

Coffee Hour Caution

*...advice for older adults greeting young adults
in Unitarian Universalist churches*

- Avoid saying:

“How old are you?”

Why: Is age so important? There’s no good answer. Just avoid this one altogether.

- Say instead:

“What did you think of the service today?”

- Avoid saying:

“Are you new here?”

Why: A young adult may have been attending for years, you just haven’t met them. This implies you think they don’t belong in the church.

- Say instead:

“I don’t think we’ve met, my name is...”

- Avoid saying:

“When are you planning to have kids?”

Why: Having or not having kids is a private matter and not one people may want to discuss. This implies you only value young adults for their future children, not as a peer adult, here and now.

- Say instead:

“What brought you here today?”

- Avoid saying:

“What do you do? / What year are you in school?”

Why: For those who are un- or under-employed, work is a tricky question - and assuming someone is a student implies you think they are a certain age. Give them the chance to talk about whatever is meaningful, which might not be school or a job.

- Say instead:

“So tell me about yourself.”

- Avoid saying:

“We need more young people!”

Why: Like everyone else, young adults want to be seen for who they are rather than as a token for their age group.

- Say instead:

“Great to meet you!”

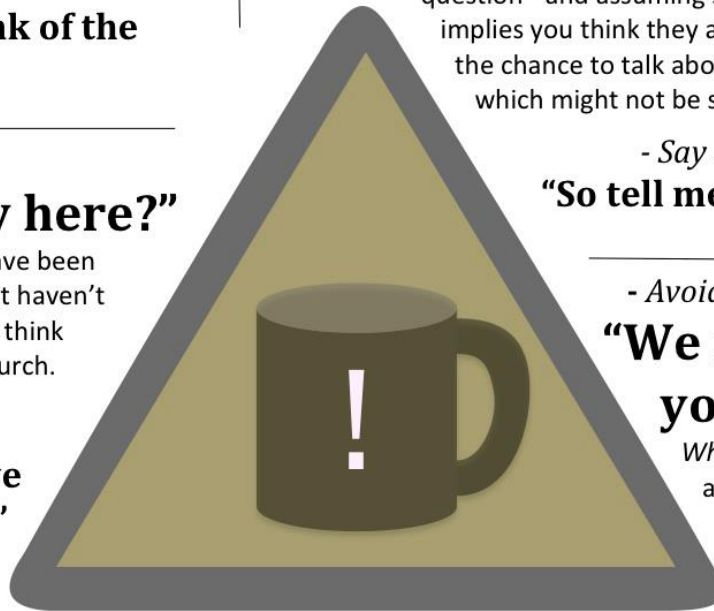
- Avoid saying:

“Have you met our other young adult?”

Why: Young adults enjoy friends of all ages. Welcome them into the community of faith and fellowship.

- Say instead:

“Can I introduce you to my friend?”



DO: Introduce yourself • Make friends • Be interested • Reach out • Respect boundaries



Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Unitarian Universalist Association • uua.org/youngadults