

Developing Faith Formation for the Baby Boom Generation

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(From: *Lifelong Faith* Journal, Volume 4.4)

Are churches reading for the coming tsunami of aging Baby Boomers. In 2011 the first members of the Baby Boomer Generation turn sixty-five years old. In the United States today Americans over sixty-five now outnumber teenagers by nearly two to one. What used to be referred to as the “graying of America” is now understood to be a social revolution. Some thirty-nine million Americans, or 13% of the U.S. population, are ages sixty-five and older—up from 4% in 1900. By 2050, according to Pew Research projections, about *one-in-five* Americans will be over age sixty-five, and about 5% will be ages eighty-five and older, up from 2% now. Nearly every industry in society, from health care to entertainment, is scrambling to respond to this age wave that is crashing on our shores.

America is in the midst of a demographic revolution, but this revolution is about much more than longevity. It's about the changing perspective of the Baby Boomers as they reach what was traditionally viewed as a time to enjoy the golden years. We are witnessing the emergence of a new stage of life between adult midlife—typically focused on career and child-rearing—and old age, traditionally marked by increasing frailty and decline. This new stage of life spans several decades and is characterized by generally good health, relative financial stability, and an active, engaged lifestyle.

Phyllis Moen, in her article “Midcourse: Navigating Retirement and a New Life Stage” writes, “[This is] the period in which individuals begin to think about, plan for, and actually disengage from their primary career occupations and the raising of children; develop new identities and new ways to be productively engaged; establish new patterns of relating to spouses, children, siblings, parents, friends; leave some existing relationships and begin new ones. As in adolescence, people in the midcourse years are thinking about and enacting role shifts that are both produces of their past and precursors of their future life course.”

1. Perspectives & Practices for Ministry with Baby Boomers - Gary McIntosh

(Excerpts from: “Trends and Challenges for Ministry Among North American’s Largest Generation.” *Christian Education Journal*, Series 3, Vol. 5, No. 2, pages 300-303; <http://wisdom.biola.edu/cej>)

Gary McIntosh describes the Baby Boomer generation as educated, media-oriented, independent, cause-oriented, fitness conscious, activists, quality conscious, and questioning of authority. He says that as church members Boomers are (1) committed to relationships, rather than organizations; (2) want to belong, rather than join; (3) supportive of people, rather than programs; (4) long to live their faith, rather than talk about it; (5) wish to be seen as unique individuals, rather than a monolithic group; (6) desire to design their own programs, rather than attend ones developed for them; (7) yearn to serve others, rather than only being served; and (8) crave meaningful activity, rather than empty days. In this excerpt he describes how to approach faith formation with Baby Boomers.

Perspectives

I have followed the boomer generation since 1983, tracking the impact of their lifestyle, attitudes, and interests on general church ministry. Like others, I have noticed that Boomers have always made their own rules, and now they are redefining how to grow old. As Boomers reinvent old age, gerontologist Ken Dychwald says they “will age rebelliously.” And, as Boomers push the age profile of churches in the United States higher, they are also demanding a different array of services than the same age group a

generation ago. My observations lead me to conclude the following regarding aging Boomers.

First as Boomers age they continue to be different than the generation preceding them. Generational personality does not change much after the bulk of the generation reaches 30 years old, and Boomers are not likely to suddenly wake up and like older forms of ministry. Expect Boomers to ask why, tell it like it is, let it all hang out, prefer informal activities, like change and variety, think the system is the problem, be cause-oriented, desire to experience life, and have a low view of institutions. In short, expect Boomers to act and think much like they always have, except with more maturity.

Second, as Boomers age, they are offended by “old” stereotypes. They like to be characterized by the following words: active, alert, contributor, experienced, healthy, independent, and worker. Most Boomers think of themselves as 10-15 years younger than they actually are. They dislike being labeled “senior citizens,” “old,” or “retired.” In short, expect Boomers to be turned off by any ministry that portrays them as frail, aged, or sedentary.

Third, as Boomers age they aspire to be unique individuals. They want to be part of the decision-making for any ministry that they are expected to attend and will not respond to a program that is developed for them without their input. They resist the “poor dear syndrome” and senior discounts. In their way of thinking, a 10% discount means they are 10% depreciated. Boomers never wished to wear fashions that made them look mature, and they continue to appreciate the music of their youth. Any church ministry that is designed for their parents will not attract aging Boomers. They are attracted to ministries that help them look back with pride to their youth, while helping them launch the next chapter in their lives. To be successful, ministry to Boomers must appear youthful, healthy, vibrant, and worthy of their time and energy.

