



## Introduction

Thus far five *Engage Together* resources aimed at building and deepening intergenerational relationships during a worship service, particularly the first 20 minutes when children are often present, have been produced. Of course, “church” is so much more than the worship service, our gathering for worship is more than just what happens between the Call to Worship and Benediction and intergenerational ministry is more than simply engaging younger generations more fully. Everything that happens before and after the service and throughout the rest of the week provides opportunities to build and deepen intergenerational relationships across all the generations.

## What’s here?

Our aim for this resource is to provide some ideas, process and planning tips that you can consider as possible next steps for your context on your intergenerational ministry journey. In it you will find...

- Practical ideas
- Helpful processes
- Stimulating questions
- Thought provoking reading

...and much more!

## For your encouragement

*Engage Together: More than worship, more than Sunday* is offered as an encouragement to your intergenerational endeavours that build upon, and go beyond, the gathering of your community for worship. We trust that you find it useful and look forward to hearing your stories, responses and learnings as you continue to explore intergenerational ministry in your context.

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# Intergenerationality and intergenerational ministry

Intergenerationality is relevant for the whole life of the whole church. It could be thought of as a core value (something fundamental to who we are and who we are aspiring to be), an attitude or disposition (the way we approach “other”, in this case those who are different to us in age) or as part of our philosophy of ministry/ethos (the way we do the things we do). It can encompass all aspects of our life together.

Intergenerational ministry can be characterised by people across the generations doing life together – sharing, learning, growing, serving – in relationships marked by mutuality (we all benefit), reciprocity (we all give and receive) and equality (we are all valued equally). Intergenerational ministry is far more than worship and it’s far more than just children! Intergenerational connections can be any generation of a different decade. Therefore, when an 80 year old and a 60 year old connect they are being intergenerational.

When so much of the discussion and debate in churches around intergenerational ministry is about our doing, this framing in relational and attitudinal terms usefully points to a more fundamental aspect of intergenerationality as being about our being. Beyond the pragmatic and programmatic, the transition to a genuinely intergenerational paradigm involves a profound change in our attitudes, behaviours and openness towards those who are different (in this case, chronologically) to ourselves.

One commonly highlighted description of intergenerational ministry, from James White, is “Two or more different age groups...together learning, growing, living in faith through in-common experiences, parallel learning, contributive occasions, and interactive sharing”<sup>[1]</sup>. Whilst a concise summary of these terms can be found in the *Best Practices in Intergenerational Faith Formation* article by John Roberto<sup>[2]</sup>, it is even simpler to note that to a large extent this definition involves different generations intentionally engaging in shared activity together.

John Roberto in *Generations Together*<sup>[3]</sup> helpfully frames this shared activity in the life of the church as how the *whole* church is...

- Caring
- Praying
- Learning
- Celebrating
- Serving

...together across the generations.

Simply having multiple generations in the same space does not make the experience intergenerational. To be truly intergenerational requires the generations to be genuinely interacting and engaging together. Intergenerational ministry requires specific action from those in leadership. It requires modelling and deliberate cultivation of the values, attitudes and behaviours that enhance intergenerational engagement. It requires leadership that is intentional in developing its understanding and practise of intergenerational ministry.

Intergenerationality is not something that just happens, it requires intentionality – especially on the part of leaders. The joy – and potential – of intergenerational ministry is to see people of all ages, across the generations, doing life together and growing in faith together, with genuine love, respect and mutuality.

See Appendix 2 for a Fact Sheet about “What is intergenerational ministry?” to use with your community.

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<sup>[1]</sup> James W. White, *Intergenerational Religious Education: Models, Theories and Prescription for Interage Life and Learning in the Faith Community* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1988), p18.

