

Young Adult Project

Final Report

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Project Report

The Young Adult Welcoming Project – a partnership between the Canadian Unitarian Council, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada, and the Unitarian Church of Vancouver – engaged Canadian Unitarian Universalist congregations in enhancing their welcome, service to, and integration of young adults (people aged 18-35 inclusive). Seven congregations participated in the project, including the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax, First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough, Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg, Unitarian Church of Calgary, Unitarian Congregation of Vancouver, and Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship. Participating congregations created a team to work together on the project. Other congregations and individuals also took part in introductory webinars and conversations.

Project Goals:

- To increase congregations' capacity to serve existing young adults
- To increase congregations' capacity to reach out to and welcome potential new young adult members
- To help congregations identify and remove barriers to young adult welcome and integration in their context
- To lift up young adult voices and experiences in our congregations and communities

Project Activities:

- Webinars:
 - Webinar One: Introduction to ministry to and with young adults (open to all) – November 2016
 - Webinar Two: Deeper exploration of ministry to and with young adults (open to young adult project teams) – February 2017
 - Webinar Three: Preparing and implementing action plans for increasing young adult welcome, service, and integration (open to young adult project teams) – April 2017
 - Webinar Four: Sharing of learning and challenges to date - November 2017
 - Young Adult Ministry for Ministers – February 2017
- Young Adult Ministry Self-Assessment:
 - An opportunity for Young Adult Project Teams to reflect on the current state of young adult involvement and ministry in their congregations at the beginning and end of the project
- Coaching:
 - Young Adult Project Teams received coaching from Asha Philar, Ariel Hunt-Brondwin, and/or Rev. Carly Gaylor throughout 2017
- Canadian Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Survey:
 - 50 respondents shared their experiences in our congregations and communities (an executive summary of results is included in this packet, and a full report is also available)
- Young Adult Welcome Packets:
 - Creation of a young adult postcard with ways to get more involved and welcoming packages for use in Canadian UU congregations; packets include the postcard, a principles and sources bookmark, the book "[Becoming](#)," and a welcome letter from the CUC. Five free welcome packets will be sent to each congregation that participated in the project. To order Welcome Packets at cost for your congregation, contact Asha (asha@cuc.ca).
 - Congregations are encouraged to include a small chalice with welcoming packets (instructions on page 27 of this packet)

Project Outcomes:

- **First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg:** In 2017, DLFD Andrea James' job expanded to lifespan faith development - which gave her the ability to support young adult programs directly. While participating in the CUC Young Adult Welcoming Project, Winnipeg staff and volunteers made a list of young adults in the congregation; they have an active Facebook group and a YA email list. In September they hosted a games night for young adults, and started a monthly YA small group, based on the congregation's monthly theme and using materials from Faith Rocket. Andrea facilitates and supports this group. Winnipeg has also had success with social events that appeal to all ages, like a trip to see the Star Wars movie, and monthly pub nights, and coffee mornings with the minister. There is a young adult serving as both an audio tech and a Service Coordinator, so there is often a YA presence in the service, and a bridging youth/young adult (and member of this project's team) was elected to the Board in 2017. They are also working on their welcoming and greeting systems to make sure that everyone coming in the door feels welcomed and can connect with the congregation.
- **Unitarian Church of Calgary:** In 2017, minister Debra Faulk hosted a young adult dinner, which was well attended and helped young adults get to know each other better. This group has continued to meet up for social events, with some support and encouragement from older members of the congregation. Calgary is aware that not all events are affordable for young adults, so they try to offer sliding scale or a discounted price when possible. Calgary is also working on raising their online presence with a better website, as well as planning to hire a social media coordinator who is a young adult. The monthly Pub Night is becoming more popular with young adults. They are also working to connect young adults with events and programs that might appeal to them, like becoming worship leaders, and Spirit Jam events.
- **Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough:** Small but mighty UPF has lots going on for young adults. They host a monthly pub night, are doing outreach to the local university campus, and have young adults taking leadership in worship, the board and as a lay chaplain. The congregation took a collection to provide funding for young adult activities, and they are helping young adults with the cost of attending regional and national events. It has been great having the support of older members and the minister to get these initiatives going.
- **First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa:** Leadership from the membership committee has kept young adult ministry in the congregation's priorities since their team joined the Young Adult Welcoming Project. They have brought information to leadership, written an article for the newsletter, and worked through the Membership Committee to welcome newer young adults. Ottawa held a recent Sunday service about radical hospitality, and is working on becoming more welcome to people of all identities.
- **Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax:** Halifax gained useful insight and resources through participation in the project. Knowing that congregational support is helpful for young adult groups, Halifax is hoping to find ways for older adults and church staff to support more young adult activities and programs. Halifax has given a lot of consideration to different ways to bring young adult voices into the forefront for Sunday Services. They are also exploring ways to attract more young adults and make their congregation more multigenerational.

- **Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship:** The Comox team found it useful to gather to look at young adult ministry in the congregation, and experienced some changes through their work together. Most significantly, they have made drastic changes to their Sunday Services format, including meeting in the hall in a circular format (rather than in the Sanctuary with pews), the sermon has changed into a more interactive event, and music is almost never from the hymn books and is instead more folky and usually with guitar or similar instrument. There is a small but regular contingent of younger adults with families, who nevertheless make up a significant percentage of the congregation. The Young Adult project team would have liked to do more to support young adult ministry, but had challenges in sustaining their meetings and efforts as a small team with limited energy.
- **Unitarian Church of Vancouver:** The Vancouver team struggled to find time and energy to get together to engage in this project work. All young adults themselves, team members are active in other areas of church life, and wondered if they were just too busy. They affirm that those young adults who are active in the congregation are doing a lot of good work, which keeps them going, but fear they are losing the potential power of a unified young adult voice in the congregation.

Comments from congregational team participants:

- “This was an incredibly valuable service. The resources, hearing the voices of Canadian young adults (especially via the survey, but also during webinars), and the lifting up the varying experiences of YAs were all extremely helpful. You provided a container for this work and a framework for how we might move forward.”
- “The congregational assessment, materials and Webinars, as well as the ongoing support [were helpful]. Well done! Thank you.”
- “You’re there, and you’ve been there, in a structured and well thought out way. You’re inviting us to work, and it’s important to do this work. You get that, and you hear a need from our generation that might only be whispered, but it’s been whispered for a long time. Thank you for the commitment, for the opportunity, for the community you brought.”
- “The webinars with multiple view points and then having a group discussion on how issues can be aided [were helpful]. It was great to have multiple voices from different congregations at different stages.”
- “Convening us in the first place was helpful, even though our mini-team did not accomplish a whole lot. Some changes did happen.”
- “Getting it on our radar as an issue; hearing what other congregations are doing; thinking specifically about things we might do and then getting feedback from Asha and Carly on implementation [were helpful].”

