



Soulful Home

Finding the Sacred in
Everyday Spaces



ALL PEOPLES

a Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Paying Attention
March 2026

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A Blessing of Paying Attention

The Welcome Mat

What Does it Mean to be a Family that Pays Attention?

Before I became a parent, if someone had asked me what it meant to pay attention, I probably would have said “listening” or “noticing.” Parenting taught me it’s so much more—it’s leaning in, slowing down, and truly seeing the world, our children, and ourselves in ways that can’t be rushed. This slower mode of parenting is what enables us to notice what isn’t said and catch the quiet moments that often contain the deepest meaning.

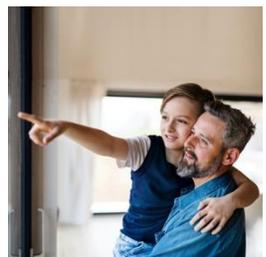
Paying attention is also about being present. As parents, there often are more things on our to do list than we can get to. This leads to us rushing from morning to night. But we also know that when we rush, we aren’t really present. We are there, but not really there. And paying attention only works when we’re fully present. This practice of full presence is what reminds us to listen with curiosity, honor feelings, and celebrate the small wonders of everyday life. It is how we show our love, because love shows itself in the care of noticing.

And when children see us paying attention—with curiosity, care, and intention—they also learn that noticing is a form of love. They see that attention isn’t passive—it’s active, transformative, and grounding.

So friends, this month, I hope your family explores attention as a spiritual practice and, as hard as it may be, accepts the invitation to slow down. Notice the ordinary and extraordinary moments. Honor each other’s experiences. And give yourself grace—paying attention is a practice, not a task. It’s a way to show up fully, with love, and with eyes wide open to the beauty of your family’s life.

With warmth and hope,

April



At the Table

Exploring Attention Through Discussions

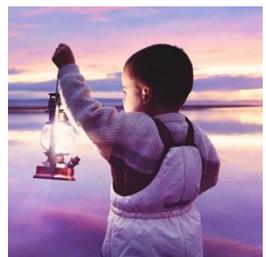
The At the Table section engages the theme through question-driven family discussions. The questions are designed to be used at a family gathering, most often dinner, but can also be used during a quiet moment in the living room or while driving in the car. This section strengthens family bonds as members learn more about each other through evocative questions.

How To Go About It

The most straightforward approach is to have parents and/or caregivers read off the questions they believe will resonate most with family members, and then have everyone take turns answering. Another fun way to do this is to create [a family question jar](#). To make this easier, we've listed all the questions below at the end of this packet with dotted lines you can cut along to make "question strips." You can then pull out the question jar and have family members choose a question/strip a few times each week.

Discussion Questions

1. Who do you think pays better attention? Adults or kids? Why?
2. Do you pay better attention when you are sitting quietly and listening or standing and moving around a little?
3. Name your most helpful and most unhelpful way of getting the attention of your parents. How about your most helpful and most unhelpful ways of getting the attention of your friends?
4. One way we pay attention to people is to give them compliments. What's one of the best compliments you've received?
5. Would you rather be the center of a group's attention or be among the crowd of observers? Why?
6. What topic or subject almost always has your full attention?
7. How do you know when your pet wants your attention?
8. Sometimes, when our attention wanders, we actually come up with some pretty great ideas or realizations. Describe a recent daydream or wandering thought that was interesting to you?
9. What's the best way to get the attention of trusted adults outside of your immediate family, if you needed their help?
10. How does it feel to you when you get attention that you DO NOT want, such as when you make a big mistake (or get loudly blamed for one!), or accidentally do something really noticeable?
11. What social justice issue do you wish adults would pay more attention to?



At Play

Playing With Resistance as a Family

At Play suggests games, crafts, and activities to help families experience the theme through joy and fun.

This Month's Treasure Hunt - Photo Treasure Hunt

This month, invite your family to pay special attention to the things that “catch our eye.” When walking around or playing in our neighborhoods, little things naturally grab our attention: rocks, seedpods, sticks, flowers dried on their stalks, interesting graffiti, an old coin, or a broken piece of pottery, etc.

