we surrender to Spirit, then the promise is fulfilled, and we are given hidden manna that is not visible to the world. We are given the peace that passes all human understanding and we are given an entirely new source of energy and nourishment.

This hidden manna is derived from the higher levels of being within us. It nourishes the soul first, then the body. (Matthew 6:33) "Strive first for the kingdom, and all these things will be given to you." It benefits the whole being. In the Gospels, Jesus alludes to this very thing when he says to his disciples, (John 4:32) "I have food to eat that you do not know about." This "hidden manna" is the vital life substance and energy of Spirit, directly assimilated into our entire being.

Story Sharing #2

The second part of the promise is: 'And I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

At this time it was believed that when the people had overcome and had made their connection with the Divine; then they got a new name. That new name was written on a white stone. The name was given to them directly by God. No one else intervened, no one else was aware of this new name. It was a new nature, the freedom from bondage. When people had overcome, when they were set free from their bondage, they got that stone.

In the Bible, you see many name changes. For example, Saul - which means personal will - was struck to his knees. His physical eyes were blind for three days and he had to look within. He went from persecuting Christians to helping them. He became the reason that Christianity survived. His trips to spread Christianity changed the face of this earth. He was given a new name at the time of his awakening. Saul (personal will) was transformed to Paul, which means enlightened will. He became will that followed God's will.

Abram, as he grew in spiritual awareness, became Abraham, Sarai became Sarah. The change in name always signifies a change in consciousness. In Biblical times, a name was a very meaningful and sacred thing. Every name represented a quality that was in the person who carries the name. You didn't choose a name for your child because you liked the name. You chose it for whatever essence you saw in the child.

After we surrender to that inner Spirit, we are promised a new name. This refers to the new and higher realization of the I AM. Before coming into truth, when we said, "I AM" we were usually thinking of only our current opinions of ourselves. After study and greater realization of "I AM" we came to realize that it is more than an opinion of one's self, it is more of an awareness of the God self, of the higher self, or real self. Our real self, or God self, is so much greater than any opinions we can ever have of ourselves. It requires our reaching a higher level of consciousness within ourselves to even bear facing a realization of our real self, God self. This is the white stone mentioned.

White metaphysically represents Joy, Victory, and Purification.

In this white stone, or purified state of consciousness we know that the Father and I are one.

In this white stone consciousness we remember what God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM," and in this higher white stone consciousness within ourselves we learn our "New Name," an entirely new realization of our true "I AM."

We conquer and receive the hidden manna, our full potential, by consciously surrendering, letting go of that unnecessary baggage. By prayer and meditation, by utilizing the tools of affirmations and denials and by remembering that, I AM: GOD IS.

As we surrender and follow the tools of Spirit we make a space for unlimited possibilities to become manifest in 2010. In creating a space in our consciousness, we open ourselves up to unlimited possibilities, unlimited potential in 2010.

And so I encourage you to consciously invite the activity of God - the Holy Spirit - into your heart and mind for the next few minutes. Perhaps there is a new career, a new title, or a new quality that Spirit is pressing out through you. I ask you to give your ego a few minutes off and let that Divine Holy self

in you come through. Give yourself permission to know that you have a new quality, a new name.

I've seen people who, when they write the word peace, love, or presence, take on a new essence of who they are.

Later, you will be invited to write the name on your stone, and to carry it with you, and carry that name in your heart.

Whenever we ask there is always an answer.

Meditation

Play the meditation music

You can close your eyes and open them whenever it is comfortable for you.

Let's become still for a minute and allow God to express through you and as you. I invite you to take the white stone in your hand and know it as a symbol of a new life. See it as a symbol of who you have become, or of who you are becoming, or of who you would like to become.

Feel the presence of God and know your oneness with God. Know your I AM'ness with God. Feel that loving presence of God as it surrounds and supports you. Know right now that you're safe and secure. You are loved and supported by the presence of God. Know that you are encouraged by your fellow travelers. Know that you are loved and appreciated by this spiritual community.

Behold, the Christ of God in each of us says, "I make all things new."

Again, the scripture that we are using today is: (Revelation 2:17) "Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it."

And so this white stone is the promise of a new life. It is the symbol of a clean slate, as was the custom in the times when the Bible was written. When one was set free from prison, they were given a white stone, and they carried that white stone with them as proof for anyone to see that they had completed their obligation, that their slate was clean and that they were free.

And so this is our sign of a clean slate. Whatever has gone on in the past, we let it go. This is a sign of our ability in this moment to live in this new beginning. This is a moment in which we know we are free, free from all that has bound us, free from the prison in which we had put ourselves.

To those who move forward with faith, a new name is given. So now we meditate on our new name, for each of us has overcome adversity. We have freed ourselves to live more fully, conscious of the activity of the whole spirit of God in the creative life force and in every aspect of our lives. We are now free from limiting thoughts about ourselves, each other, and our world.

Anytime you look at your white stone realize that you have the gift of choice; the gift to live differently, to live a more fulfilling life, to begin again, to connect with God and co-create with God.

John wrote in the book of Revelations that the white stone carries a new name, the spiritual identity and a deeper awareness of what God has planned for you. No one, in the entire universe except you

and God, knows what this new name is. But it has come to you to be lived out, to be expressed, to be embodied as you. It is what God is calling you to be or do. It is a whisper from your soul that you are so much more than you have ever let come into expression.

Begin to reflect on a new name. Let it come to you easily, without trying to make it happen. Let a name come to you that marks your new beginning, feel the stone in your hand. Hear it beckon to you. Spirit has decreed a name for you to be written on the stone. What will your life be called from this point forward?

And so, as you are guided by Spirit, (and it may feel to you as if you are making it up because it may seem so wonderful or so much what you have yearned for), but still I invite you to trust in this now moment,as Spirit gives to you in this sacred place...in this moment of Truth...an insight into your divine purpose...an insight into your holy essence, and so in that secret place of the most high, I invite you to allow yourself to hear the new name that God has for you.

And, as that name becomes clear, just allow yourself to write it...it may be a title, it may be something like published author...or clean and sober...or grateful...whatever.

If a name has come to you, stay quiet and allow yourself to ask for a deeper understanding, to ask if there are any steps to take. In this moment allow yourself to simply open to Spirit, to say, 'God in me reveals my true essence. God in me reveals my next step. God as me lives a joyous, peaceful, fulfilling life.'

"Behold, I make all things new...for you are my beloved in whom I am well pleased."

A thankfulness flows over us as we receive our new name. Along with it comes the power and guidance to achieve all that we desire. This is our new name. We see it. We decree it. We are on the path to gaining greater insights and awareness and mark a new beginning.

"It is your Father's good pleasure to give you this kingdom." Accept this consciousness of ever increasing good in your life. I invite you to carry this white stone as a reminder of that promise. "Amen."

Closing Prayer

Action

- Have the group form a large circle, become still, breathing in and out, and focusing only on their breath.
- Remind them that they have the power to choose whatever they want to focus on in life.
- Invite one of the teens to lead and affirmative prayer, such as, "I am a beloved child of God. I choose to express health, strength, peace, joy and wisdom.
- They can share their name or word if they want.