Next Steps:

- Asha Philar, CUC Youth and Young Adult Ministry Development Staff, will continue to be available for coaching ministers, staff, and congregational leaders on young adult ministry. You can book an appointment with her [here](#).

Additional Resources Included in this Packet

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Executive Summary of Canadian UU Young Adult Survey Results

The survey of Canadian Unitarian Universalist Young Adults was conducted from December 2016 to June 2017. A total of 50 people responded to the survey, answering questions about their involvement in Unitarian Universalism, their experiences, and their recommendations for congregations looking to welcome and integrate young adults. Respondents were given the option of answering qualitative questions in written or oral form.

Demographics of Respondents:

- 50 percent are between 30-35 years of age; while 22 percent are 18-23 and 28 percent 24-29;
- 50 percent became UU as adults, while 50 percent became UU as children or youth;
- 58 percent have experience in two or more UU congregations; 36 percent in one congregation, and 6 percent have not attended a UU congregation as a young adult;
- 50 percent report attending UU congregations weekly and 16 percent monthly;
- 58 percent are members of a UU congregation.

How Respondents are Involved in UU Community:

- 74 percent attend Sunday worship services at a congregation;
- 64 percent connect with other UUs on Facebook;
- 56 percent connect socially with other UUs;
- 54 percent participate in young adult activities;
- 54 percent attend events outside of Sunday worship at a congregation;
- 38 percent are involved in leadership within congregations and/or regionally/nationally;
- 20 percent are employed at a UU congregation/organization.

Important Trends and Learning:

- Several respondents said that people did not talk to them before or after the service when they first visited their congregation; this isolation can cause hurt, confusion, and disillusionment.
- Popular activities include music, services, alternative worship, small groups, conferences, camps, and retreats.
- The role of ministers is important to many young adults. When ministers host or attend young adult dinners/events, they are often more successful.
- Young adults who come to UUism in adulthood and young adults who grew up UU often have different needs and expectations. Young adults who grew up UU often don't identify as "newcomers," may have more affinity for alternative/circle worship than traditional Sunday worship, and often seek ways to deepen their spirituality.
- Young adults are used to and expect diversity and diversity awareness. Disconnect between words and actions, portrayal of a congregation as more diverse than it is, experiences with individuals who are uncomfortable with diversity, pointed personal questions about their identities, and unfamiliarity with current diversity issues and practices can alienate young adults.
- Young adults are diverse in their theology, worship preferences, and ways of engaging with UU activities and community. Many young adults would like to be part of small groups.
- Young adults appreciate being welcomed as individuals with unique skills, needs, and interests; comments like "we need more young people like you" or "we need a young person's perspective on this committee" as well as expectations that a young adult can speak for all young adults, are counterproductive in welcoming and integrating young adults.

10 Tips for Welcoming and Including Young Adults

1 Treat young adults as people. Young adults are unique individuals. People with skills and gifts and passions. People who come to UU congregations looking for spiritual nourishment, community, and social action. People who are not defined by their age alone.

2 Talk with young adults. In coffee hour. Before worship. After worship. At events. Whether they are new or seasoned in the congregation, get to know young adults as you would anyone else. Learn about their passions, their spirituality, their lives, their dreams. Take a look at the UUA poster “Coffee Hour Caution” on the next page for good tips on talking with young adults.

3 Create welcoming space for single, partnered, student, working, unemployed, and parenting young adults. Young adulthood encompasses many stages and paths that are not necessarily linear. Don’t group all young adults together, or assume all young adults have the same life goals. For young adult parents, childcare during church events can facilitate participation.

4 Respect young adults’ diverse identities. Many young adults are accustomed to and/or hope for communities where their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, appearance, etc. are accepted and celebrated. Pointed questions and/or using young adults (or anyone!) as a sounding board to explore your own questions or issues about a particular identity is unhelpful at best, and alienating and extremely harmful at worst.

5 Encourage young adults find their niche in your congregation. Not just to have young adult representation on a committee. Not as warm bodies. But because they have unique skills and gifts, and may have precious little time to share them.

6 Include diverse voices in worship. Young adult voices. And also voices of people of colour, people of diverse sexual and gender identities. People of diverse theological and spiritual and other perspectives. Diversity strengthens our communities and young adults are often particularly attuned to this.

7 Create opportunities for young adults to connect with one another AND for multigenerational connection. Both huddling (same age) and mixing (multigenerational) activities are important for young adults, though some young adults are looking for more of one than the other. Listen to the hopes and needs of young adults present in your community to discern a good balance.

8 Respect young adults as part of your congregation now, NOT as future saviours of your congregation and/or UUism. Comments like: “We need more young people like you!” and “Your generation will change/save church” both minimize the current contributions of young adults and place a heavy burden on them.

9 Connecting with ministers is important for many young adults. Young Adult events hosted or attended by the congregation’s minister are often particularly successful. Young adults may need special invitation or welcome to seek out pastoral and/or spiritual support from their minister. If your congregation doesn’t have a minister, young adults may appreciate outreach from wise, thoughtful, and caring lay leaders.

10 Attend to your welcoming practices for people of all ages. Do you have welcoming and inclusive ways to connect with the curious individual, welcomed visitor, connected friend, engaged participant, and integrated leader? Your welcome of people of all ages, including young adults, will benefit if you do!

Strategies for Strengthening Your Young Adult Ministry

The strategies below are divided into four categories, and fuller explanations of each action can be found on subsequent pages. We recommend choosing one, two, or three actions to work on to start out, with attention to your current context, needs, and hopes for young adult ministry, and with consultation and/or leadership from young adults (this is important!).

Welcoming:

The welcoming category focuses on actions that change and improve the way you attract and welcome newer young adults to your UU community. Many of these actions will also have a positive impact on newcomers of all ages, and will help create a more comfortable and welcoming environment for all.

1. Improve your welcoming and greeting systems
2. Print and assemble welcoming packets for young adults
3. Congregational workshops - how to talk to young adults
4. Improve outreach - website, social media, at events, through organizations
5. Accessibility - carpooling, bus info available, childcare, etc.

Connecting and Deepening:

Once a young adult is in your door, or has been coming to church for a few months (or even years!), what are the ways that they can continue to form connections and grow spiritually within your community beyond coming to church on Sunday morning and being recruited to a committee?

1. Implement an “engage and connect” team to help people go deeper with the congregation
2. Host a minister’s dinner or event for young adults
3. Start or improve a young adult group or regular YA activities
4. Improve your “Caring community” mechanisms to keep track of and support YAs

Worship and Ministry:

Sunday worship is a big part of most congregations - so use the service as a way to try out new things, or ensure greater consistency to help visitors understand what you’re all about. Make sure that services are high caliber and have elements that would appeal to young adults. Create other opportunities for deepening and spiritual exploration, as well all as multigen community, through small group ministry.