Most often, we walk right past them there in the path, or on the street, or in the park. But for this month, we’re going to start a temporary collection as a way to hold these little gifts

of paying attention, to be extra grateful for the ways our world surprises us with tiny treasures.

What You’ll Need:

A phone or a camera

Curious eyes and a little time together

How to Play:

1. **Head outside together.** Take a walk around your neighborhood, a park, or even just your block. Move slowly and notice what catches your eye.
2. **Look for tiny treasures.** Pay special attention to small, easily overlooked things—interesting rocks, seedpods, sticks, dried flowers, bits of art or graffiti, an old coin, or anything that feels like a surprise.
3. **Pause and notice.** When something catches your attention, stop for a moment. What do you like about it? Why do you think it stood out to you?
4. **Take a photo.** Instead of collecting the object itself, take a picture of it. This helps us honor the treasure while leaving it where it belongs.
5. **Create a temporary collection.** When you get home, look at your photos together. You might make a shared album, print a few favorites, or display them on a screen for the week.
6. **Reflect together.** Talk about what you noticed.
 - Were you surprised by what caught your eye?
 - Did different people notice different things?
 - How did slowing down change the walk?

Optional Approach:

Seeing the world through someone else’s eyes is a great way to view your regular stomping grounds in a new light. So another way of doing this “catch our eye” hunt is to take turns pointing out what grabs your attention. Be sure to explain to each other why it caught your eye and seems interesting to you.



Additional At Play Options

Option A: Family Kindness Bingo: Paying Attention to Each Other

This family activity is all about noticing the small ways we can brighten someone else's day. Every smile, kind word, or helpful action has the power to change someone's day.

1. Print out a [bingo card](#) for each family member
2. When someone completes a square, mark it
 - Pause for a moment: notice how it felt to give kindness and how the other person responded.
3. Share together
 - Encourage everyone to **tell the family** about one kind thing they did that day.
 - Highlight the ways your attention to others' feelings made a difference.
4. Celebrate achievements
 - Celebrate when someone fills a row, column, or the whole card.
 - Emphasize: the **real reward** is noticing the positive impact our actions have on others' hearts.

Option B: [Why Guess Who?](#)

This is a game that really puts our attention to the test by asking us to...

- Carefully observe (Players have to notice small details (hair, glasses, expressions) rather than guessing randomly.)
- Listen closely (You must pay attention to the answers given, not just ask questions.)
- Slow down (Rushing leads to mistakes; thoughtful attention leads to success.)
- Notice differences without judgment (The game invites curiosity about differences rather than ranking or valuing them.)

Adaptations

- For younger kids: Play cooperatively—work together to guess the character.
- For older kids/teens: Add a challenge round where you can only ask one question at a time and must explain why you chose it.
- Faith-at-home tie-in: Families invite everyone to pay attention and notice one detail about each other later that day and name it appreciatively.



Option C: [Spot It Game](#)

Who in your family can focus their attention the fastest? This game will help you find out! Spot It! is a fun and fast-paced, all-ages family game where the point is to find the matching pictures on the circular cards. The trick is that when the picture placement and size are changed, our brains have a harder time recognizing it, so this game calls for extreme focus of attention.

Note: Spot It! is small enough to stash in the car or in a bag to have handy when you find yourself waiting unexpectedly with antsy kids. You can easily pull attention toward a fun game and away from the frustration of waiting!

Option D: Clue

A great game of paying attention, especially for older kids, teens, and families who enjoy a longer game, as this game asks players to

- Track information: Success depends on noticing which cards are shown, which are not, and what that absence tells you.
- Listen carefully: You have to pay attention to other players' questions and reactions, not just your own turn.
- Remember details over time: Clue rewards sustained attention, not quick observations.



At the Bedside and in the Book Nook

At The Bedside & In the Nook suggests books that help families engage with the monthly themes with their imagination. This story-centered section honors the unique way stories enrich our sense of what's possible, expand our empathy, and build our identities.