Fourth, as Boomers age they continue to search for the next new adventure. Whether it is short-term mission trips or ski outings, older boomer still look for new experiences. Most recently, they have made sports utility vehicles extremely popular. It is true that they rarely drive them off the road, but they have an adventure from their driveway to the grocery store and back. In short, they are attracted to church ministry that is challenging and adventuresome.

Fifth, as Boomers age, they continue to accelerate their careers. Boomers are changing their lifestyles but staying involved in the work force. They are buying vacation and second homes, as well as enlarging their nests to include home offices and fitness centers. While churches continue to offer noontime luncheon meetings for seniors, working Boomers cannot come due to their jobs. In a word, aging Boomers are attracted to ministries that are high quality and make allowances for their work schedules.

Sixth, as Boomers age, they continue to search for spiritual meaning. While Boomers have always demonstrated a “spiritual” bent, whether in a mystical or a traditional religious sense, throughout most of their lives many Boomers have simply ignored the church. However, it is now apparent that age Boomers struggle with the same spiritual, emotional, and life-stage issues with which previous generations have wrestled. All the instincts of the baby Boomers are saying, “Slow down. Figure out what’s important.” They are attracted to church ministries that speak clearly and specifically to their concerns, and ones that make a difference in their lives.

Seventh, as Boomers age, they continue to break the rules. Boomers have always challenged the status quo, and they are doing so as they reinvent themselves today. Aging Boomers will need room to re-frame traditional seniors’ ministry to fit their own needs and desires.

Practices

As church leaders think through the challenges and opportunities present by the aging boomer generation, I believe they should consider trying to do the following:

1. Build a ministry for Boomers that is **adventurous**. Rather than mall walking, consider hiking in the mountains, cross-country skiing, or snowshoeing. Remember: Boomers have always seen themselves as a youthful generation, and they still do!
2. Build a ministry for Boomers that is **fun**. Rather than potluck luncheons, consider catered parties, fishing trips, paint ball competitions, and team-building camps. Remember: Boomers are not looking for a

seniors' ministry; they are seeking an older youth ministry.

3. Build a ministry for Boomers that is **significant**. Rather than being served, consider serving others by building a home for Habitat for Humanity, assisting missionaries, helping out-of-work people to find a job, or tutoring children. Remember: Boomers desire to make a difference in the world by taking on great causes.
4. Build a ministry for Boomers that is **educational**. Along with Bible studies, consider CPR, basic first aid, personal health, managing finances, and public speaking classes. Remember: Boomers are an educated generation, and they wish to continue learning to the end of their days.
5. Building a ministry for Boomers that is **spiritual**. Rather than offering simplistic formulas, consider prayer walks in the neighborhood, intercession teams, and a variety of small group sharing. Remember: Boomers are a mosaic of sub-groups, and it will take a multi-dimensional approach to spiritual formation to reach them.

There are three approaches we can take with aging Boomers. One, we can simply write off Boomers and focus on the emerging generations. Two, we can try to reach and keep Boomers with ministries that currently exist and are popular with the oldest generation. Or, three, we can scrap our conventional thinking about seniors' ministry and start from scratch, building a new ministry that is fruitful in reaching and keeping aging Boomers. For churches that desire to be fruitful, my advice is to choose the third option.

2. Three Components of Ministry with Baby Boomers - Amy Hanson

(Excerpts from *Baby Boomers and Beyond: Tapping the Ministry Talents and Passions of Adults Over Fifty*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010.)

Amy Hanson, in *Baby Boomers and Beyond*, proposes three essential components for creative ministries with maximum impact on Baby Boomers:

1) service, 2) spiritual growth, and 3) intergenerational relationships.