<sup>[2]</sup> John Roberto, “Best Practices in Intergenerational Faith Formation” *Lifelong Faith* (Fall/Winter 2007) pp.4,5. [http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/best\\_practices\\_in\\_intergenerational\\_faith\\_formation.pdf](http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/best_practices_in_intergenerational_faith_formation.pdf), accessed on 07/29/17

<sup>[3]</sup> Amedei, Merhaut and Roberto, *Generations Together: Caring, Praying, Learning, Celebrating, and Serving Faithfully* 2014 LifelongFaith Associates.



# Becoming a more intergenerational community

## A useful framework

The key to a faith community becoming more intergenerational is the development of the value of intergenerationality across the whole life of the community. For this to become reality requires intentionality, modelling and deliberate action, especially on the part of church leadership.

A useful starting point for action is the framework set out by John Roberto (as per previous page) that characterises the shared activity of Christian community as...

- Caring
- Praying
- Learning
- Celebrating
- Serving

## Some helpful questions for reflection and action

For each of these areas of caring, praying, learning, serving and celebrating, some helpful initial questions to ask of your community life may be...

1. What is currently happening in this area?
2. To what extent is it already intergenerational?
3. How could the current activity be more intentionally intergenerational?

Once these are addressed, and potential changes trialled and reviewed, the next step may be to discern what new endeavours might be implemented that are intergenerational from their inception.

*See the following page for some examples of what this might look like in practice.*

*Refer to Appendix 1 for a Proforma to use with your community to work through these questions and steps for action.*

## A beginning point

When it comes to being more *intentionally* intergenerational in any of these areas, a simple way forward is to be more proactive in ***involving a number of different people from a range of generations*** in...

<b>Shaping</b> what happens	Who decides? Which generations are being listened to?
<b>Leading</b> what happens	Which generations are being seen/heard?
<b>Participating</b> in what happens	How is the activity intentionally inclusive of different generations? How are the different generational expectations being taken into account?

## A key principle

A key principle here is that of ***teaming up people from different generations whenever possible***. Functioning in this way has the benefit of...

- Providing intergenerational interaction in preparation
- Modelling of intergenerational engagement in practice
- Demonstrating a value/ethos of intentional intergenerationality
- Giving a shared intergenerational experience to look back on
- Building intergenerational relationships
- Showing intergenerational intentionality



## **Some Examples - What might this look like in practice?**

### ***Caring***

1. What is currently happening in this area? Eg. Pastoral visitation team in place
2. To what extent is it already intergenerational? Eg. Families are included on visitation list
3. How could the current activity be more intentionally intergenerational?
  - Eg. Increase generational diversity of team (perhaps including older children/teenagers)
  - Eg. Encourage visitation by multi-generational "pairs" where possible
  - Eg. Raise awareness of team members of the needs/concerns of different generations

### ***Praying***

1. What is currently happening in this area? Eg. Rostered person each week in church
2. To what extent is it already intergenerational? Eg. People of different ages are prayed for
3. How could the current activity be more intentionally intergenerational?
  - Eg. Roster people on as multi-generational "pairs" or "households"
  - Eg. On some weeks focus specifically on praying for the needs of a particular generation
  - Eg. Ensure processes for gathering prayer points facilitates contributions from all ages

### ***Learning***

1. What is currently happening in this area? Eg. Small Groups meet on weeknights
2. To what extent is it already intergenerational? Eg. Some groups include young adults
3. How could the current activity be more intentionally intergenerational?
  - Eg. Increase the range of meeting times (eg. weekends or weekdays) to increase access
  - Eg. Proactively offer "intergenerational" options (eg. around a Saturday evening meal/Sunday lunch)
  - Eg. Provide/develop small group material that intentionally seeks to engage all ages

### ***Celebrating***

1. What is currently happening in this area? Eg. A pianist or organist provides music for sung worship
2. To what extent is it already intergenerational? Eg. On special occasions there are multiple instruments played by a variety of ages
3. How could the current activity be more intentionally intergenerational?
  - Eg. A greater range of generations could be involved in the choosing of music
  - Eg. At least two appropriately gifted people (from different generations) could lead together each week
  - Eg. Occasionally people from different generations could introduce songs that are special to them