1. Consistency in worship services
2. Small group ministry
3. Bringing in new elements to existing worship, or new types of worship (circle, Soulful Sundown, singing worship, etc)

Bridging from Youth to Young Adulthood:

Of kids and youth raised Unitarian Universalist, less than 15 percent transition to active participation in UU community as adults; mentoring, connection with the minister, and multigenerational events can help youth to bridge to active participation as adults.

Welcoming:

1. Improve your welcoming and greeting systems

What happens when someone new or newish walks through your door on Sunday morning? Are they greeted warmly? Is it clear what they should do and where they should go? Are greeters friendly, knowledgeable, and able to create a welcoming atmosphere? Are they able to direct young adults to more information about our faith, your programs, and ways to engage and connect with others at church?

Improving your welcoming and greeting systems has an immediate impact in setting the tone of your congregation and drawing people into the worship space, and to your community. For young adults that are new to UUism, or possibly new to church in general, a good first experience can go a long way.

Challenges congregations face:

- Greeters are not always present on Sunday morning
- Greeters are busy chatting with people they know, and do not notice newcomers
- Greeters do not know enough about what goes on at the congregation to be able to connect newcomers to information and resources that they need to get involved
- The congregation doesn't have a process for choosing greeters, beyond who is available, and so the greeters may not be the best suited for the task
- Greeters are enthusiastic, but do not know how to interact with young adults in a way that makes them feel welcome and safe
- At coffee hour it is not clear where newcomers should go, or who they should talk to.

Potential impact:

Huge! Especially for newer young adults who may feel a little apprehensive about coming to church or being in that type of social situation. One negative interaction can send them out the door, never to return. Having an organized and well-oiled greeting system tells a newcomer that welcoming them is a priority.

Ideas to try:

- Implement or improve your newcomer / green mug / greeting table
- Ensure consistency in Sunday morning greeters - make sure there is always someone there, and train each greeter on how to approach and talk to young adults
- Recruit young adult greeters
- Have the right information available and at hand for greeters to give to young adults (knowledge about the congregation's programs, calendar of upcoming events, brochure about UUism, etc)
- Introduce young adults to others with whom they may share an affinity (it could be by age, interest, social justice issue, reason for coming to church, etc)
- Have name tags ready to go for newcomers - do not let them get mired in church bureaucracy or wait months to get an "official" name tag

Resources:

- [UUA hospitality self-assessment for congregations](#) - how well do you do hospitality and welcoming?

Welcoming:

2. Print and assemble welcoming packets for young adults

Assemble welcome packets for young adults who are newer to your congregation. The packet will include a postcard about young adults in Canadian UUism, a copy of the book *Becoming* and a small chalice.

Challenges congregations face:

- There is no information available to young adults on the type of programs, events and groups that the CUC and UUA run.
- After coming to church a few times, a newer young adult may want to find ways to extend their spiritual practise and faith development outside of Sunday morning, but is not sure how to do that.
- Young adults who only have experience of the local congregation are not aware of the breadth and diversity of young adult experiences and programs that they could participate in.
- Congregations may not know how to officially welcome a new young adult in, besides having them join as a member.

Potential impact:

For young adults that are newer to our faith and to your congregation, but aren't coming for the first time. For young adult that would like to develop a better understanding of UUism and try out a spiritual practise with a chalice and readings. A welcome packet makes a newer young adult feel acknowledged, welcomed and feels that there is something specifically designed for them.

Ideas to try:

- Print welcome packet brochure, acquire copies of the book *Becoming* (available through the CUC), make or acquire small chalices, and assemble welcome packets.
- Give out welcome packets to young adults who have come a few times and are interested in a deeper connection with the congregation.
- There are other alternatives to this specific welcome packet that can help extend spiritual practise outside of Sunday morning - some congregations have a traveling chalice, journal, and book of readings that change hands each week.
- Maybe there is a token or small object specific to your congregation that would be meaningful to give young adults in the welcome packet.

Welcoming:

3. Congregational workshops - how to talk to young adults

Organize a workshop (or a series of events) in your congregation to help educate older adults about how to engage with young adults.

One of the biggest issues that we've heard through the survey and anecdotal evidence is that coffee hour can be an uncomfortable experience for many young adults. As we've shared in the quotes, older adults can be eager to talk to young adults, but don't always know how to do it well in a way that leaves both people feeling good about the conversation. An awkward or hurtful interaction at coffee hour can be a major deterrent for young adults, and even cause them to not return to church. But conversely, being made to feel welcome and included in that setting can have a lasting positive impact!

Challenges congregations face:

- Young adults, new and long term, can have unpleasant experiences at coffee hour
- Many congregations know this is a problem but don't have a way to address it
- Coffee hour does not always follow the service well - there aren't opportunities to talk about the service or the morning's themes, or do participate in spiritual discussions
- Young adults are sometimes ignored at coffee hour and leave without anyone having talked to them

Potential impact:

A good conversation or experience at coffee hour can help young adults feel welcome, included and can help them develop a better understanding of who you are and what you do as a congregation.

Ideas to try:

- Plan a workshop for non-young adults and provide some education on ways to approach and talk to young adults at coffee hour
- Recruit and train some coffee hour greeters that roam around coffee hour and look out for people who are looking for more connection, including young adults
- Use the coffee hour poster to provide tips and training to older adults about how to rephrase some common approaches (like "Are you new here?")
- Re-structure your coffee hour by adding tables, or an alternative space for people to have discussions related to the morning's theme
- Provide post-service opportunities for small group check ins and for more structured ways for young adults to get to know other congregants

Welcoming:

4. Improve Outreach - website, social media, at events, through organizations

Many people think that a good website or social media presence will impress and draw in young adults, when in reality most younger people assume that organizations will have a decent website as a baseline. However, an unattractive website that is difficult to navigate and lacks crucial information for visitors is a glaring message to young adults that your congregation may not be well suited to their age group.

Challenges congregations face:

- Website is unattractive - does not seem fun, inviting, or represent who the congregation is with pictures, stories and current updates
- Website does not include essential information for visitors, or it is hard to find
- Website is not at all visitor oriented, and contains acronyms, jargon or inside terms that may alienate prospective visitors or newer members
- There is no social media presence so young adults do not find you in the places they normally search
- Social media presence is spread thin over too many platforms that aren't well used or maintained
- UU's are present at, and help organize non-UU events and initiatives, but they never identify themselves with the congregation - missing a great promotional opportunity
- Congregation misses out on opportunities to promote themselves through organizations that already have a good young adult audience

Potential impact:

A great website provides a (hopefully representative) snapshot of your congregation and entices young adults to find out more or visit. Social media presence makes your congregation searchable and allows young adults to share your content and events on the platforms that they use.