Service

Boomers want to do something interesting and challenging. They are ready to jump into a worthwhile cause where they feel that can make a significant difference. Boomers want service opportunities that have a mission. They want to do things that give their lives purpose, meaning, and fulfillment. They want to know their contributions truly matter. There is no greater mission for Boomers to immerse themselves in than the mission of Christ to redeem and heal a broken world. Encourage Boomers to serve in an area where they've always had an interest, and provide them with exposure to a variety of service opportunities. Short term trips can be a great way for people over fifty to discover the one thing they want to invest themselves in. Show Boomers how they might use their past work experiences as tools for service. Help them tap into their passion.

Engaging Boomers to make a major impact for Christ in the world should be a primary foundation for ministry with Boomers—if not *the* primary foundation. We have an open window of time right now to help individuals refocus their priorities and recognize how God wants to use them for his purposes in this season of their lives. (Hanson, 143)

Spiritual Growth

There are several fundamental resources why Boomers are responsive to the message of the gospel and to spiritual growth. Later Adulthood is a season of significant life transitions and people are more responsive to religion. A second reason is Boomers quest to find meaning and purpose in life as they enter the second half of life and evaluate the things that really provide lasting fulfillment. A third reason adults are open to faith and spiritual growth is their desire for meaningful relationships. The church can be a primary place of social interaction where people can connect with one another and talk about life issues. "All three factors—help dealing with life's changes, a search for purpose, and a desire for meaningful relationships—can powerfully work together in drawing adults to Christ's saving grace. (Hanson, 151)

Effective ways to bring older adults into a relationship with Christ include: (1) small group

faith formation, (2) hanging out in the places where Boomer adults gather, (3) hosting events that appeal to Boomer's interests and needs, and (4) service opportunities.

Intergenerational Relationships

Ministry with Baby Boomers includes an intergenerational component. Developing intergenerational relationships is one of the best ways to break age-related stereotypes, to share faith across generations, and to help the church become more unified. There are a variety of ways to connect the generations and develop intergenerational relationships: (1) encourage generations to serve together on a worthy cause; (2) form groups according to similar interests rather than age; (3) encourage adults to intentionally pray for young people and vice versa; (4) host strategic intergenerational events that are fun for all, have ready-made questions that permit age groups to engage easily in conversation, and encourage relationships to continue after the event is over; (6) ask adults to tell their stories, at workshop or events or programs, and capture them on video and/or in print; (7) develop intergenerational small group and large group programming; (8) integrate all ages in Sunday worship; and (9) educate people as to the uniqueness of each generation.

As multiple generations work, worship, serve, and play together, the result will be that people lay down their own self-centeredness and take up the attitude of Christ. True, we may have to do church a little differently, but when all ages are regularly interacting and loving one another, God is honored, and we become an example to our hurting world. (Hanson, 185)

3. Keys to Baby Boomer Faith Formation: Variety & Choice

We know from research that adult learners will chose the learning activity that best fits their learning needs, preferred modes of learning, and time constraints. In order to accomplish this, faith formation with Baby Boomers needs to provide a variety of content and learning activities, and a variety of models for faith formation that include activities in physical places and virtual spaces.

A Variety of Models

Six models that should be part of adult faith formation offerings for Baby Boomers include:

1. **Faith Formation on Your Own:** through reading, online courses, audio and video programs, movies, television programs
2. **Faith Formation at Home:** through Bible reading, storytelling and caring conversation, prayer and devotions, rituals and traditions, service
3. **Faith Formation in Small Groups:** through Bible and theology study groups, social issues study groups, faith sharing groups, lectionary-based groups, service/mission action groups, support groups, special interest groups
4. **Faith Formation in Large Groups;** through courses, speaker series, workshops, film festivals, retreats, conferences, intergenerational programs
5. **Faith Formation in the Congregation:** through Sunday worship, church year events and celebrations, service/mission activities, ministry and leadership in the church and community
6. **Faith Formation in the Community and World:** through programs, courses, clinics, workshops, and presentations at universities, retreat centers, YMCAs, libraries, bookstores, regional church programs; through engagement in community/political action, local and global service and justice projects

A Variety of Settings: Face-to-Face & Online

Adult faith formation includes learning activities in physical places and virtual spaces, blending face-to-face, interactive learning with virtual, online learning. Online websites, social networking services, and digital technologies (e.g., an iPod Touch, smart cell phones) mean that churches can deliver faith formation experiences and resources anytime and anywhere, reaching people wherever they go online (home, work, school, vacation, coffee house). The interplay between learning in physical places, face-to-face, and virtual online spaces can revolutionize adult faith formation in a church.

