



Identity, self esteem,
Love & feeling young

A Unitarian Worship Pack created
by Senior Weekenders



Dear worship leaders and young people,

Welcome to the Youth Sunday worship pack created by young people who attend Senior Weekend and youth leaders. We hope you enjoy taking a look at the material - it is aimed at 14 - 114 year olds.

Please feel free to use it any way you like. You may like to ask some teenagers to lead an intergenerational service (for people of all ages) in your congregation or you may prefer to use just some parts of this pack. You may even wish to use this material for worship on a different Sunday altogether.

You may like to donate part or all of the collection towards the Youth Programme to help us expand and deepen our youth work and religious education for young Unitarians.

The main hope behind Youth Sunday is to encourage our worship up and down the country to become more child/youth friendly, accessible for all ages and to inform more families about the Youth Programme.

For information about the Youth Programme please look at www.yuonline.org.uk, our very own website, or go to www.unitarian.org.uk - we hope you enjoy this material.

With warmest wishes,

John Harley - GA Youth Coordinator



Cover image by James Barry

Youth Sunday
Sun Jan 29th 2012

Identity, self esteem, love & feeling young.
Worship Pack - Page 2



Opening Words

Friends are a big part of our lives

Friends are a big part of our lives,
relying on each other.

In every step we take they are there for us forever,
every minute of every day we spend by their side will be a
memory.

Not always seen but always there,
devoting their lives to helping each other,
showing that they really do care.

Helping each other through difficult times,
inviting others to join with them,
presenting others with their love.

Caitlin Finnan and Megan Lorimer



We value you being here

We value you being here.

Whether you are confident and exuberant and bright as the red of a rose.

Whether you just want to hide away,

Cover your face,

Be invisible like the cool, grey morning mist hanging above a lake.

We welcome you to this place of friendship.

Whether you are not sure of anything,

Full of greys and don't knows,

If you feel as dark as deep, mysterious soil,

A burnt umber of stillness.

You may be full of energy in this moment,

Fizzling with excitement and hope for the future,

A fervent green looking up to the sun.

You may feel like a patchwork quilt of complexity,

Like a river forever changing its colour and mood as it flows
through different lands and climates.

Whoever you are,

Whatever your colour,

Whatever the intensity of your shade,

You are valued here.

We are grateful for the richness of you,

The you that you bring to this community.

John Harley



Poems and Readings by Seniors and Youth Leaders

Mirror

As I look in the mirror before a night out
I try to find the right person for me.

I look fat in this - I should change.
This outfit makes me too curvy and I don't have enough
make up on.
Who is going to love me when I look like this?

If you let your mind carry out these negative thoughts
you won't be able to find the right person.

We should have more confidence in ourselves.
There's no need to judge the way we look.
We are who we are.
The minute we stop knocking our confidence will be when we
can go out and find that right person.

Beckie Lyons



Being Young

Youth isn't looking young.
Youth is feeling young, acting young.
Being young is such a strange feeling.
It's not about looks or being naïve.
It's about how you think, eat, sleep and breathe.

Being young is not about Botox or short skirts.
It's about the way you live your life with happiness and joy,
not pain or strife.
Being true to who you are,
not changing for anyone.
Seeing the goodness in each person,
And having a radiance that outshines even the sun.

That is being youthful,
not 19 boyfriends in one week,
or the trip to the local to let off some steam.
The steady assurance;
You are who you are,
and nobody wants you to change you.

Joe Smith

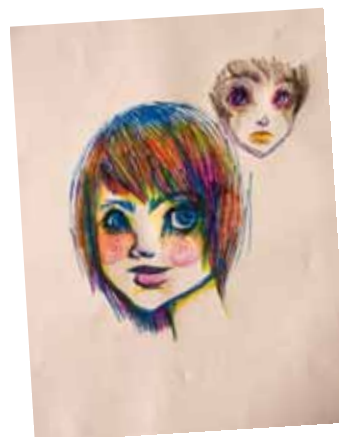


Self-image

There is nothing really that can define self-image. It is the private relationship you have with yourself.

No-one can tell you how to see yourself (although they may try). That journey you must take yourself.

An image is usually something tangible yet when discovering the image of yourself there is nothing static about it. As you grow your image changes, therefore how you see yourself grows too. Your image dips and skyrockets depending on sometimes the smallest things; exams, friends, rivals.



But, you need to remember that there is only one you and self-image is a discovery that will leave you stripped bare of all else except who you are.

Tilly Pugh

Identity

It has taken a long time to develop a sense of who I really am

Different people expected me to be a person that I didn't recognise

Every time I look in the mirror I ask myself questions

Nobody ever knows exactly how I feel, except me . . . or do I?

Teachers at school had some influence on where I am now and who I have become

I am like a chameleon who can adapt to any setting. Does this compromise who I am?

There has been no point in my life where I have felt 100% sure of who I am. Where will this uncertainty lead me?

You will only ever learn of me what I choose to show you . . . unless you know something I don't.

Charlie Watts - Youth Leader

Meditation on Identity

Close your eyes. Make sure no light creeps in.

Take a deep breath, maybe a couple.

Get calm, relaxed, at peace.

Start to think - think about you.

Focus on your identity - who you are. What makes you, well, you.

You shape your own identity. It's sculpted by your choices.

Your identity is special - it is what you are loved for. If you would just remember that your self-esteem would be sky high.

Each of us is different, each of us deserves a place in the world, each of us deserves to be accepted and loved.

