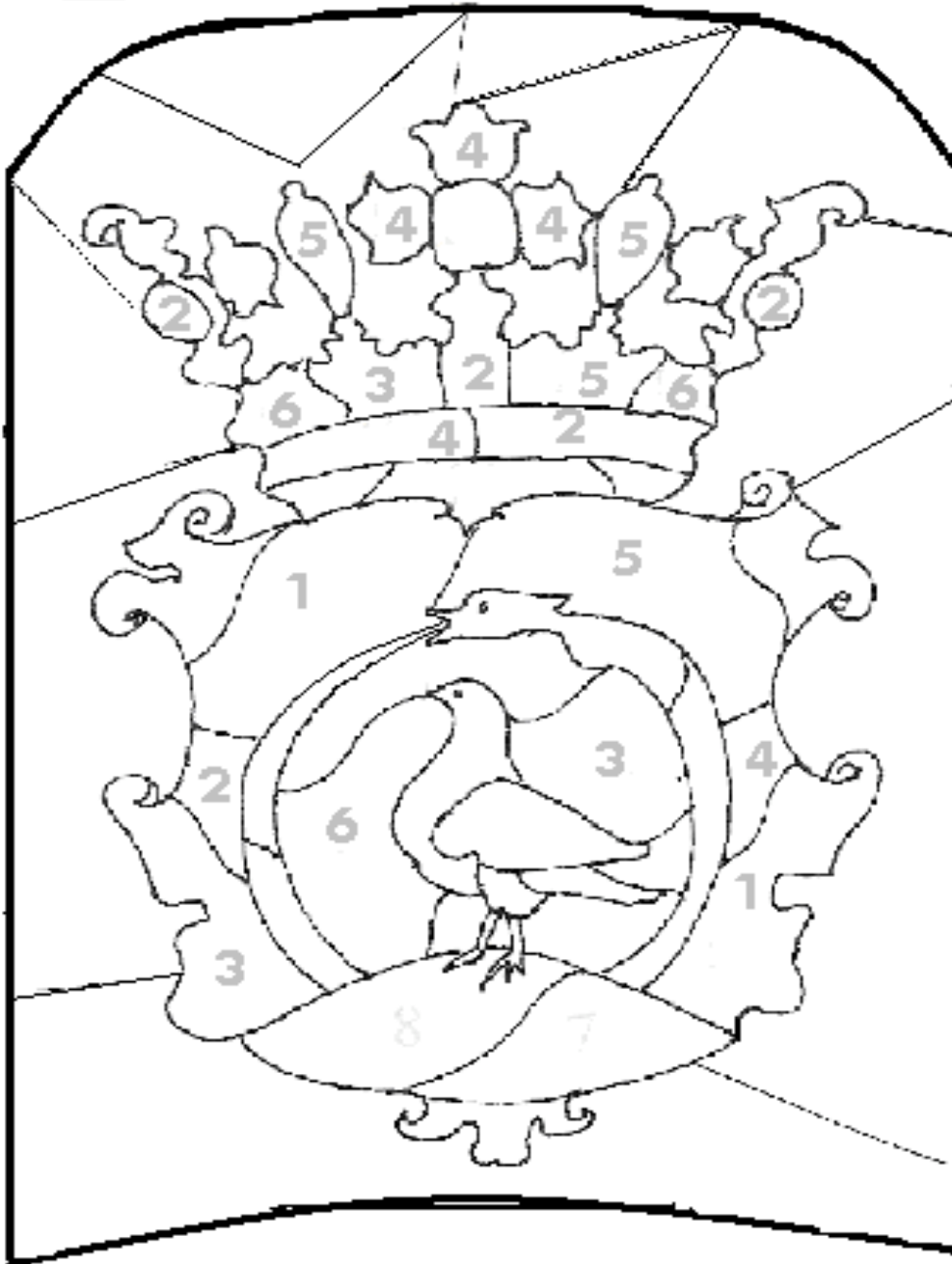


# Transylvanian Unitarians



- Read each fact about Transylvanian Unitarians.
- Decide if it is the same or different from what you, your family or 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.

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1. Communion, or "The Lord's Supper," is celebrated 4 times a year in Unitarian churches.