Suggestions & Ideas for Baby Boomer Faith Formation

1. Develop a Lifelong Learning Institute at your church or as a collaborative effort among churches in your community.

Baby Boomers are looking for stimulating learning experiences that run the gamut of topics and interests. Imagine your church (or a group of local churches) as a “college” where courses and learning events are offered throughout the week—daytime, evenings, weekends—on campus and out in the community/world.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes can serve as a model for establishing an institute for adults 50 or older. Osher Institutes are found on the campuses of 118 colleges and universities from Maine to Hawaii and Alaska. Each provides a distinctive array of non-credit courses and activities specifically developed for adults aged 50 or older who are interested in learning for the joy of learning.

For example the University of Dayton Osher Institute offers courses in art, current events, health and fitness, history, literature, music, religion and science. A curriculum committee selects courses on the basis of member requests, the expertise of moderators, variety, and balance. Moderators include University of Dayton professors and community professionals who lead peer-to-peer informal discussion seminars that meet once a week for two hours, for four to eight weeks. The summer session is two one-day sessions. At Duke University the Osher Institute utilizes a mix of peer teachers, Duke professors, graduate students, independent scholars, and community experts.

Your church(s) can develop courses and learning activities around the interests of Baby Boomers, as well as around the expertise of teachers/leaders in your church and community. Topics which emerged from the survey of research in this journal issue included:

- personal finances and financial security,
- physical health and exercise
- personal interests (e.g., hobbies, dance, writing, arts)
- travel and new adventures
- family relationships and responsibilities (e.g., caring for an older parent),

- spiritual health (meaning and purpose in life, deepening and strengthening relationship with God)
- changing living situations
- multiple life transitions

Courses at the Duke University Osher Lifelong Learning Institute cover a wide range of topics and interests: art and architecture, hands-on art, computer programs, culture and social sciences, economic/financial issues and retirement issues, health and wellness, history and current affairs, literature, language and drama, natural science and technology, performing arts, religion and philosophy, and writing.

Ginghamsburg Church in Tipp City, OH takes a similar “institute” approach, offering courses and learning activities throughout the week on a wide variety of topics and interests. The Winter/Spring 2011 courses include: Encountering the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; A Study of David: Anointed, Transformed, Redeemed; Crown Financial Study and Financial Peace University; Secrets of a Prayer Warrior; A Follower’s Life; Boundaries (relationship course); Forgive for Good; Ministry by Strengths; Love is a Choice: Letting Go of Unhealthy Relationships; C.L.A.R.I.T.Y. in Communications; Christian 12-Step; GriefShare; Zumba with Toning; Insanely Fit; Healthy Cooking Class; Yoga Café; Yoga/Pilates Fusion; Quilting Group; and Basic Car Maintenance.

For More Resources and Examples

- Osher Lifelong Learning Institute: <http://usm.maine.edu/olli/national>
- Aquinas College: www.aquinas.edu/olli
- Duke University: www.learnmore.duke.edu/olli
- Ginghamsburg Adult Faith Formation: <http://ginghamsburg.org/adult>
- Santa Clara University: www.scu.edu/osher
- University of Dayton: <http://artssciences2.udayton.edu/continuingeducation/udlli.asp>

2. Utilize online resources to develop programs and activities in a variety of faith formation models.

Online learning resources continue to increase dramatically. Many of these resources are free and can be used in a variety of faith formation models: on your own, at home, in small groups, and in large

groups. Here are two examples of the rich resources online.

Ted Talks

TED is a small nonprofit devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. It started out (in 1984) as a conference bringing together people from three worlds: Technology, Entertainment, Design. Since then its scope has become ever broader. The annual TED conferences bring together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers, who are challenged to give the talk of their lives (in 18 minutes). The TED website has been developed around TEDTalks, with the goal of giving everyone on-demand access to the world's most inspiring voices. There are more than 700 TEDTalks now available.

Website: www.ted.com/index.php/talks

iTunes University

iTunes University, part of the iTunes Store, is possibly the world's greatest collection of free educational media available to lifelong learners. With more than 350,000 free lectures, videos, films, and other resources—from all over the world, iTunes U has become the engine for the mobile learning movement. Almost 400 universities—including Stanford, Yale, MIT, Oxford, and UC Berkeley—distribute their content publicly on the iTunes Store. In the Beyond Campus section of iTunes U, people can access a wealth of content from distinguished entities such as MoMA, the New York Public Library, Public Radio International, and PBS stations.

