

# 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!”**

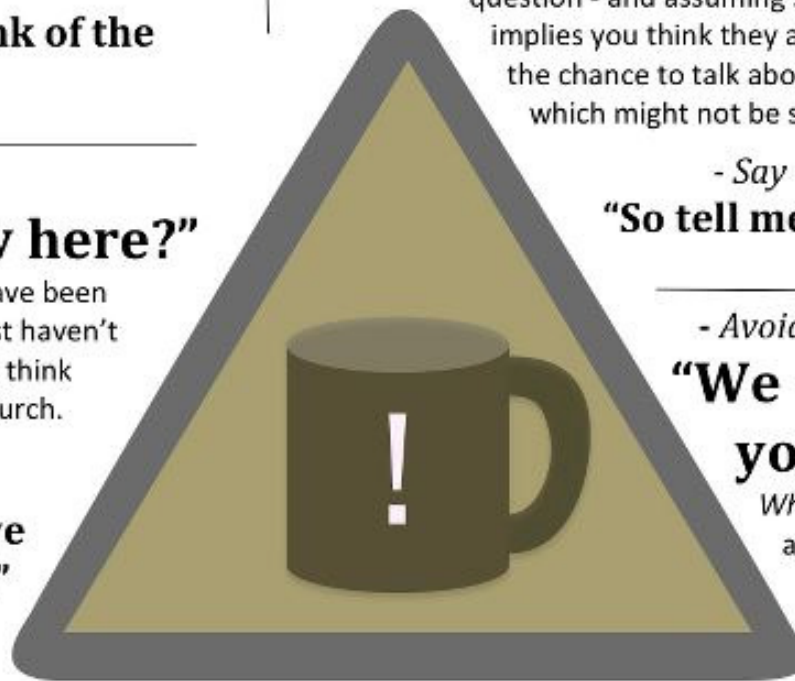
- Avoid saying:

**“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