[The Rabbit Listened](#) by Cori Doerrfeld (Suggested for kids 3-5)

A gentle story about being present and listening when a friend is sad, a great lesson in focused attention

Invitation to Connect: *Parents, ask your children if they have ever had big feelings and what helped them most—advice, a hug, or someone quietly listening.*

[The Lorax](#) by Dr. Seuss (Suggested for kids 4-7)

A powerful story about what can happen when we stop paying attention to the land and how our choices affect it.

Invitation to Connect: *Parents, use this as an opportunity to ask your children how what happens when people don't pay attention to how their actions affect the Earth and others. What does it mean to "speak for the trees" today?*

[This Morning Sam Went to Mars](#) by Nancy Carlson (Suggested for kids 5-9)

"Eight-year-old Sam is always daydreaming about exploring space and the deepest seas, which is awesome—except when he's supposed to be focusing on schoolwork or stuff at home. It seems like all he hears is, "Focus, Sam!" and "Pay attention!" The doctor says Sam is lucky: He has a very powerful brain! But he does need some help focusing. She gives Sam and his dad lots of strategies to try, like staying organized, eating better food, and asking for help when he needs it. Sam's favorite strategy? Make time for imagination!"

Invitation to Connect: *Parents, use this story as an opportunity to ask your children about their imaginations and big feelings. You might ask what places they like to pretend to visit, how pretending helps them when things feel hard, and what helps them feel safe and understood when they are upset.*

[Percy Jackson & The Olympians Series](#) by Rick Riordan (Suggested for kids 8-12)

Percy has ADHD and dyslexia, but these traits become strengths in his mythical world, showing how attention can be refocused.

Invitation to Connect: *Parents, leave this book out for your kids as an opportunity to reflect on these questions: How does Percy's brain work differently? What challenges become strengths for him? Are there ways the things that feel hard for you might also help you in other parts of your life?*



In Front of the Screen

Watching Meaningful Movies Together

In Front of the Screen offers families ways to connect with the monthly theme and each other through movies and TV shows.

Inside Out 1 and 2 — Paying attention to feelings (PG)

Snuggle up as a family and watch what happens when we pay attention to our emotions and learn to understand what they are trying to tell us.

***Invitation to Connect:** Parents, use these movies as opportunities to talk with your children about noticing their emotions. Which feelings show up most for them? How can paying attention to feelings help us understand ourselves and each other better?*

Wall-E (PG)

A powerful reminder of what can happen when people stop paying attention to the Earth and to one another.

***Invitation to Connect:** Parents, use this movie as an invitation to reflect on how people care for (or ignore) the planet. Talk with your children about what happens when we stop paying attention to our environment and what small choices your family can make to show care for the Earth.*

The Mitchells vs. the Machines (PG)

A fun movie that reminds us of how paying attention to each other matters more than paying attention to our screens.

***Invitation to Connect:** Parents, use this movie as an opportunity to talk with your kids about how technology affects relationships. What happens when we stop paying attention to each other? How can your family practice being more present together?*

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (PG-13)

A coming-of-age story about paying attention to who you are becoming and learning to trust your own strengths.

***Invitation to Connect:** Parents, use this movie as an opportunity to talk with your kids and reflect on what it means to pay attention to our own growth. How does Miles learn to notice his strengths, fears, and responsibilities? What helps him step into who he is meant to be?*



In the Toolbox

Strategies to Help Our Kids and Ourselves Navigate the Complicated Stuff

In the Toolbox offers parents resources to better understand the well-established and newly emerging challenges of being a child today. It's all about equipping parents to be better guides and companions for their kids.

Resource One: How Tech Companies Rig Parental Guilt

<https://www.afterbabel.com/p/how-tech-companies-rig-parental-guilt>

“Talita Pruett, a California mom of three children ages 14, 13, and 5, is doing everything she can to be a present, involved parent. But one issue weighs on her more than anything else: guilt over media. She has tried it all: screen-time limits, content filters, charging phones in her bedroom at night, and regular conversations about healthy media habits. Still, she says, guilt lingers, both about her children’s media use and her own...”