Website: www.apple.com/education/itunes-u

3. Offer a variety of justice and service involvements for Baby Boomers.

Churches can respond to Boomers' interest (and increasing time availability) to address social issues and their willingness to make their community and world a better place by offering a variety of age-specific and intergenerational projects that are geared to different levels of involvement and challenge, such as:

- local mission projects lasting anywhere from a few hours to one day in length
- short-term mission trips lasting anywhere from two to five days and requiring an overnight stay on location

- weeklong mission trips within the United States as well as to foreign countries, designed for those who are ready to take the next big step in service
- global expedition trips of ten to fourteen days that provide the opportunity to be immersed for a longer period in the targeted community and culture
- personalized small group mission trips, organized around the interests and time of the group

Utilize existing projects and organizations—locally, nationally, and globally—to offer a variety of involvements. Develop an annual “catalog” of service/mission opportunities. For an example of this approach go to Ginghamburg Church Adult Global Missions: <http://ginghamsburg.org/missions>.

Churches can also develop small groups that combine the study of justice and social issues with experiential hands-on action projects. Groups can be organized around issues or themes. One example of a small group program that weaves study, small group learning, retreat experiences, and action projects is *JustFaith* (www.justfaith.org). *JustFaith* is a thirty-week justice formation and transformation process that focuses on discipleship—engagement in the life of Jesus—and the call to be about God's dream of justice and compassion in a world scarred by the domestic and global crisis called poverty. Meeting weekly, small groups of 10–15 people employ books, videos, discussion, prayer, retreats and hands-on experiences. Opening and closing retreats are part of the commitment each participant makes to the group. Four immersion experiences provide face-to-face contact with people living on the margins of society, and include social analysis and spiritual/theological reflection.

4. Develop faith formation around Baby Boomer milestones and life transitions.

Faith formation with Baby Boomers (adults currently in their 50s and 60s) can be developed around their many life transitions or “trigger events” as Richard Leider calls them (see the “Discovering What Really Matters” article in the survey of research reports for more information.) The most significant life transitions in the 50s and 60s include:

- starting a new job
- losing a job

- child beginning college
- child graduating from college
- adult child moving back home
- child getting married
- birth or adoption of a grandchild
- caregiving for a grandchild
- surviving a major illness/accident
- death of someone close
- caregiving for an elderly relative
- retirement
- selling the “family home”
- relocating to a new home

Churches can develop faith formation around these significant life transitions or milestones by creating:

1. a ritual celebration or a blessing marking the milestone with the whole church community
2. a home ritual celebration or blessing marking the milestone
3. a learning program—often for the whole family or community—that prepares the individual for the milestone
4. a tangible, visible reminder or symbol of the milestone being marked
5. resources for pastoral care and for continuing faith growth after the milestone experience

Resources

Hater, Robert. *Journeys of Discovering*. New London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2009.

Milestones Ministry Manual for Home and Congregation. Bloomington: Vibrant Faith Ministries, 2007. (www.vibrantfaith.org)

5. Develop spiritual formation focused on “spirituality for the second half of life.”

As Baby Boomers enter the second half of life, churches can respond by helping them explore spirituality from a new perspective. A resource such as Richard Rohr’s *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* (Jossey-Bass, 2011) can provide content for a variety of programs and activities, including a course, a retreat program, small group study, etc.

Churches can respond to the hunger for growing in relationship and intimacy with God and exploring more deeply the life of the Spirit by providing formation in spiritual disciplines and practices for the second half of life. Churches can offer

educational programs, retreat experiences, spiritual guides who serve as mentors on the spiritual journey, and resources on the spiritual disciplines and practices. Churches can also equip Baby Boomers to serve as spiritual mentors and guides for other ages.

Churches can assist Baby Boomers in (re)discovering and experiencing spiritual practices such as Lectio Divina, Scripture reflection, spiritual reading, contemplation, fixed-hour prayer, the examen, solitude and silence, Sabbath, praying with art and music, discernment, fasting, and prayer styles and traditions.

