

Worship Resources

For Celebrating Age Diversity in the United Methodist Church of Florida

Our Social Creed

We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women, children, youth, young adults, the aging, and people with disabilities; to improvement of the quality of life; and to the rights of dignity of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities.

- From our Social Creed, *The Book of Resolutions*, 1996, Para. 70.

Scripture and Sermon Ideas¹

- ❖ Genesis 1:26-31, 6:3 – We were created in the image of God, and God created the aging process.
- ❖ Genesis 18:1-8; 21: 1-7 – Older persons are of worth to God.
- ❖ Ex. 20: 12; Job 12:12, Proverbs 16:31; 20:29; 23:22 – Celebrate the wisdom of mature years.
- ❖ Psalm 71 – Responsibility OF older persons.
- ❖ Psalm 92:14; Isaiah 46:4 – God gives us strength for our mission.
- ❖ Micah 6:6-8 – What God requires of people of all ages.
- ❖ Zechariah 8 – Thank God for the diversity of ages.
- ❖ Luke 2:22-38 – Expectation of joy in later years.
- ❖ Luke 5:36-39 – Nicodemus (the elder Pharisee) visits Jesus.
- ❖ Hebrews 11:8-16 – Faith of Abraham and Sarah and God's blessing.

A Prayer

[Use this as a framework. Be creative. Allow various ages to speak various segments. Rewrite it...adapting it for your situation.]

Creator God, we thank you for your gift of diversity in all of creation. The wide assortment of plant and flowers, the varied sounds of animals, the strange and wonderful ways of growth and development are but a sample of your broad vision for life.

We thank you for the rich variety in human life - for our differences in gender, in racial and cultural heritage, in interests and talents, and in age.

We thank you for the gift of joy shared through those we remember now...for infants (pause), for toddlers (pause), for children (pause), for middle schoolers (pause), for youth (pause), for young adults (pause), for adults at varied life stages - the parents, the workers, the faithful servants of all ages (pause), for those over 50 even if it is us! (pause). And we thank you for those older adults who continue to encourage us in their life journey in spite of physical limitations.

Teach us, Lord, to expect you, the Creator of life, to be the one able to show us in your church the way to foster creative ministries which break down barriers between the ages and draw us together in your one body, the church, through Jesus Christ, so that in all ways God may be glorified. Amen.

- Created for the Florida Annual Conference, 2005. Rev. Lois Barnum

¹ Excerpted from 1999 International Year of Older Persons. (General Board of Discipleship: Nashville, 1998). Rev. Dr. Richard Gentzler, Jr., Director of the United Methodist Center on Aging, General Board of Discipleship. PO Box 840, Nashville TN 37202