Resource Two: They See Through It All

<https://dailydad.com/they-see-through-it-all/>

“It’s important. It’s prestigious. It pays the bills. You like your job—you chose it after all. At the very least, you decided to commit countless hours of your life to making it a career...But your kids? They’re not so easily impressed. They don’t appreciate the trappings of your success. They don’t care much for status or seniority. All they know is how it affects them. And on some level, they notice how it affects you, the person who walks in the door after those long days and business trips...”

Resource Three: The Gift of Deep Listen: How Your Presence and Attention Can Impact Those You Love

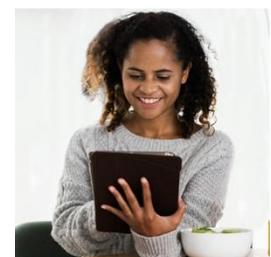
<https://thenaturalparentmagazine.com/the-gift-of-deep-listening-how-your-presence-attention-can-impact-those-you-love/2/>

“So how do we practice the art of deep listening? Just as weight training helps us build and strengthen the muscles of our body, practicing deep listening builds and strengthens our capacity to listen. Every day we are presented with opportunities to practice being truly present with others and connecting their experience in a more powerful way. Here are some tips for building your deep listening “muscle”: ...”

Resource Four: Raising a Neurodivergent Child

<https://www.browardtherapygroup.com/blog/raising-a-neurodivergent-child-noticing-their-strengths-and-challenges>

“Parenting advice is never a one-size-fits-all discussion. For parents of neurodivergent children, this reality can feel especially true. Neurodivergent children, who include those with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other conditions, understand the world in a way that differs from their peers. Their strengths and challenges may not always be immediately visible, but they are there, waiting to be recognized and nurtured. Understanding and supporting these children requires attention, patience, and a willingness to adapt...”



On the Porch

Connecting and Sharing Stories with Your Village

On the Porch uses thoughtful questions to open space for you and your parenting partners or parent/caregiver friends to connect more deeply with each other and think more deeply about how the monthly theme has shown up in your life and can show up in a more intentional way.

How to Go About It

Bring these questions with you when the time comes to hang out with your co-parent or parenting/caregiver buddy. Treat the questions less as a quiz and more like doorways inviting you into the world of mutual storytelling and memory. Go through them all or pick a few that call to you the most.

Questions

1. When you think about “paying attention” to your child, what does that mean to you?
2. How have you experienced your attention span changing as a parent?
3. To whom or what would you give your attention if you had an extra hour of the day, at a time of your choosing?
4. Share a recent moment when you really felt your child needed your full attention. How did you respond?
5. How do you model paying attention to yourself and your own needs for your children?
6. What took up a lot of your attention this month that you feel was a waste of time? What was the worthiest focus of your attention this month?
7. How do you balance paying attention to your children with the other demands of your life?
8. When growing up, what one thing above all others did your family tell you was worthy of attention? Beauty? Status? Duty? Kindness? Honesty? Education? Loyalty? Success? God?
9. Are there times when you feel distracted or “checked out” of parenting? What helps you notice when that happens?
10. How do you notice your child’s feelings or needs when they’re not expressed in words?
11. Are there habits or routines in your family that help everyone feel seen and heard?
12. How do you help your child practice paying attention to others, their environment, or their own feelings?
13. What is one simple change you could make in the next week to be more fully present with your children?



Alongside the Chalice

Family spiritual practices and rituals are crucial for kids, youth, and adults. While lighting a chalice at home is a beautiful family practice, it can often be the only explicit UU identity practice we bring into our homes. So our Alongside the Chalice section offers a different UU practice, observance, or ritual for families to try out each month, with the hope that a few stick and become woven into the repeated and treasured rhythms of family life.

Family Spring Equinox Practice

The Spring Equinox is a special moment when the Sun shines directly over the Earth's equator, bringing nearly equal day and night—a natural reminder of balance. For thousands of years, people have celebrated this turning point with rituals that connect us to the rhythms of nature. It's a perfect time for families to slow down, notice balance in the world, in ourselves, and in our relationships, and to celebrate growth, new beginnings, light, and renewal.