2. Transylvanian Unitarians believe that Jesus was "our best teacher," but not God.

3. Religious Education classes are taught each week in the public school; the Unitarian ministers are paid by the government to teach these classes but the church and ministers are free to decide what will be taught.
4. Transylvanian Unitarians have a special ceremony to welcome babies into the church.
5. At Age 13 or 14, youth may become members of the Transylvanian Unitarian church. In order to do this they must learn by heart the answers to questions about Unitarian faith.
6. Each region of the country has its own special folk costume; these are handmade and passed down from parents to youth, and are sometimes worn to church for special traditional ceremonies.

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## Some things to know about Unitarians in Hungary and the Transylvanian region of Romania.

### Beliefs and Practices

1. “God is one” is written over many church doors in Transylvania. In Hungarian that is written “Egy az Isten” and pronounced “*Edge oz eesh-ten.*”
2. Most Christians are “trinitarians” –they believe in a 3-part God. The name “Unitarian” was first used in Transylvania in 1600. Do you know why this name was used? (Here’s a clue-- “Uni” means one!)
3. During King John’s reign, religious debates were important exciting events. Preachers were like famous celebrities and people took sides to support their favorite preacher, almost like a sports event today. Do you have a favorite famous celebrity? Who?
4. One of the most famous sayings of Francis David was: “We need not think alike to love alike.” What do you think he meant by this?
5. Transylvanian Unitarians believe that Jesus was “our best teacher” but not God. What was one of Jesus’ teachings?
6. Communion, or the Lord’s Supper, is a Christian ritual practiced by Unitarians in Transylvania. Have you ever seen communion? What is it?
7. Religious education is taught in public schools once a week by the ministers of each religion. If there are only a few children of a certain religion in a village, a minister will come once or twice a month to worship and give lessons. Does your minister teach in your school?
8. During the Communist years (1949-1989) children were not supposed to go to church. (The government believed that all religions were bad.)The Young Communists had uniforms and marching songs. So some churches, including Unitarians, had their own marching songs. Does your congregation have any special children’s songs? Do you have special t-shirts for kids?
9. At age 13 or 14 youth can become full members of their churches. To do this they have to say by heart the answers to a set of questions about their Unitarian faith (the Unitarian catechism). This is similar to many Protestant churches in the United States today. Can you think of a good question about Unitarian Universalism that would be good for every UU child to know how to answer?

10. The confirmation service each year is a solemn ceremony where each of the classmates answers several of the questions. Then they are welcomed into the church and served communion for the first time. Then there is a big party. Will your church have a coming of age ceremony for you?

11. Each time a child enters the church they say this prayer silently:

I have entered your house of worship

Oh, gracious God, my prayers are seeking you and I hear your voice.

Loving God, be with me, show me your holy face, fill my heart and my spirit

Let me feel your loving presence.

Does your congregation say the same words each week? What are they?

12. Here is the prayer each child says when they leave the church:

I depart with joy in my heart, filled with peace and stillness.

My soul has found rest here, because you have been with me.

Guide me, protect me, help me always, oh loving God.

What is the last thing that happens before you leave your church service?

13. At the beginning of each religious education class, this prayer is said:

Good Father, our God, be with us in our work.

Then they say the Lord's Prayer together.

Do you know any prayers by heart?

14. In some old fashioned Unitarian churches, the men sit together on one side of the church and the women on the other. Boys and girls sit separately, too, and only teenagers get to sit in the balcony. In some of the new churches, families sit together. Where do you sit when you are at a service in your sanctuary?

15. If a mother and father of a family are of two different religions, the girls are brought up in the mother's religion and the boys in their father's religion. How did your parents decide what religion to bring you up in?

16. People in Transylvania almost never choose to practice a different religion from the one they grow up in. What religions did each of your parents and grandparents grow up in? (If you don't know, find out on your way home today!)

17. Transylvanian Unitarian children are christened when they are babies or toddlers. There are 6 or more godmothers. One of the godmothers holds the baby through the ceremony, where

water is poured on the baby's head. After the church ceremony there is a big party that often lasts all night.

Have you even been to a Child Dedication ceremony? What happened?

19. During Transylvanian services the children and adults never laugh out loud. Being in church is serious. They think laughing would be disrespectful.

Do the people in your congregation laugh and clap during your worship services? What do you think about this?