Ideas to try:

- Recruit some friends who are not affiliated with your congregation to look over your website and give honest feedback from an outsider's perspective.
- Do a basic website check: does it include the following:
 - Contact information and location easily found (at bottom or top of page)
 - Embedded map of your location - easy to get directions to church
 - Links to social media presence
 - Sunday service times and upcoming topics on home page
 - Photos and (if possible) videos that represent who you are and what you do
 - Basic content that clearly explains who you are and what you offer
 - References to young adults in your congregation (young adult events, photos including YAs, etc.)
 - Preferably links to young adult resources outside of your congregation
- Basic social media presence - focus on maintaining a Facebook page for your congregation that contains basic contact information and is updated with events at least once a week
- If social media is not your strength, streamline your approach and do not try to take on more than you can maintain and update (stick with Facebook for now)
- Brainstorm ways to have a more visible presence at events/spaces where young adults may take notice

Welcoming:

5. Improve Accessibility - carpooling, bus info available, childcare, etc.

If young adults have trouble getting to your church, or attending your events and services, they will not feel very welcome and will not be able to participate regularly. Taking stock of and addressing the barriers that exist will show young adults that you want them to be a part of your community.

Challenges congregations face:

- Church building is not very accessible by public transit, or is far from the city centre and places where young adults are likely to live
- There is no structured way to connect young adults with rides to and from church
- The timing of events is not conducive to young adults who work full-time
- Childcare is sometimes an afterthought, or it is not clearly advertised
- Young parents may face backlash or at least dirty looks if they bring their babies to Sunday service - this makes them feel very unwelcome
- Young adults who are students, low income or underemployed may not be able to contribute financially or pay entry to church events that are costly
- The casual way we talk about money, or assume that everyone is from a middle-class background, creates barriers and cultural divides for young adults

Potential impact:

Improving accessibility in all these ways creates opportunities for young adult participation, and shows them that you prioritize their involvement - even if they don't have a car, or a lot of money. Carpooling arrangements can also encourage multi generational connections.

Ideas to try:

- Assess how accessible your congregation and events are in many different ways
- Encourage carpooling and/or connect individual young adults with church members that live near them
- Look at your events for the month - when are they scheduled? Do the ones that would attract young adults take place in the evening or on a weekend? Are young adults consulted about when events are planned?
- Create a consistent approach to offering childcare at events, so that young parents can count on it, or make sure to advertise that childcare will be available well in advance
- Arrange for baby minders to be present at the back of the worship hall to offer relief to parents of infants - they deserve to have a worshipful time as well
- Make sure there is a nursery space where young parents can be with their infants and still listen to the service (this could be in addition to, or instead of the previous suggestion)
- Do an inventory of the cost of events at your church over the past few months - are the prices accessible to young adults? Are there sliding scale or "pay what you can" options available?
- How is money talked about in your congregation? Assess whether there are ways to make people with low income feel more comfortable and welcome
- Work with your stewardship or pledge committee to improve the way they reach out to young adults and include people who are not able to make a significant pledge - is it clear that young adults can contribute in other ways, and are still welcome and valued?

Connecting and Deepening:

1. Implement an “engage and connect” team to help people connect and go deeper with the congregation

Engage and Connect is an idea that came from the Toronto First congregation. They have a table in a central location every Sunday, staffed by an “Engage and Connect” team volunteer, and they ask people a single question: “Are you as connected here as you would like to be?”. The volunteer is well connected in the congregation and knowledgeable about the programs, events and opportunities that exist. If the congregant responds that they would like to be more connected, the volunteer can help link them to programs and events, or can help them feel more connected in other ways.

Challenges congregations face:

- Young adults (even those who are lifelong UUs) are often asked “Are you new here?”, which can be hurtful and alienating.
- After the initial welcoming period, young adults may feel lost or confused as to what the next steps are. How do they get more connected? How do they start a spiritual practise? How do they deepen their experiences with the congregation and with UUism?
- We generally do not offer a set “path” for newcomers in our church, so some of them stay at a shallow level of engagement because they do not know how to get more involved.
- Opportunities offered to young adults are not always the ones they want (like being on the board), but with a lack of other options, they take on leadership that they don’t want
- There is not generally a central location that people can go to get more information about congregational events and programs - besides the church bulletin or website
- Young adults may come in and out of a community, or may be long time UUs and join a different church when they move. So they are not new, but may not be well connected at that particular church.

Potential impact:

Engage and connect acknowledges that it’s not always easy to deepen connections with a congregation, or to get more involved. The question “Are you as connected here as you would like to be” offers a non-threatening opening to a conversation about becoming more connected with your UU community. Young adults wanting a deepening of commitment may appreciate being asked and offered those opportunities, and may stay around longer.

Ideas to try:

- Implement an Engage and Connect table, or integrate aspects of the program into your existing greeting and welcoming structure
- Train greeters and people at the Welcome Table to make sure they are well-versed in what the church has going on, and that they can connect people to those programs
- Make sure that your Welcome Table has congregational material on hand - a directory, church bulletin, calendar of upcoming events, contact information for volunteers and staff, and anything else that you need to connect a young adult with the activity they are interested in.

Connecting and Deepening:

2. Host a minister's dinner or event for young adults

When the minister plans an event specifically for young adults, it makes the statement that young adult ministry is central to the ministry of the church. It also provides a fun opportunity for young adults to gather and to get to know who the minister.

Challenges congregations face:

- Young adults may not know the minister, especially if they do not come to church regularly or are not very involved
- Some young adults may not know what the minister does, or that they can access pastoral care from the minister in a time of need
- Ministering to and with young adults may not seem central to the church's work, if ministers do not have much contact with young adults
- The church may have told young adults "you can plan an event for yourselves if you want" without offering any support. Often, young adults would be happy to attend something that has been planned by someone else.

Potential impact:

Makes young adults feel welcome, valued, cared for and ministered to. Having a dinner is also a great draw, because who doesn't welcome free food, fellowship and connection to other young adults?

When the minister fosters connections with young adults, they feel much more connected to the church and are more able to access pastoral care when they need it.