### ***Serving***

1. What is currently happening in this area? Eg. annual Working Bee on a Saturday morning
2. To what extent is it already intergenerational? Eg. Everybody is invited to participate
3. How could the current activity be more intentionally intergenerational?
  - Eg. Ensure there are tasks, and equipment, suitable for a range of abilities and ages
  - Eg. Encourage tasks to be done in multi-generational "pairs" or "teams" where possible
  - Eg. Have a Working Bee process where "teams" can sign-up for tasks that can be done at any time across a weekend



# Planning ministry that is intergenerational

In ministry we seek to enable the whole people of God – all people, of all ages – to encounter God and grow in faith. Also known as growing as disciples.

Therefore we need to keep in mind who is in our community, who engages with our church ministries and events and who does not. The joy and challenge is in how we plan activities with all ages in mind without making things more onerous or overly simplistic.

**Central to ministry that is intergenerational is building and deepening intergenerational relationships.** This is the key to keep in mind when planning, leading and implementing intergenerational activity.

Intergenerational ministry uses multi-age strategies (multi-age, multi-ability, multi-sensory, multi-intelligence) with an intentional intergenerational overlay that seeks to deepen connections between at least two different generations.

As we bring in the multi-age, multi-ability, multi-sensory, multi-intelligence and intentional intergenerational opportunities – keep in mind – how is this encouraging people to grow in faith? We don't want to get so caught up in creativity or in multi-something that people are distracted from God. We want to plan and offer intergenerational engagement that supports faith growth and assists the whole people of God to grow in connection with one another.

**In planning ministry** that is intergenerational, as with any type of ministry planning, consider:

- The purpose for the ministry
- The congregation and/or wider community – who you are engaging with
- The physical location/venue
- How much time there is
- The theme – faith focus

**In preparing ministry** that is intergenerational, consider incorporating a variety of:

- Senses – touch, taste, see, smell, hear
- Intelligences (ways that people learn) – intrapersonal (on own), interpersonal (with others), number (count/order), word (read/write), music, visual, movement (body), nature

Always encourage ministry planners/leaders to work as a team. Understand each other's strengths and preferences, including modes of communication. For example, some leaders may have a preference for on-line and visual engagement, others may prefer face-to-face and small group conversations. Don't use all approaches and ideas every time.

**Some more tips for intergenerational ministry:**




- Provide opportunities for interaction of small intergenerational groups within the ministry setting
- Include fun, excitement and surprise in the context of genuine ministry
- Ensure explanations, invitations and directions are clear so that participants know expectations
- Use language that is hospitable, invitational, inclusive and understandable to those present
- Involve a number of different people — representing a range of generations — in various aspects of the ministry
- Make sure invitations to programmed movement and activities are inclusive of all present and respectful of different abilities
- Keep in mind the resources available – can you print off 100 copies of these? Do you have balloons or bubbles? Is there time to prepare 50 star shapes or would squares suffice? This isn't about adding to our workloads or budgets but thinking about simple and strategic ways to engage all people in ministry, encountering God and creating or deepening intergenerational connections.



APPENDIX 1: PROFORMA –

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION ABOUT INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY IN YOUR COMMUNITY/CONTEXT

This process would be most effective with representatives from different generations and/or with the whole community.  
It could also be used by ministry leadership teams and/or Church Council.

	WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN THIS AREA?	TO WHAT EXTENT IS IT ALREADY INTERGENERATIONAL?	HOW COULD THE CURRENT ACTIVITY BE MORE INTENTIONALLY INTERGENERATIONAL?	WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS? WHO WILL DO WHAT BY WHEN?
 CARING				
 PRAYING				
 LEARNING				
 SERVING				
 CELEBRATING				



# WHAT'S INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY?

INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY IS ABOUT BUILDING AND DEEPENING INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

It is characterised by people across the generations doing life together – sharing, learning, growing, serving – in relationships marked by mutuality (we all benefit), reciprocity (we all give and receive) and equality (we are all valued equally).