- **Sunrise Greeting:** Wake early to greet the sunrise, visualizing winter's darkness fading and spring's energy entering your body.
- **Nature Walk:** Look for first flowers, budding trees, returning birds, or signs of new life; collect natural treasures for a nature table.
- **Planting:** Start seeds indoors or plant seedlings in the garden, singing to the plants as you do.
- **Barefoot Walk:** Walk on soft earth with bare feet to feel grounded and connected to the Earth.
- **Spring Cleaning:** Open windows and clean your home, letting fresh air and light in to clear out winter's stagnant energy.
- **Nature Altar:** Create a special spot with bright colors, flowers, and natural items to set intentions for the season.
- **Egg Activities:** Decorate eggs or play egg-balancing games, discussing how eggs symbolize new life.
- **Fire Ceremony:** Have a bonfire (safely) or light candles to represent the returning light, releasing what you'll miss from winter and what you look forward to.
- **Journaling:** Start a nature journal to record the "firsts" (first robin, first daffodil) and track seasonal changes.
- **Intentions:** Go around the circle as a family and share what you want to grow and blossom in your lives this year.
- **Spring Feast:** Cook and eat meals with seasonal ingredients, perhaps baking hot cross buns or other symbolic foods.



Sit-and-Notice Meditation

A Family Spiritual Practice for Paying Attention

Paying attention is a spiritual practice. When we slow down and notice, we remember that we are connected to the world around us and to one another.

Getting Ready

- Find a comfortable place to sit together, inside or outdoors.
- Take a few deep breaths together.
- Feel your body supported by the ground, a chair, or a cushion.
- There is nothing to fix and nowhere else to be.

The Practice

For the next few minutes, we will practice paying attention.

- Begin by noticing what you can **see**.
Let your eyes rest gently on colors, shapes, light, or movement.
- Now notice what you can **hear**.
Sounds near and far... loud and soft... sounds that come and go.
- Notice what you can **feel** in your body.
The air on your skin, your feet on the floor, your breath moving in and out.

If your mind wanders, that's okay.

Gently bring your attention back to noticing.

Closing the Meditation

When the time feels right, take one more deep breath together. If you'd like, go around the circle and name **one thing you noticed**. something small, ordinary, or surprising.



Paying Attention Through Compliments

A Family Spiritual Practice Inspired by [World Compliment Day](#) (March 1)

This practice invites us to slow down and pay attention to the goodness in one another. A compliment is more than kind words; it is a way of seeing someone clearly and naming what we notice and appreciate. When we offer sincere affirmations, we help create moments of connection that can brighten a whole day.

The Practice

Throughout the day, practice noticing what is good, kind, or meaningful in the people around you.

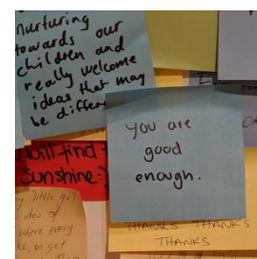
- **Offer three compliments.**
They can be simple or detailed—spoken, written, or shared quietly. The intention is not perfection, but presence.
- **Get curious and specific.**
Instead of general praise, name what you truly notice: an effort, a choice, a way someone shows care.
- **Practice gratitude when words feel hard.**
If a compliment doesn't feel natural, offer a warm smile and a genuine "thank you" as a way of honoring the connection.

Closing Reflection

At the end of the day, pause and reflect:

- What did you notice when you slowed down and paid attention to others?
- How did giving (or receiving) a compliment affect your mood or sense of connection?
- How might this practice change the way you move through the world if you carried it beyond today?

This practice costs nothing, yet it reminds us that attention itself is a powerful gift, and one that can transform our communities, one kind word at a time.



The Extra Mile

The Extra Mile section is for families who want to continue exploring the theme of the month through larger adventures, more complex projects, or simply through additional modalities not otherwise included in the packets. A bit more effort, but well worth it!

Forage and Create with Wild Clay

<http://www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids/magazine/202503Mar.pdf>

This activity is all about paying attention to the natural world through observation, touch, and creativity. It invites families to slow down, explore their local environment, and notice the small details in the soil beneath their feet.