Ideas to try:

- Work with the minister and volunteers to plan and make a meal for young adults
- Organize some simple games or get-to-know-you activities for the event to help young adults and the minister to get to know each other
- Plan (or encourage the minister to plan) regular times for the minister and young adults to get together - could be ice cream after church, or a monthly dinner, pub night, etc
- Encourage the minister to hold a drop in time at a coffee shop or pub in a central location (especially if your church is not central or near where young adults live)
- Make sure that young adults understand what the minister's role in the church is, and how they can access pastoral care

Connecting and Deepening:

3. Start or improve a young adult group or regular YA activities

Although most young adults really value multi generational connections (and this could be a central reason they come to church), they also enjoy getting to know other UU young adults. If your congregation has a young adult group or regular activities already, think about how you could provide more institutional support for them. If there are no regular young adult meetings, this may be something to pursue, depending on your local situation and number of young adults.

Challenges congregations face:

- Too few young adults are present to start or maintain a regular group
- Young adults are given “free reign” to create their own programs and events, without receiving any or much congregational support
- Congregations assume that young adults only want age-specific activities, and do not provide enough structured ways for young adult to form multigen connections
- Young adults are present, but there is no organizing drive or energy for them to meet regularly
- A young adult group or meet up may happen for a while, driven by one or two organizers, and then fizzles out when those people leave or stop putting the work in

Potential impact:

Whatever the result, if young adults see that the congregation is actively supporting them with volunteer or staff time, money, space and other resources, they will know that they are valued. Sometimes a bit of institutional support and structure can help maintain a young adult group or activity so that the burden on volunteers is lighter.

Ideas to try:

- Work with young adults to schedule regular meetups or events, so that there is consistency and they can work these events into their regular schedule
- Explore options for young adult activities that are best suited to your situation - maybe alternate young adult-specific activities with a multigenerational dinner night that is attractive to young adults
- Help young adults meet and connect with each other. A staff member or volunteer could help by setting up and maintaining a Facebook group or email list and making sure that newer young adults are added to it.
- Find out why regular young adult events or groups haven’t succeeded or taken off in the past - was it because of a lack of volunteer time? The timing of the events? Was cost a barrier? Were young adults encouraged to use church space? Did any older adult volunteers or church staff support the group or events in tangible ways?
- As young adults what they are looking for at church. What kinds of multigen or young adult-specific activities would they find most meaningful? What capacity do they have to organize such activities, and what support do they want from your congregation?

Connecting and Deepening:

4. Improve your “Caring community” mechanisms to keep track of and support YAs

In churches big and small, young adults can fall between the cracks of a caring committee system, especially when they aren’t able to attend church regularly and may need the most support. What systems are in place in your congregation to help keep track of young adult visitors and members, and support them in times of need?

Challenges congregations face:

- There is no mechanism to notice when people are not coming to church, and when they might have a need for support (unless they tell the caring committee themselves)
- Young adults seek a community that holds them and that they are accountable to, but end up pursuing other activities and groups when our congregations do not offer that
- Young adults going through a life transition, upheaval or a difficult time are less likely to come to church and become more and more disconnected with the community
- The type of “caring” that we generally provide may not be the most helpful or appropriate for young adults. Instead of baked goods and phone calls, they may appreciate a text, or an opportunity to meet with a minister or pastoral care chaplain in person.

Potential impact:

Feeling forgotten or ignored by the community that should have been there, or claimed that they would be there, is difficult for most people. But for young adults who may not have well established support networks, or may be explicitly seeking a supportive community, that let down can be the signal that your congregation isn’t the right place for them. But when a congregation comes through and is successful in supporting and caring for its young adult members, the impact is significant and long-lasting.

Ideas to try:

- Ask young adults about their experience with the caring systems in your congregation - were there times that they needed more support than they got? How would they like to be held by their community in times of hardship?
- Create a buddy or group system where young adults create longer lasting connections with other members, who will notice when they don’t come to church or are having a hard time and can connect them with congregational supports.
- Ask young adults how best to communicate and stay in touch with them - email may not be the best method, but they may suggest Facebook messenger, text or other ways.
- Figure out the best way for your congregation to “keep track” of young adults who visit and attend regularly. Keeping a simple list of names and phone numbers is a good way to notice which young adults are still engaged, and which ones haven’t been in a while.
- Plan for who will be the one to keep track of these young adults and check in with them occasionally (is it a staff person, a group of volunteers, the minister, other young adults?)

Worship and Ministry:

1. Consistency in worship services

In your congregation, how often does a worship leader encourage people to come back several times because all services are different? In principle, that's not a bad thing - we value diversity in our services and programs. However, if this is a disclaimer that tells a visitor that some services are better than others, it may be a good idea to create some more consistency in your worship services. For a young adult visitor or newer member, it can be helpful to know that worship services will have a basic caliber, and some consistent elements to provide a sense of UU identity.

Challenges congregations face:

- Worship services are so wildly different from each other that it's hard for newcomers to get a sense of what the congregation, or UUism is all about.
- Services lack a consistent quality, and a low quality service can be an immediate deterrent for a young adult visitor.
- Very inconsistent services can give the impression that the church is disorganized, or that there is no unifying purpose to the organization.
- Some speakers may be excellent, but some many not add enough spiritual elements or provide the deepening that young adults are looking for.
- Sermons that are overly academic may be less appealing to young adults, especially those that are students and are looking for something different on Sunday morning.

Potential impact:

Consistently high-quality services convey confidence, organization and professionalism, and give young adults the sense that your congregation has something concrete to offer. Having some consistent elements and rituals can help young adults feel more comfortable and familiar with your congregation.

A bad service can be an awkward experience for any newcomer, and they may not come back for another one.

Ideas to try:

- In your team, or with your worship committee, have a look back at the last few months of services. What impression do those services convey? Do you feel that they have relevance and appeal for young adults?
- Do the service leaders or worship associates reflect the diversity of your congregation? Are there any young adult worship leaders, or any young adults that would be interested in that role?
- What are your congregations rituals that create a sense of consistency and meaning on Sunday morning? Could any of those be done better or more regularly?
- Ask young adults what parts of the service they find more meaningful, or what they would like to see improved about worship services.

Worship and Ministry:

2. Small group ministry

Small group ministry can be a great way to engage young adults, encourage spiritual growth and create a close knit multigenerational community.

Challenges congregations face:

- Non-existent or inconsistent small group ministry
- Lack of opportunities for spiritual deepening, outside of attending Sunday worship
- Young adults do not have opportunities to engage with people of all ages in meaningful ways (different from coffee hour) and explore topics related to UUism and spirituality

Potential impact:

Small group ministry can have a high impact on the quality of a young adult's experience of congregational life. Aside from connecting them to the congregation and to others, these groups can provide consistency, support and fellowship that impacts their non-UU life.