Spiritual formation in small groups provides a flexible way to explore and experience the spiritual practices and disciplines, and apply them to daily life. Offer small groups in a variety settings (church, home, coffee shop), times, and lengths suited to people’s lifestyles. Offer a variety of content topics such as “Spiritual Disciplines Bible Study Groups” focused on the core spiritual practices in the Bible (see *Spiritual Disciplines Companion: Bible Studies and Practices to Transform Your Soul* by Jan Johnson); and small groups focused on a single spiritual practice, such as Sabbath, prayer, contemplation, fasting, Scripture reflection, pilgrimage, discernment, and liturgical year.

Set aside a prayer room stocked with resources about prayer and spiritual practices and connect people to online spiritual formation and prayer resources, as well as to online communities that nurture spiritual formation.

A Sampling of Spiritual Formation Resources

Ancient Christian Practices Series (Thomas Nelson)

- Allender, Dan. *Sabbath*.
- Benson, Robert. *In Constant Prayer*
- Chittister, Joan. *The Liturgical Year*.
- Gallagher, Nora. *The Sacred Meal*.
- McLaren, Brian. *Finding Our Way Again: The Return of the Ancient Practices*.
- McKnight, Scott. *Fasting*.

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Sacred Rhythm: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006.

Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005.

Caliguire, Mindy. *Discovering Soul Care, Spiritual Friendship, Simplicity, and Soul Searching*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007-2008.

Dawson, Gerrit Scott, Adele J. González, E. Glenn Hinson, Rueben P. Job, Marjorie J. Thompson,

- and Wendy M. Wright. *Companions in Christ: A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation*. Revised Edition. Nashville: Upper Room, 2006.
- Foster, Richard. *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2008.
- Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. 20th Anniversary Issue. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1998.
- Johnson, Jan. *Spiritual Disciplines Companion: Bible Studies and Practices to Transform Your Soul*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2009.
- Redmont, Jane. *When in Doubt, Sing: Prayer in Daily Life*. Jane Redmont. Notre Dame: Sorin, 2008.
- Rhodes, Tricia McCary. *Sacred Chaos: Spiritual Disciplines for the Life You Have*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2008.
- Rupp, Joyce. *Prayer*. Joyce Rupp. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007.
- Thompson, Marjorie. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Westminster/John Knox, 2005.
- Wicks, Robert. *Prayerfulness: Awakening to the Fullness of Life*. Notre Dame: Sorin, 2009.
- Wolpert, Daniel. *Creating a Life with God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices*. Nashville: Upper Room, 2003.

6. Connect Baby Boomers with the other generations in the congregation through intergenerational events, programs, and relationships.

Churches can connect Baby Boomers to other generations in a variety of ways. Here are several suggestions.

- Offer simple, one-time opportunities for Baby Boomers and the younger generations to get to know each other: social events, service projects, or educational experiences. Make a concerted effort to invite people from all generations to plan and participate in the activities.

- Encourage Boomers to share their faith journey, beliefs, and values with young people. Invite young people to share their stories, too.
- Link people of different generations (older-to-younger or younger-to-older) in the church who have insights and life experiences that may be helpful to the other, such as Boomers helping young adults and new parents with money management and household management, or young people helping Boomers navigate the online world.
- Structure age-group programs with an intergenerational connection, such as an educational program that includes interviews, a panel, and/or storytelling with people of different ages.
- Incorporate intergenerational dialogues into programming—opportunities for the generations to experience the wisdom, faith, and interests of other generations through presentations, performances, and discussions.
- Develop mentoring relationships between youth and Baby Boomers, such as prayer partners, learning-to-pray spiritual direction, service involvement, and Confirmation mentors.
- Design intergenerational service programs (or redesign existing programs) that accommodate the needs and interests of all generations.
- Sponsor music and art projects such as a community concert where musicians of all ages perform together, or an intergenerational art exchange or exhibit, or an Advent or Lent music festival.
- Organize social-recreational activities, such as an intergenerational Olympics or a Wednesday night simple meal and Bible study during Lent.
- Offer intergenerational learning programs throughout the year that involve all generations in learning, relationships building, faith sharing, prayer and celebrating.

(For more insights and ideas about connecting the generations see the Spring 2009 (Volume 3.1) issue of *Lifelong Faith*—“Generations Learning Together.”)