

National Youth Sunday 2023

Romans 12:2, NLT: Stand Up, Even If You Stand Out

More than “Standing Up”: a note about metaphors by Becky Ullom Naugle

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” --Romans 12:2, New Living Translation

In this scripture, we are being encouraged to let our faith and the way we express that faith in our everyday interactions, be shaped by God and not “the behavior and customs of this world.” While the theme for National Youth Sunday 2023 relies on the image of “standing up,” we would be misguided to think scripture is encouraging us only towards outward movement and signs/symbols. Standing up physically is an easy-to-see illustration of the idea of transformation through relationship with Jesus. However, this illustration should not be used to the exclusion of sisters and brothers for whom physically standing up is difficult or not possible. As you plan worship, encourage one another to share about the transformation in our own thinking, feeling, and living which we have experienced or sought. “Standing up, even if you stand out” is a metaphor; you are invited to expand and interpret that metaphor, based on the scripture, in ways most helpful to the people of your community - with all their gifts, experiences, disabilities and abilities.