Ideas to try:

- Start a small group ministry program (there are lots of resources available!)
- Encourage young adults to join existing small groups
- Train facilitators who can create a welcoming environment for young adults in small group ministry settings
- Try out some smaller scale ideas, like hosting discussions after church, or check in groups that meet on Sundays

Resources:

- [Small Group Ministry Network](#): Includes free and paid resources and guides for small groups, from a UU perspective. Many are individual themed guides, but there are also some compilations.
- The UUA's [Small Group Ministry page for Young Adults](#): Links to small group guides that are specifically for young adults, as well as guides with themes that would work well for young adults.
- [Becoming Together: A small group ministry manual](#) for the book "Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood". The book is available on Amazon as an e-book, and also from the UUA bookstore. Contact Asha if you want copies of the book - the CUC has a number of copies that we give out to young adults.

Worship and Ministry:

3. Bringing in new elements to existing worship, or new types of worship

Young adults are diverse with diverse needs - some like the traditions and rituals of regular Sunday worship, and some crave different ways to be together on Sunday. Incorporating elements of youth/young adult worship, more singing and music, and interactive activities are some ways to appeal to the less traditional worship goers.

Challenges congregations face:

- Trying to balance the desire for consistency in worship with an openness to new ideas and different ways of doing things
- Congregational resistance to change
- Cultural divides between (sometimes older) more secular members, and (sometimes younger) members who want a deeper and more moving spiritual experience on Sundays
- Lack of staff and volunteer time to learn about/try new worship elements or add new worship services
- Leaders who did not grow up UU may not have the experience of attending youth or young adult worship, and may not know how to incorporate those elements
- Low participation in evening services or alternative worship times
- Congregation may not have the resources (time, money, musicians, volunteers) to carry out new worship elements successfully

Potential impact:

Varying your worship elements and styles, and incorporating circle worship elements, will definitely appeal to some of your young adults (and people of other ages, too). If done well, it will convey your congregation's openness to new ideas, willingness to have fun and experiment, and will broaden the worship experience for all.

Ideas to try:

- Make small changes - take an existing worship element and make it a bit more engaging and dynamic (sing a new hymn, or a youth worship song in a round)
- Consult youth and young adult worship resources to learn new activities, songs, and worship styles
- Ask young adults if they want to participate in the service in various ways - speaking, music, stories, meditations, etc.
- Take inspiration from youth worship - ask your youth what they would want to see in a worship service, and chances are many of those elements will appeal to young adults
- Organize a Soulful Sundown service - either one event, or recurring
- Provide more opportunities during and after the service for people to reflect and share what touched them about the morning's topic and worship
- If it's possible in your space, try varying the setup of your worship room - arrange the chairs in a circle, or encourage people to sit closer together up front
- Use music and silence in different ways - include longer meditation readings or periods of silence for meditation and prayer, and/or more music - either from musicians, or longer hymns and songs

Bridging from Youth to Young Adulthood

** With deep thanks to Ursula Svenne for her insights in helping to put this list together: **

Challenges congregations face:

- Youth feel they are not so much bridging to something new but walking off a plank
- Youth are connected with one another but not with others in the congregation
- Youth leave the city when they graduate high school
- The congregation doesn't know when UU young adults from other congregations move to the city for university/college/work/other
- There isn't a young adult group/community to welcome bridging youth
- Youth don't participate in Sunday services due to timing, interest, and/or worship preferences

Potential impact:

Of kids and youth raised Unitarian Universalist, less than 15 percent transition to active participation in UU community as adults. Imagine what would be possible if we find ways to bridge the kid/youth experience into a meaningful adult experience!

Ideas to try:

- Minister and youth meet-ups! Strong relationship with a congregation's minister is key in helping youth from youth to young adulthood without losing connection to UUism. Possibilities include ice cream socials with the minister (monthly or at least a few times a year - Winnipeg has done this), attending Sunday Services as a group and meeting with the minister afterwards (once a month or every other month - Toronto First has done this), or other ideas that may emerge from the particular interests of your youth and minister.
- Mentoring of youth: Match each youth with an adult congregant (similar to Coming of Age program but for each year of youth group). Have a mentor-mentee activity for all the pairs a couple of times a year. Encourage fun and meaningful conversation.
- Multigenerational events: Fun is good! Games nights, potlucks (with a theme), murder mystery game, coffee houses, table topics, birthday celebration (cake for each month, and sitting with other people with your birthday month - done in Winnipeg)
- Deep talk and fun are better than small talk! Rather than asking "how's school going?," engage youth in conversations about their passions, spiritual journey, and deeper life questions. Equip adults to have these conversations - conversation starters can help!
- Invite youth to participate in meaningful workshops and events with the adults of the congregation.
- Try a spiritual practice together with all ages, such as labyrinth walking, hiking, meditation, etc.
- Have an annual bridging ceremony in the congregation, and welcome youth to young adulthood with clear next steps (young adult group, opportunities for leadership, spiritual growth, and building relationships with other people in the congregation)
- Ensure that joint activities are brainstormed with youth and adults together!

Guidance for Membership/Welcoming Committees

What is a young adult?

Young adulthood is not a fixed category, but within Unitarian Universalist communities, young adulthood includes between the ages of 18 and 35, inclusive. This is a large age range that tends to include a lot of different life stages and diverse needs: some people are doing some or all of going to school, moving out and/or changing cities, starting new jobs, dating, partnering, and parenthood. Young adulthood is the age range most often absent from faith communities, including Unitarian Universalist communities, and young adults have important voices and contributions to make within Unitarian Universalism and in society as future – and present! – leaders.

Some UU young adults find connection in congregations; some find meaning in other gatherings (for example camps, retreats, online, and small groups), and some are active in both congregations and other settings.

Help young adults get connected!

Connection is an important part of Unitarian Universalism: connection with ourselves, with others, with all life, and with the “more” that has many names (god, spirit, grace, mystery, purpose, love, to name but a few). As a membership/welcoming committee, you can help young adults get connected.

Young adults who grew up UU:

Although there is more of a Canadian young adult community now than 10 years ago, there are many youth who find they bridge from UU youth community into an abyss. To help bridging or returning UU young adults to find their spiritual home in your community, it can be helpful to:

- Inform other congregations if one of your young adults is moving to their area
- Reach out to young adults who have newly moved to your area (hopefully other congregations will inform you!)
- Don't assume that new visitors are necessarily new to UUism
- Engage people who grew up UU in spiritual discussions more than small talk. Many young adults report wishing for more meaningful conversations with people in their UU community.
- Offer opportunities for people to grow in their spiritual journeys, including spiritual practices, more advanced adult religious education, etc. Many raised-UU young adults are looking for spiritual growth opportunities beyond what they learned in religious exploration classes and youth group.
- Be aware that many raised-UU young adults enjoy participatory and/or circle worship. Having evening services or integrating ritual, sharing, and other participatory elements into Sunday services may help them feel more spiritually connected to worship.
- Create safe space for young adults to ask questions about your congregation and how they can get connected to your minister, other young adults, across generations, in small groups and committees, and in leadership, etc.

