

# LEAN ON ME

The following is a range of worship material and trust activities drawn from different sources including Inter and Senior Weekends in November 2014. Do use in any way you wish on Youth Sunday or any other occasion. The trust activities may be useful for children's activities on a Sunday or an intergenerational event. Please mention and publicise the Youth Programme whether you have children and young people attending or not. Have fun!

## Worship material

### Opening words

May my feet rest firmly on the ground  
May my head touch the sky  
May I see clearly  
May I have the capacity to listen  
May I be free to touch  
May my words be true  
May my heart and mind be open  
May my hands be empty to fill the need  
May my arms be open to others  
May my gifts be revealed to me  
So I may return that which has been given  
Completing the great circle

The Terma Collective

### This is the classic 'Footprints in the Sand' poem by Mary Stevenson

#### Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.  
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.  
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.  
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,  
other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed  
that during the low periods of my life,  
when I was suffering from  
anguish, sorrow or defeat,  
I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord,  
"You promised me Lord,  
that if I followed you,  
you would walk with me always.  
But I have noticed that during  
the most trying periods of my life  
there have only been one  
set of footprints in the sand.  
Why, when I needed you most,  
you have not been there for me?"

The Lord replied,  
"The times when you have  
seen only one set of footprints,  
is when I carried you."

Mary Stevenson

## **Meditation**

Sit comfortably. Be still and try to clear your mind (pause). Think of time when someone you trust or feel close to has helped you through a difficult time – possibly a friend or maybe a family member (pause). Now think of a time when a friend has come to you for help or moral support (wait a minute). Now, when you're ready take a deep breath, open your eyes and return to reality.  
Ted Barganski

## **My Mum**

My Mum is always there for me when I'm feeling sad, confused or just feeling rubbish. She helps me stay organised, something I'm not very good at. She never fails to make me smile, even when she's feeling down. Thank you Mum.  
Ted

## **Footprints ritual**

*Preparation:* Cut out a number of feet from card – at least two for everyone who is taking part. You can do this by drawing around people's feet and cutting out the shape. Use a variety of different colours of card. Put the cut out feet into a basket or on a tray.

*Ritual:* Pass the basket of feet around. Invite people to pick two feet from the basket. Ask them to firstly write the name of someone who has supported or helped them during a difficult time and secondly to write the name of someone they have given a helping hand to. They can consider tiny examples of helping or massive ways! You will need to pass round felt tips or pens also. Allow plenty of time for people to write names on the feet. When everyone has finished writing, invite people to place their cut out feet onto an area of floor at the front or middle of the worship space to form a line of footprints. They can arrange them to form a pathway or journey of footprints that can weave in different directions. When everyone has placed their cut out feet on the floor you can sit in silence and look at the footprints or listen to some music.

*Variations:* The congregation can draw pictures/cartoons of the people instead of writing their names if they prefer. If you don't have an area of floor to arrange the footprints you can stick or blu tac the feet up on a screen or the wall. Any folk who have mobility problems can ask someone else to take their cut out feet and place them on their behalf.

### **Hymns:**

Lean on Me – 1021 in Singing the Journey

Come, all who look to God today – 20, The Human Touch – 161, May I use my hands with care – 101, in Sing Your Faith

Kum ba Yah – 32, Trust in Life – 60 in Hymns for Living

### **Closing words**

My light is burning bright;  
My stride is long, my head is high.  
Don't go; I need the humility of your low light.  
Stay near and, if by chance you see more clearly to  
    Take your next few steps,  
We shall have served each other well.

But now my light is glimmering low.  
I stumble and barely see the way.  
I need your light which now is burning strong.  
Dare I believe you still need mine?

And now my light is out, I think;  
I cannot find the way at all  
But stand in darkness, lost, afraid...  
Until I see your light, and trust your reassuring hand,  
And strength returns, and fear has gone.

And now again, somehow, my light is burning bright.  
Yet I did not see your light touch mine.  
We are a gift and a miracle, you and I...

Derek Corlett

## Trust activities

### Share this story:

What are the differences between Heaven and Hell?, a young Zen monk asked an aged Buddhist priest who was renowned for his wisdom.

'There are no material differences,' replied the old monk.

'None at all?' asked the puzzled young monk.

'That's right. Both Heaven and Hell have a spacious hall with a big pot in the centre in which noodles are boiled, giving off a delicious scent,' said the old priest. 'The size of the huge pan, the number of people sitting around the pot and the bowl of sauce placed in front of each diner are the same in both places.'

'The odd thing is that each diner is given a pair of meter-long chopsticks and must use them to eat the noodles.'

'To eat the noodles, you must hold the chopsticks properly at their ends,' the old monk told the young Zen monk.

'In the case of Hell's kitchen, people are always hungry because no matter how hard they try, they can't get the noodles into their mouths,' said the old priest.

'But isn't it the same case for the people in Heaven?' the junior monk inquired.

'No. They can eat because they each feed the person sitting opposite them at the table. That's the difference between Heaven and Hell,' explained the old monk.

*(This story can be acted out as a drama. You just need two long sticks – bamboo poles are useful props)*

### Trust meal

Have a brief discussion about the meaning of this story. Then set up a trust meal. Put out finger food and food in bite size pieces on plates. Food like chips, slices of cucumber, red and green pepper and carrot, crisps, slices of pizza, cheese on biscuits, grapes, segments of tangerine etc are good for this. Label the plates clearly so people can see what the main ingredients are (this is especially important for people on special diets or with food allergies). Ask people to get into pairs. Give them 5-10 minutes each to feed each other. The person who is being fed is not allowed to use their hands at all to feed themselves but they are allowed to speak and to point to which food they want to eat!

Afterwards lead a short discussion

- Did you prefer to be the feeder or be the person being fed? Why?
- Did you learn anything about the way you trust people in your life?
- Did this exercise teach you anything about any real situations in your life?

*Some practical considerations:*

It is really important that the person being fed decides what they want to eat or not, especially if they have allergies. The feeder should be in the role of servant! After the trust exercise and discussion you can allow people to feed themselves in a more normal way so that they don't go hungry.

*Other trust exercises include:*

- Blindfold walk. Find a partner and blindfold them. Use a scarf. Lead them on a little walk around the church, chapel or garden if well contained. The leader should hold the hand of their blindfolded partner or put a hand on their shoulder – or the blindfolded person can take the arm of their leader. The leader needs to give clear instructions and take full responsibility for the blindfolded person's welfare. Make sure participants receive a thorough briefing. Perhaps do this for around 10 minutes each so both people get a turn. Pair up people of similar ages and heights if possible. Follow this with a discussion. Which role did you prefer and why? (Do a risk assessment before this activity!)



- Human knot. Form a circle of around 8 people of different ages. Ask people move in closer into the centre, to close their eyes, to put their arms out and to link hands with two different people. This forms a human knot. The challenge is for the whole group to untangle themselves without breaking any of the connections. It is possible! We managed it at Senior Weekend with 13 people! You will need to make slow, careful manoeuvres. Hopefully at the end you will all be back in a circle facing each other.

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For information about Unitarian Youth Events please visit [www.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.unitarian.org.uk)

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