**Topics**

**First topic: "In the Beginning" (0 a.d. - 1553 a.d.)**
This film examines the early roots of liberal religious thought. It chronicles the isolated declarations of Universal Salvation in the early years of the Christian era. It traces the early anti-trinitarians such as the monk Arius and his role in the Council of Nicaea. It discusses pre-Reformation heretics such as Katherine Vogel, John Wycliffe, and Jan Hus. It concludes with the life and work of Michael Servetus. It makes the case that there were two Reformations going on in the 16th century - a theologically conservative one catalyzed by Martin Luther and a liberal one based largely on the works of Servetus.

Discussions could center around: Why does the early story of Christianity matter to us as Unitarian Universalists today? Why was it so important for the Christian Church to eliminate heresy? Why were heretical ideas so difficult to extinguish? How might claiming an identify as a “heretic” today be an asset to our faith? How might it be a hindrance?

**Second topic: The birth of Unitarianism (1553 - 1794)**
This session tracks Unitarian Theology through the rise of liberal religion in Poland and how the Catholic Counter-Reformation of the 17th century drove the Unitarians out of Poland and west across Europe towards the Netherlands and England. It documents the influence of Servetus, and Joseph Priestley. In many ways, the story of Unitarianism in Europe is a story of new ideas put forth by learned and well-positioned people, primarily white men. Discussions may include: How did those new ideas matter to those who were less well-positioned? Why do you suppose the ideas were seen as so very dangerous? Where and how do debates about religious belief occur in our society today? Do you see any commonalities with debates of the 16th and 17th centuries?

**Third Topic: American Unitarianism (1620 - 1860)**
This session covers the development of Unitarianism in America from 1620 through the death of Theodore Parker in 1860. It discusses the early fractures between religious liberals and Congregationalists in Colonial America. It discusses the effect of Joseph Priestley's immigration and William Ellery Channing, as well as the role of the Transcendentalism of Ralph Finally, It discusses the role Theodore Parker played in advancing Unitarianism beyond its traditional Bible-centered roots and his role in some of the great social justice issues of the day, especially the abolition of slavery.

**Fourth topic: Universalism (1600 - 1860)**
It discusses the unprecedented explosion of Universalist churches across America during the first half of the 19th century, and why the movement began its precipitous decline after the death of Hosea Ballou who argued that God wants people to be happy. A question from this session could be: What role does happiness play in the faith of Unitarian Universalists today?

**Fifth topic: Evolution (1861 - 1961)**
This session follows both Unitarianism and Universalism through the late 19th and early 20th centuries as they evolve from Christian bible-oriented religions to our present-day non-creedal movement. It discusses influences as diverse as Darwin's On the Origin of Species, the Civil War, Feminism and Suffrage, and the Social Gospel.

The video describes continual interplay and conflict between advocates for new ideas and approaches and guardians of deeply held ideas, values, and ways of doing things. Is a similar tension part of Unitarian Universalism as you experience it today?

**Sixth topic: Unitarian Universalism (Today)**
The film argues that deep philosophical and theological differences held the Universalist and Unitarian movements apart, until humanism provided the common ground that allowed for merger. In what ways is humanism still the common ground that holds Unitarian Universalists together? One of the sessions concluding questions: How is liberal religious education—grounded in life experience and nurturing a sense of wonder and a questioning mind—reflected in Unitarian Universalism today?