

Philippine Unitarian Universalists



- Read each fact about Unitarians in the Philippines. Decide if it is the same or different from what you, your family and your church do or believe. Mark an S if it is the same, a D if it is different.
 - On the poster, find the numbered spaces and match them to the list of facts.
 - Color the spaces red which match facts marked S. If you marked a fact with a D, color the space yellow.
1. Filipinos honor the spirit on non-human things in nature, like animals, trees, plants, ocean and the earth.
 2. Philippine Unitarian Universalists follow the teachings of Jesus and generally believe in God.
 3. Guitar is a popular instrument placed in UUCP worship services.
 4. UUCP members believe that God loves all people and would not punish us.
 5. Worship and religious education are centered on the Bible.
 6. Worship services begin with lighting a chalice.
 7. UUCP members are open-minded about other faiths and different religious beliefs. Freedom of belief is very important to them.

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Things to Know about Unitarian Universalists in the Philippines

Beliefs and practices

1. UU Churches in the Philippines are simple structures with dirt floors, benches or chairs, an altar with a UUCP banner, a chalice and a centering bell. What would a visitor to your church see?

2. Faith healing, or the “laying on of hands” to help heal illness, is commonly practiced by Unitarian Universalist ministers. How do your ministers and other people in your church help people who are sick?

3. Filipinos honor and respect the spirit of non-human things in nature, like animals, trees, plants, ocean, earth. They give thanks to these spirits. Do you know other people who honor the spirits in nature as well?

4. Filipinos say “buyag” (boo-yag) after someone gives them a compliment to ward off spirits that might take it away. In North American culture, when somebody _____, the people around them say “God bless you,” or “Gesundheit” to ward off bad luck or bad spirits.

5. Philippine Unitarian Universalists are UU Christians: they follow the teachings of Jesus and generally believe in God. What do you and your family believe about God? Is there a teaching of Jesus that you try to follow?

6. Guitar is the popular instrument played in UUCP worship services. What musical instruments do you hear in your church? Do you play a musical instrument?

7. Most hymns sung in UUCP worship services are traditional Filipino Christian folk hymns. Some of the songs and readings in their hymnal have been translated from English into Cebuano, the language spoken by many Philippine UUs. What is your favorite hymn? Do you ever sing folk songs in church?

8. UUCP members believe that God loves all people and would not punish anyone. The idea of “universal salvation” is where the word “Universalist” came from. What is your church’s name? Does it have the word “Universalist” in it? How did it get its name?

9. UUCP worship and religious education is centered on the Bible. Have you ever read from the Bible in your church school? What is your favorite Bible story?

10. The teachings of Jesus are a very important part of UUCP beliefs. One of these teachings, often called "the Golden Rule," is found in every major religion of the world. Can you tell the Golden Rule in your own words?

11. UUCP members are open-minded about other faiths and different religious beliefs. Freedom of belief is very important to them. In this way they are very much like North American UUs. Do you celebrate holidays from non-Christian religions in your church?

12. In the UU Church of the Philippines, worship services begin with lighting a chalice. Do worship services in your church start with a chalice lighting? What other things happen to show that worship is starting?

13. Many Filipino congregations meet mid-week for special programs as well as Sundays. Does your church ever have special programs? What are they?

Cultural Customs

1. Families of 8-12 live together in a hut made of light wood, such as bamboo, with a roof made of coconut leaves or some kind of palm leaves. The floor is usually made of bamboo. The family uses a kerosene lamp and cooking is done directly on a fire with dry chopped woods. Have you ever cooked over an open fire?

2. People sleep under mosquito nets because the mosquitoes carry diseases. What insects are most bothersome where you live?

3. A typical family outing is a day at the beach with lots of food. What is one of your family's favorite activities to do together?

4. People generally don't have pets but they raise chicken and pigs for food. Do you have pets, or raise animals for food?

5. Birthdays are not usually celebrated because most people don't have money for that sort of thing. How do you celebrate birthdays in your family?

6. Public transportation is on "trikes," a motorcycle with a side car that might carry 7 people. What kinds of public transportation have you taken?

7. People ride motorcycles that have long banana seats so they can carry 4 people or more. How many people can fit in your family car?

8. Children go to school early each morning so they can clean the classroom before the teachers arrive. Do you have classroom jobs? What are they?

9. There might be as many as 40 students in one classroom, and only one book! How many children are in your classroom? Do you share books?

10. Teachers write lessons on the blackboard to be memorized by the children. Have you ever had to memorize a poem or a lesson? Can you still recite it?

11. Students go home for lunch. If students live far from the school, they might live with relatives during the week while they go to school. If you had to live in a different city to go to school what would you like about that? What would you miss most about your home?

12. Students cut the lawn with machetes and polish the floor with a coconut husk. What jobs do you do to help in school and what tools do you use?

13. Filipinos point with their lips and say “yes” by raising their eyebrows. What is one non-spoken way of saying “yes” where you live?

14. Marbles and basketball are popular pastimes. What is your favorite sport or pastime?

15. A favorite game is sungka—a counting game like mancala. Have you ever played mancala? What other games do you like?

16. Every neighborhood, or barrio, has a “sari sari,” a small store that sells things like candies, soda, crackers and ice. What would you call that kind of store where you live?

17. UUs living on Negros Occidental (one side of the island) speak Ilongo; those living on the other side (Negros Oriental) speak Cebuano. What languages, besides English, do people speak in your city or state?

18. Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts are popular with both boys and girls. Have you even been in Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts?

19. If you went to the Philippines and lived with a UU family there, what do you think would be hardest for you?

21. Most Filipinos are not called by their given names but by some kind of nickname. Two popular ones are Inday (pronounced in-dye) for girls and Jun Jun (pronounced june-june) for boys. Do you have a nickname?