Take this time to think about your identity. You're incredible. Do you find spaces in your life where you can be nurtured and supported?

Take this time to think about your special self.

Never change if they don't want you to be who you are. Your identity is more precious than you'll ever know.

'You were born an original - don't die a copy'. *Elizabeth Rosenberg*

aged 15 and Rebekah Lewis aged 14



Meditation on Labels

When you look at me what do you see?

Do you instantly put a label on me?

Am I a woman, a lady, a girl, a child?

Am I shy, geeky, intelligent, wild?

If you have to put a label on me,

How do you know it's what I want to be?

Is it my dress size, my personality too,

That has given that impression of me to you?

You might not know but we're labelled everyday.

When attracted to a label you cannot walk away.

You may be an adult, a woman, a child or man.

You might think labels mean nothing,

But sometimes they can.

You may be labelled more than ten times today,

From none of which you can walk away.

A nerd, a fashionista, a hipster, a freak,

It doesn't matter because we're all unique.

Beautiful, ugly, pretty or not,

A chav, an emo, a goth or what?

Labels can affect people in different ways.

Just think how many times you will have been

labelled today.

The labels you've been given,

Is that who you want to be?

Or maybe you've labelled yourself for others to see?

So now when you look at me,

What do you see?

Don't instantly put a label on me.

Sarah Hall aged 16

Rituals/Communions

Making a thread of love

Ask the congregation to think about what they love in their lives - allow around 2 minutes of silence. It could be people, places, sensations, tastes, things, anything really - think of something funny, profound, small or big etc.

Pass a nice quality ball of wool (perhaps one with bright or attractive colours) around a circle or down rows of people. As each person receives the ball of wool they are invited to share what they love but it is important to stress that if they would prefer not to say anything then that's fine. Then they pass it onto the next person.



When everyone is holding onto the wool the worship leader can express some sentences about love and connection and the idea of being united by one thread of love.

The ritual can be brought to a close by rolling up the ball of wool in reverse order or a pair of scissors being passed around and each person cutting the wool and tying it around the wrist of the person next to them so that everyone ends up with a love bracelet.

Allowing pebbles to teach us about ourselves

Set up a table with a wide range of pebbles and stones - a variety of colours, sizes and textures. The congregation are invited to visit the table and choose a pebble that they are attracted to for any reason. They are invited to hold the pebble in the palm of their hand and to notice every mark, crack, shape, blemish or imperfection. Get to know it as if you will never see it again in your life. Get to know it like a friend.

Consider these questions:

How is this pebble like you?

Does this pebble remind you of any special memories or events in your life?

If this pebble had an emotion right now what would this emotion be?

The participants can take their pebble away with them and are encouraged to keep it safe and to hold it or study it when they want to return to themselves.



Reflection on Time

'To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven' Ecclesiastes 3 verses 1-8.

A basket is passed around the circle or rows and the people are invited to take off a watch they may have on and place it into the basket. Read the above bible reading.

The leader explains that we will now be stepping out of time for a few moments, leaving behind the rush of life and the pressure of minutes, hours, days and weeks. A second basket is passed around - participants are encouraged to take a piece of paper and a pen/pencil.

The congregation are given the opportunity to write their own line based on the structure 'There is a time to.....and a time to.....'. Allow 3 minutes for this. Next the participants are given the chance to read out their statements - or if they prefer they can remain silent.

Period of silence.

To finish the ritual the basket of watches are passed back around the circle or rows and people can take their watch back and put it on (hopefully you have no thieves amongst you!) The worship leader can share some words about returning to the everyday resource of time.

John Harley

Closing Words

Today is your last day in the world

Today is your last day in the world.

As the sun sinks in the sky, your life will be over.

The hands move closer to your final second,

To your very last breath,

Your last gasp of air from your lungs.

But you still have today.

One last day, a few sweet hours, to savour.

What will you do with them?

Do you really want to waste them, doing the same, menial tasks you do every single other day?

Wash the car?

Walk the dog?

Empty the bins?

Or do you really want to live again?

It is your last day.

Where will you go for your final journey?

What sights will you see with your tired eyes?

What sounds will you hear?

What textures will you touch?

What flavours will you taste?

And who will be standing by your side?

Who will be with you as the world comes to a close?

Some time sooner or later, you may not be around anymore,

May not be here to see the faces of your friends,

To hear the voices of your loved ones,

To feel the touch of the earth in your soul.

But don't look to that day.

Don't look to the future.

Look at today,

And everything you still have time left to achieve.

Live in the now, not the next,

Today is the first day of the rest of your life.

Live it as though it is also the last.

Matthew McCready-Allen



Musical Ideas

Music exploring the theme of love:

'Where is the love?' Black Eyed Peas

'Do you believe in life after love?' Cher

'You got the Love' Florence and the Machine

'All you need is Love' The Beatles

Hymns from 'Sing Your Faith'

191 We have a dream

88 Let it be a dance we do

18 Celebrate the gift of laughter

148 Spirit of Life

I am who I am - a chant

For more details about events run for young Unitarian people (YUP)
please go to:

www.yuonline.org.uk

or

www.unitarian.org.uk/youth

or Contact John Harley

e: jharley@unitarian.org.uk t: 07985 900 935

Copyright © 2011 - The Unitarian & Free Christian Churches

1-6 Essex St, London, WC2R 3HR t: 0207 240 2384

Charity Number 250788