Step 1: Foraging for Clay

- Explore nearby outdoor spaces like riverbanks, fields, hiking trails, or even areas where soil is freshly dug.
- Pay close attention to the **textures, colors, and layers of soil**.
- Look for soil that is smooth, sticky, or cracked. Test small amounts to find clay that is soft, stretchy, and moldable.
- Notice the differences: gray, red, brown, or white—each color tells a story about the minerals in the earth.

Family Mindfulness Tip: Encourage everyone to **move slowly and quietly**, paying attention to smells, sounds, and the feel of the soil. Ask: “What do you notice about this place that you might usually overlook?”

Step 2: Preparing the Clay

- Remove rocks, twigs, and leaves.
- Knead it, adding tiny amounts of water if needed, until it’s smooth and holds together well.
- Take note of how the clay changes as you knead it—its texture, temperature, and stretchiness.

Family Mindfulness Tip: Talk about **how paying attention to small details makes a big difference** in your final creation.

Step 3: Creating

- Use the clay to make pots, tiles, figures, or simple ornaments.
- Encourage each family member to focus on the **details**: the shape, smoothness, or patterns in their piece.
- Optional: experiment with natural textures—press leaves, sticks, or stones into your clay for decoration.

Family Reflection: Ask: “What did paying attention to the texture, color, and shape of the clay teach you?”



Step 4: Drying and Observing

- Let creations air dry for several days or weeks. Cover with a damp cloth to prevent cracking.
- Observe how the clay changes over time—its color, hardness, and shape.
- If you want a challenge, research ways to fire clay safely with a solar kiln, campfire, or low-tech method.

Extra Mile Reflection & Connection Questions

1. What did you notice about the soil that you might not have before?
2. How did paying attention help you choose the best clay or make a better creation?
3. Did anyone notice details that others didn't? How did that help your project?
4. What other ways could we practice paying attention to the natural world?



Blessing of Paying Attention

Dear schedule makers, shoe/binky/homework/sports bag/permission slip finders, and keepers of all things...

This month,

May you notice the small wonders in our children, their words, their silences, their laughter, and their fears.

May you give yourselves the grace and permission to slow down, so that you may enjoy the lives you have helped to shape and mold, so that you may see them fully, hear what they are truly feeling, and be present with care, so that you have a chance to pay attention not just to what is easy to see, but to the hidden gifts, the growing strengths, and the quiet needs of their hearts.

And may your children recognize you and notice that your attention is a gift of love - a way to guide, support, and nurture them in body, mind, and spirit.

May this practice of slowing down and paying attention strengthen your patience and sharpen your view, so that your children, and all children, feel seen, safe, and loved.

Blessed be, and may it be so.

~ ***April Rosario***



Question Jar Cut-Outs

We invite you to write your own questions as well

We also remind you that questions that evoke stories are often the most impactful.

**Who do you think pays better attention?
Adults or kids? Why?**

**Do you pay better attention when you are sitting
quietly and listening or standing and
moving around a little?**

**Name your most helpful and most unhelpful way of
getting the attention of your parents. How about
your most helpful and most unhelpful ways of
getting the attention of your friends?**

**One way we pay attention to people is to give them
compliments. What's one of the best
compliments you've received?**

**Would you rather be the center of a group's attention or be among the crowd of observers?
Why?**

What topic or subject almost always has your full attention?

How do you know when your pet wants your attention?

Sometimes, when our attention wanders, we actually come up with some pretty great ideas or realizations. Describe a recent daydream or wandering thought that was interesting to you?

What's the best way to get the attention of trusted adults outside of your immediate family, if you needed their help?

How does it feel to you when you get attention that you DO NOT want, such as when you make a big mistake (or get loudly blamed for one!), or accidentally do something really noticeable?

What social justice issue do you wish adults would pay more attention to?

Connect With More Inspiration For You and Your Family!

Parents can Join our Facebook and Instagram pages for
daily Inspiration on our themes:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/?ref=settings>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/soul_matters_circle/

Parents and youth will want to check out
our [Spotify](#) & [YouTube](#) music playlists on the monthly themes.

Credits

Soulful Home packets are prepared by

April Rosario

Our Soul Matters Director of RE Resources and [Family Ministry Coordinator](#)

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