### Cultural Customs

1. In Hungarian, a person's name is always said with their last name first. How would your name be said when visiting Transylvania?
2. Transylvanian children are taught to memorize poems from a very early age. By the time they are 10, they can recite long poems. What is the longest poem you can recite?
3. In Romania there are Hungarian-Romanians (people whose ancestors lived in Hungary before 1919 and who speak Hungarian) and Romanian-Romanians: their families have always been Romanian and they speak Romanian only. What is your family's ancestry?
4. Most Unitarians in Romania are Hungarian-Romanians. They speak Hungarian but must also learn Romanian, starting in grade 2. Can you speak any language other than your native language?
5. Classes are taught in either Romanian or Hungarian depending on how many children speak Hungarian. The rule is: if 10 or more children speak Hungarian, a Hungarian speaking teacher will be hired. What languages do the children in your school speak?
6. Gypsies live in Romania, too. Their tradition is to wander from place to place, trading, buying and selling, instead of settling down in a home and working at a job or farm. Because of this people sometimes call them names or don't treat them fairly. Do any groups of people in your country get treated this way?
7. The name "Transylvania" means "beyond the forest region" of Hungary. It is a land of rolling hills and valleys, dotted with small villages. Does the name of the town or state where you live have a special meaning?
8. Each region of Transylvania and Hungary has its own handmade folk costume. Costumes are passed down from parents to children and everyone loves to wear them for special occasions. Do you have any clothes that your parents or grandparents wore when they were your age?

9. In each region of Transylvania there are dances that children do. The girls usually dance in a circle while singing. The boys' dances have lots of jumping and slapping their boots. A few dances are done by boys and girls together. Have you ever danced ethnic or folk dances?
10. When the Communists were in power, some songs and dances were forbidden. Unitarian parents thought it was important for their children to know these songs so they taught them in secret and children never sang them aloud in public. Have you ever been forbidden to read a book, sing a song, or do a dance? What do you think that would be like?
11. Weddings and Christenings are big celebrations, with cooking and preparation for the feast starting at least a month ahead; the party goes on all night till mid-morning. When your family has a special celebration, what foods are prepared?
12. Hungarian folk art is popular in Transylvania. The women stitch colorful embroideries to decorate their homes and churches. The men make decorations of carved wood. Do you have anything decorating your home or church that was made by hand?
13. The tulip is the national flower of Hungary and tulip designs are common in Transylvanian folk art. What is your state or regional flower?
14. Horse and buggy are still the most common form of transportation in many Transylvanian villages. Many people ride bikes or walk. But not many people have cars. Could you get to school or to church without a car?
15. There is a holiday in spring when the boys leave a bouquet of flowers in front of the home of the girl they have chosen as the "maid of spring." Do you do something special to celebrate the coming of spring?
16. Here's a special Easter tradition: Girls dye eggs red, boiling them in red onion skins. Boys come to the house and recite a poem like: "I was walking in the green wood. I saw a blue flower. But it was shriveled. Please, can I water it?" And if the girls say "Yes," the boys sprinkle them with perfumed water, and the girls give them eggs. Do you have a special Easter tradition?
17. Mothers come to school on Mothers Day in May. The children recite poems, sing songs and give their mothers flowers. How do you celebrate Mother's Day?
18. On December 6th Transylvanian Unitarians decorate their Christmas tree and St. Nicholas comes to a party at the church and brings presents for each child.

19. On December 24th Christmas angels visit each house, delivering presents through the window to all children who have been good and written letters to the angels. What do you think a Christmas angel looks like?
20. In Transylvanian villages, church bells ring every morning when it's time to wake up, at lunchtime, and in the evening when it's time for the farmers and animals to come in from the fields. The bells are also rung in special patterns for weddings and funerals and to call everyone to come to church services. Does your church have bells? When do they ring?
21. Sometimes partner churches arrange to ring their bells at exactly the same time and have a partner church worship service in the same moments. Do you have a partner church? What time is it right now in your partner church?
22. Many Transylvanian Unitarian boys are very good at catching fish. Some can even catch them with their hands! Have you ever gone fishing?
23. Teenage boys learn to use a scythe to cut the long grass. Scythes are dangerous to use and it's an important responsibility to teach the boys to do this without hurting themselves. Have you learned any dangerous skills?
24. Many houses are heated with wood. Regular jobs for the boys are splitting the wood and keeping the woodbox filled. The girls cook and sew and beat the rugs. What are some of your regular jobs at home?
25. In Hungary and Romania people celebrate their Name Day (the saint's day for their name) in a much bigger way than their actual birth day. For instance, all the people named Janos have a party on the same day.

Were you named after someone special? Who?