

Creating an Intergenerational Church Culture

Resources: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/thrive>
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Thriving congregations embrace the myriad of gifts, strengths, experiences and wisdom of all generations within their church, and empower all individuals to share their best selves for the fulfillment of its mission and vision.

Topic 1.
Create a culture rich in intergenerational relationships and experiences

Topic 2.
Cultivate generational gifts and strengths and equip for mission

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An Intergenerational Church Culture

- ◆ Creates a welcoming environment of hospitality, trust, acceptance, emotional safety, and care that is conducive to promoting faith growth and mutual support across generations
- ◆ Builds caring relationships among the generations in the church through worship, learning, service, and community events and activities
- ◆ Creates intentional opportunities for bringing the generations together to build relationships and engage in shared activities
- ◆ Involves all generations together in Sunday weekend worship; gives special attention to being inclusive of children and teens in Sunday worship; and engages all generations in leadership roles in Sunday worship (music, reading, praying)

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An Intergenerational Church Culture

- ◆ Engages all generations together in learning experiences that teach the Bible and the Christian tradition, and form disciples of all ages in Christian identity
- ◆ Brings together the generations to learn from each other, share their faith stories, and find support for practicing their faith in daily life
- ◆ Nurtures the spiritual life of all generations together through the community's prayer life, rituals, and blessings; brings together all generations to nurture their spiritual life through prayer and spiritual practices and disciplines
- ◆ Engages all generations together in service to the poor and vulnerable, in the works of justice and advocacy, and in care for creation

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Building an Intergenerational Church Culture

At every stage of life people need to be connected to other generations and have intergenerational faith forming experiences

1. Connecting generations
2. Transform multigenerational into intergenerational
3. Transform age-specific into intergenerational
4. Design intentionally intergenerational initiatives
5. Make intergenerational learning central to church life

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Connecting the Generations

Creating small actions to build relationships, trust, and respect by looking across the church to see possibilities for connecting generations:

- ◆ Praying for other generations
- ◆ Mixing generations on leadership and ministry teams
- ◆ Mentoring relationships between generations
- ◆ Generations sharing/contributing at worship, events, etc.
- ◆ And much more...

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Transform Multigenerational to Intergenerational

Every church has multigenerational environments in which at least two generations are participating in an event or activity—Sunday worship, church events, social gatherings, and more.

How can you transform multigenerational environments into experiences of intergenerational connection and community?

Identify ministries, programs, and activities that are multi-generational (with all ages present without the intergenerational connection and experiences) that can be transformed into more intentionally intergenerational experiences.

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Transform Multigenerational to Intergenerational

Transforming multigenerational settings by . . .

1. Including relationship building activities
2. Engaging in storytelling
3. Praying for each other
4. Participating in shared activities as mixed-generation groups
5. Making people feel welcome, respected, valued, and recognized by other generations
6. Developing leadership roles and teams that involve multiple generations, leading together, in ways appropriate to gifts, abilities, and age

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Transform Age-Specific into Intergenerational

Age-specific programs and activities provide opportunities for intergenerational connection, relationship building, and shared experiences.

How can you transform age-specific programs by adding intergenerational activities or by redesigning the program into an intergenerational experience?

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Transform Age-Specific into Intergenerational

Transform age-specific programs by . . .

- ◆ Incorporating another generation to share their life story, faith, wisdom (interviews, storytelling, presentations, demonstrations)
- ◆ Adding mentors or spiritual guides: grandparent mentors for young parents, spiritual guides for young people, and more
- ◆ Adding regular intergenerational gatherings into age group programs throughout the year
- ◆ Redesigning an age-specific program: camp or vacation Bible school into a grandparent-grandchild program, service program or mission trip into an intergenerational activity for all ages

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Design Intentionally Intergenerational Ministries, Experiences, and Programs

Create programs, activities, or experiences that bring together all of the generations for learning, celebrating, praying, reading the Bible, serving and working for justice, worshipping, and leading.

Where are the greatest opportunities for creating initiatives that will contribute toward building an intergenerational culture in your congregation?

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Design Intentionally Intergenerational

Creating new initiatives that will contribute toward building an intergenerational culture in your congregation by . . .

- Intergenerational models of learning—weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or seasonally—for the whole faith community
- Intergenerational models of vacation Bible school or camp programs or Bible study programs
- Intergenerational Sunday worship
- Intergenerational prayer experiences, prayer groups, retreat experiences, spiritual formation programs, spiritual direction
- Intergenerational local and global service projects, actions for justice, care for creation, and more

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Intergenerational Learning Model

Meal and Community Building

Part 1. Gathering and Prayer

Part 2. All Ages Learning Experience

Part 3. In-Depth Learning Experience

Option 1. Whole Group (together)

Option 2. Age Group (parallel)

Option 3. Activity Center

Part 4. Sharing Learning Experiences and Application

Part 5. Closing Prayer

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Cultivating Generational Gifts & Strengths

Identify the potential motivations of people....

1. Live their calling as a Christian
2. Contribute to the church / community
3. Use their gifts to benefit others
4. Learn something new
5. Personal fulfillment / personal growth
6. Build connections/ sense of belonging
7. Make a difference in other people's lives / in the world
8. Do something well
9. Be challenged
10. Change the way things are
11. Give back

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Cultivating the Gifts of the Community

1. People's experience of mission/ministry deepens their relationship with Jesus Christ.
 2. People are respected as full partners in ministry..
 3. People's gifts, abilities, interests, and passions are honored. We take the time to discern their gifts and see that their involvement matches with their gifts.
 4. People are equipped for mission and ministry. They receive specialized training, resources, and support so that they can adequately perform their ministry.
 5. People are appreciated and recognized for the value of their contributions.
- ** People have the opportunity to work in intergenerational teams.**

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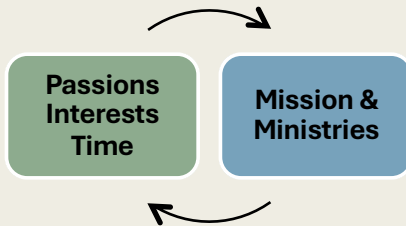
Cultivating the Gifts of the Community

Identify the potential motivations of people for mission and ministry....

1. Live their calling as a Christian
2. Contribute to the church / community
3. Use their gifts to benefit others
4. Work with others
5. Learn something new
6. Personal fulfillment / personal growth
7. Build connections / have sense of belonging
8. Make a difference in other people's lives / in the world
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11. Change the way things are
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Engaging People in Mission/Ministry



Intergenerational, community-wide learning to cultivate gifts and equip for mission

Community-wide, all-generations gifts discernment

Community-wide opportunities for mission and ministry

Consider....

- ◆ Person-centered
- ◆ Mission-centric
- ◆ Variety of engagements
- ◆ Time
- ◆ Episodic micro-involvements
- ◆ Flexible and adaptable
- ◆ Clear expectations
- ◆ Project-centered / teams / shared
- ◆ Apprenticeships