Intergenerational ministry isn't something all that new. It is a reemphasis on community, on building good relationships no matter our age, gender, culture, background or anything else. As we explore what intergenerational ministry means, we are actually exploring what living as God's people means. Being intergenerational is when people of different generations, for example from different decades, build and deepen relationships together. Therefore, when an 80 year old and a 60 year old connect they are being intergenerational.

AN INTENTIONALLY INTERGENERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IS MORE LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE AND SUSTAIN LIFELONG DISCIPLESHIP FOR ALL AGES.

Being Intergenerational is...

- Not just about children, it's about **people of all ages**
- Not about what we do, it's about **who we are**
- Not something that just happens, it requires **intentionality**

INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY IS FAR MORE THAN WORSHIP AND IT'S FAR MORE THAN JUST CHILDREN.

## HAVE A GO!

Ask 5 people of different ages at your church:

- What do you like about church?
- Why do you attend church?
- Who do you like to see or catch up with at church?

Even better if you can have this conversation as a group!



"Generations Together" by Amedei, Merhaut and Roberto

"The term intergenerational church describes a congregational style and mind set in which **doing things together is the norm.**

Programming based on generational or other divisions is carefully considered and implemented only when it is the best way to meet specific needs."

*Intergenerational Ministry Team, Uniting Church SA*

## HAVE A GO!

With a few people of different ages, brainstorm ideas about how each of these areas could be more intergenerational in your church community?



To be truly intergenerational requires the **generations to be genuinely interacting and engaging together**. Simply having multiple generations in the same space does not make the experience intergenerational. We can do things together in ministry and in life but it isn't necessarily being intergenerational. It might be meeting the needs of different ages and abilities and different types of learners but in and of itself it may not be creating intergenerational connections.

Intergenerational ministry requires specific action from those in **leadership**. It requires modelling and deliberate cultivation of the values, attitudes and behaviours that enhance intergenerational engagement. It requires leadership that is intentional in developing its understanding and practise of intergenerational ministry.

## HAVE A GO!

Ask yourself and your ministry team:



In John Roberto's article "Best Practices in Intergenerational Faith Formation"<sup>1</sup> he encourages us to reflect on the extent to which the following practices are happening in our current worship contexts. Let's also consider to what extent these are happening in our ministry and shared life throughout the week...

- To what extent are **multiple ages** being engaged together?
- To what extent are **new relationships** being created and developed?
- To what extent is there diverse, embracing and collaborative **leadership**?
- To what extent is the **environment** conducive to a variety of gifts, needs and learning styles?

These can be confronting questions but we don't need to be afraid. Let's ask these questions and seriously reflect on how we could improve things. Most churches are probably doing some of these things – be affirmed – and then consider what else could be implemented. Not in a 'change everything' way just a 'what's the next step?' kind of way.

It's helpful to remember that people worship and serve God in different ways - we all have different gifts and needs.

For those of us who have known God for decades and experienced 'being church' in particular ways - how do we show grace and love, and create space for the needs of others, particularly those who don't know God or who are just beginning to learn about following Jesus?

ULTIMATELY, THE HOPE IS THAT WHEN OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES ARE INTENTIONALLY INTERGENERATIONAL EVERY PERSON IS BEING ENCOURAGED TO WORSHIP GOD WITH THEIR WHOLE LIFE AND TO GROW IN FAITH.

## HAVE A GO!

Questions for reflection:

- **What intergenerational ideas are exciting for you?**
- **What have you found challenging / confronting?**
- **What is the next step for your church community?**

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<sup>[1]</sup> (John Roberto, "Best Practices in Intergenerational Faith Formation" *Lifelong Faith* (Fall/Winter 2007) pp.4,5 [http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/best\\_practices\\_in\\_intergenerational\\_faith\\_formation.pdf](http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/best_practices_in_intergenerational_faith_formation.pdf), accessed on 07/29/17)