Guidance for Membership/Welcoming Committees (Cont.)

Young adults new to UUism:

It is increasingly common for people in Canada to identify as “spiritual but not religious” and refrain from participating in religious communities. Young adults coming to UUism for the first time are more likely than ever to have little or no experience with religious community. As Unitarian Universalists, we offer community for people who don’t want to be “spiritual but not religious” alone.

For young adults new to UUism, it can be helpful to:

- Learn what sparked their interest in UU community, what their hopes are as they consider involvement in your congregation, and how you can support them
- Create safe space for them to ask questions about UUism and how your congregation works, including ways to connect with your minister, other young adults, and people of all generations, leadership opportunities, small groups and committees, etc. Don’t assume what they know or don’t know; both can be damaging.
- Ensure your congregation has organized ways to learn more about UUism and your congregation, and that they are invited to participate in these courses/programs.

For both young adults who grew up UU and young adults new to UUism:

- If you have a minister, an invitation from the minister to meet to get to know one another can make a huge difference in helping young adults integrate into the congregation..
- Talk to them! Many of our young adults report standing alone before and after services and in coffee hour.
- Always ask open-ended questions rather than questions that make assumptions about who people are or why they’re here
- Help young adult parents connect with your religious exploration programs. Include children and/or offer childcare at all-congregational events so young adult parents can participate.
- Support young adult activities in your congregation. This may include logistical support, organization, preparation of food, or even attendance of young adult gatherings (ministers seem to host particularly successful young adult events!).
- Respect young adults’ diverse identities, including sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, language, life stage, socioeconomic status, physical and intellectual ability, etc. Ask for people’s preferred pronouns. Respect people’s privacy about their various identities, letting them take the lead on what they would like to share.
- Offer opportunities for leadership *that are connected to young adults’ passions and skills*. Be mindful of when and how to invite young adults into leadership; some may want to be involved right away, others may want to take time and simply get to know the congregation.
- Offer connections to regional, national, and international UU groups, including young adult groups (see resources in the next section).

Guidance for Membership/Welcoming Committees (Cont.)

Further Resources for helping young adults get connected:

If you have a young adult group, wonderful – make sure any new young adults know about the group (recognizing that not all young adults are looking to connect with other young adults, especially right away).

Also ensure young adults know about ways to connect with other UU young adults online and in-person. A good place to start is giving them the Canadian Unitarian Council postcard about ways to connect. It directs them to the [Canadian Unitarian Council young adult ministry page](#), which has up-to-date resources for young adults and young adult ministry.

For your information, here is a short-list of resources available on that page:

Online:

- [Canadian Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Facebook Group](#)
- [UU Young Adult Connections Facebook Group](#)
- Other Facebook groups (search both “UU” and “Unitarian Universalist” and many groups come up. Lots are congregation-specific or serve a particular group of people – see if any spark your interest!)
- [Church of the Larger Fellowship](#): An online UU community open to all
- Sign up for the Canadian Unitarian Council monthly eNews, including articles, reflections, and events from across the country (visit www.cuc.ca to sign up)

In Person:

- National and regional gatherings of the Canadian Unitarian Council: Events are listed at www.cuc.ca, and often have young adult participation and/or specific YA activities
- OPUS – An annual spiritual retreat led by and for UU young adults, held each August in Canada or the U.S. Find out more by emailing young-adults@cuc.ca.
- [Unicamp](#) in Honeywood, Ontario
- [Eliot Institute Camps](#) in Seabeck, Washington
- [Northwest Wilderness Society Camp](#) on Kootenay Lake, BC
- [General Assembly](#), the annual conference and meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association in the United States

If you have further questions or want more guidance:

Contact Asha Philar, CUC Youth and Young Adult Ministry Staff, asha@cuc.ca, or book an appointment with her by clicking [here](#).

Young Adult Ministry Congregational Self-Assessment

The Young Adult Ministry Congregational Self-Assessment was created by the UUA and offers insight into your current state of young adult ministry, and resources and strategies based on your stage. As part of the young adult project, we've "Canadianized" the assessment and made it available [here](#) as a google form.

Stages of Young Adult Ministry:

Learn more about each stage, and associated strategies for improving young adult ministry, by clicking on the stage name (links are to resources on the UUA website):

- [Welcoming](#): There are very few young adults and young adult visitors rarely stay. In the congregation there may be a desire for the involvement of younger generations of adults, but it is hard to know where to start.
- [Inviting](#): Young adults are present but on the periphery of our congregation, and have yet to create a critical mass. Some may be involved in aspects of congregational life as religious educators, worship associates, or in justice work. However, they may not be in positions of leadership, and their presence is not much felt within the congregation. If they are in positions of leadership, they may feel isolated or singled out as in their identities as young adults. Some young adults are here now, but if the situation does not change, they might not be soon.
- [Building](#): Young adults are connected to each other in small groups, and have started to create a critical mass. They may have social events with each other, such as going out to brunch after church. They are starting to look for more intentional and spiritually fulfilling ways of being together. They may have good connections to the rest of the church, but few spiritual connections to each other. Or, conversely, they may have friendly connections with one another but are looking for ways to deepen their spiritual experience.
- [Deepening](#): Young adults are a strong presence within the congregation, but the congregation has not yet been transformed to being a full multigenerational home. The young adults in this congregation have connections to each other, both socially and spiritually, as well as robust regular activities, but have fewer relationships with other adults in the congregation. Some young adults are likely involved in other aspects of congregational life, and are starting to offer their perspectives on new ways of doing business.
- [Growing Together](#): Young adults are fully integrated into the life of the church, and have strong connections with each other. They are involved in both intergenerational and age cohort activities that satisfy spiritual and social needs (mixing and huddling). They are in positions of leadership throughout the church, and their perspectives and voices are valued, not just because of their generational lens, but also because of their leadership abilities. Their leadership is felt in many aspects of congregational life. Young adults are (becoming) a large part of our identity as a faith community, it is truly THEIR congregation, too.

Coffee Hour Caution

...advice for **greeting young adults at church**

X - Avoid saying:

“How old are you?”

Why: Is age so important? There's no good answer. Avoid this one altogether.

✓ - Say instead:

“What did you think of the service today?”

X - 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...”

X - 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?”

X - Avoid saying:

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

Why: For those who are un- or under-employed, work is a tricky question; assuming someone is a student implies you think they are of a certain age or life stage. 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...”

X - Avoid saying:

“We need more young people!”

Why: Like everyone else, young adults want to be seen for who they are, not as a token for their age.

✓ - Say instead:

“Great to meet you!”

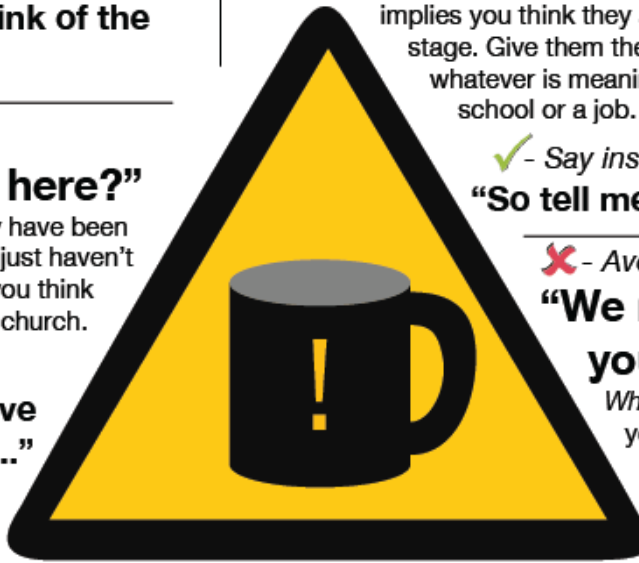
X - Avoid saying:

“Have you met our other young adult?”

Why: Young adults enjoy friends of all ages. Welcome them into 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

Homemade Clay Pot Chalice Instructions



You can make clay pot chalices to give to young adults (or children/youth/adults) as a welcome gift for less than \$3 per chalice.

What you need:

1. Clay saucer (available at [Michael's craft store](#)) - 3 inch is pictured above.
2. Clay pot (available at [Michael's craft store](#)) - 1.5 inch is pictured above.
3. Glue
4. Paint (acrylic works well)
5. Paint brushes
6. Tea lights if you'd like to get people started with a fully functional chalice
7. People who enjoy art projects to help with painting!



Notes:

1. For potted plants, the pot usually sits in the saucer. For a chalice, invert the pot and place the saucer on top.
2. It can be easier to paint first and then glue the saucer and pot together once they're dry.
3. It works well, and is more "chalice-like," to have the saucer one size larger than the pot.
4. If giving them out in small numbers, you may want to ask people for their favourite colour to keep in mind while painting/selecting a chalice for them.

Additional Resources for Young Adult Ministry

**** Especially recommended resources**

Research about Young Adults and the Millennial generation:

- [How We Gather](#): A study by Angie Thurston and Casper ter Kuile on how and where millennials find meaning and community. **
- [Something More](#): A study by Angie Thurston and Casper ter Kuile on the need for and examples of religious innovation to meet the needs of millennials. **
- [Future of Faith Prezi presentation](#) by Carey McDonald, exploring future of faith and the millennial generation from a U.S. perspective.

Reflections and Blogs:

- [What If We Wanted Bridging Youth Leaders to Continue Their Work?](#): A reflection by Canadian UU Young Adult Hazel Gabe on the experience of transitioning from youth to young adulthood in our faith tradition. **
- [“Is it OK to Not Go to Church?”](#) – A reflection by Youth and Young Adult Ministry staff person Asha Philar on the reasons that church may not appeal to young adults, especially those in the 18-24 age range. **
- [Blue Boat Blog](#), the shared voice of youth and young adult ministries of the Unitarian Universalist Association: Blog posts range from campus ministry to worship to spiritual practice to social justice, written by and for young adults.
- [Finding a Spiritual Home](#): Reflections about Unitarian Universalism by young adults on the themes of transitions, community, spirituality, justice, and leadership. This is also available as a brochure to order from the UUA bookstore.
- [Seven Reasons Why Young Adults Quit Church](#) and [Four More Big Reasons Why Young Adults Quit Church](#): Blog posts by Christian Piatt on why young adults are not participating in Christian churches
- [How to Create Vital Young Adult Ministries](#): A reflection by Donald Skinner

Resources for Developing Young Adult Ministry:

- [Resources for young adult ministry](#) from the Unitarian Universalist Association, including resources for congregations, events and trainings, transitions and rituals, social justice spirituality and worship, multi-generational pastoral care, and identity formation.
- [Campus Ministry](#) resources from the Unitarian Universalist Association
- [The Church of the Larger Fellowship](#): Participate in an international community of UUs, from wherever you are, with online worship, a UU “talk show,” weekly reflections and social connections. Find spiritual community no matter where you are in the world!

Worship and Small Group Ministry Resources:

- [Worship Web](#): A searchable online catalogue of UU readings, poetry and sermons, free to use for worship services on any theme. You can search by spiritual theme, type of reading or meditation, title or author. *Note: "Young Adults" is a search option in the "spiritual theme" field.*
- [Multigenerational Worship](#): Resources and ideas for planning successful, engaging worship services for all ages.
- [Youth and young adult worship resources](#): A great collection of ideas, links and resources for planning worship in a young adult group, or in a multigenerational setting. Also includes resources for small group ministry.
- [Contemporary Worship Resources](#): Tips and resources for designing and leading more contemporary or young adult-friendly worship services.
- [Dynamic Worship by Dennis](#): A useful article about planning worship services that are moving, impactful and collaborative - all of which usually appeal to young adults.
- [Becoming Together](#): A small group ministry manual for the book "Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood". Use this guide to easily plan small group sessions for young adults that address topics like growth and change, identity, roots, family and love. Includes facilitation tips, suggested readings and discussion questions.

Books to use for worship:

- Singing the Living Tradition & Singing the Journey (grey and teal hymnals)
- Skinner House Meditation manuals
- [Earth Prayers from Around the World](#)
- [Rise Up Singing](#)
- [Soulful Sundown](#)
- [Rejoice Together by Helen Pickett](#)

Recommended Books for Young Adult Ministry:

- [Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood by Kayla Parker](#): A wonderful collection of quotes, readings and reflections by UU young adults that speak to themes relevant to emerging adults. We recommend giving this book to any bridging youth, and new young adults. Can be used with "Becoming Together" (link above).
- [Heart to Heart by Alicia Hawkins and Christine Robinson](#): A book of small group ministry resources for fourteen gatherings on topics such as forgiveness, loss, nature, money, and friendship. Includes readings, quotes, reflections and discussion questions.
- [Soul to Soul by Alicia Hawkins and Christine Robinson](#): - Additional resources for small group ministry, similar format to Heart to Heart.
- [Growing Young by the Fuller Institute](#): A book of cutting-edge research and thinking that presents 6 strategies to ministering to and retaining young people in churches. It's from a Christian perspective, but has plenty of applicable insight for Unitarian churches. [Read a review](#) of the book by Bart Frost, Director of the UUA Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries